Old Testament Introduction
Chapter 32,
On the Reliability
of the Old Testament

***Introduction***

After months of brain numbing research, even prayers and tears; one is overwhelmed when the answers come in an “accidental” flash of light. Not that anyone should believe in accidents. We believe that God answers prayer. When this “Old Testament Introduction” (OTI) web page was first conceived as a blog and the first article published on May 27, 2015,[[1]](#endnote-1) the whole subject was laid out in outline form, following *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* (BBS)[[2]](#endnote-2) video sequence exactly. Difficulty was expected in the early chapters; difficulty was not anticipated for essays on the Hebrew kings.

Now after being bogged down in the number puzzle, which the Hebrew kings present, we were ready to throw in the towel, and had all but abandoned hope that a cultural backdrop could be provided for the period from 930 to 586 BC. That which is (not) provided by BBS is minimal to nonexistent: it jumps immediately from Solomon’s Temple and Samaritan Worship to Assyria and Josiah; leaving all of the rich intervening wealth of material untouched.

Seeking help with this difficult material we turned to that old standby, Thiele[[3]](#endnote-3), looking for simple answers. We were sadly disappointed.[[4]](#endnote-4) Thiele was not much more helpful than Anstey[[5]](#endnote-5), which is now seriously antiquated, having been eclipsed by a deluge of modern archeological studies.[[6]](#endnote-6) And here we thought that nothing about biblical chronology had changed for thousands of years.[[7]](#endnote-7)

On the other hand, our pain did turn up some fruitful resources, chief among them:

<http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp>

<http://newadvent.org/bible/gen001.htm>

These, together with our faithful sidekick,

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

have proved a great help with research.

When we purchased a new copy of Thiele on the internet, Amazon offered free shipping for a minimum order and suggested another book, which we purchased only to save the shipping charge. The other book was set aside as we plowed into Thiele. Months later, looking for any reading material that would provide a break, we picked up the other book as something to read during TV commercials. Imagine our serendipity when we discovered that the mystery book had all that the doctor ordered and much, much more.

We’ve been reading Kitchen, Kenneth A., *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003 (2006 paperback) 662 pages: which book Kitchen lovingly dubs, *O! Rot!* (OROT),[[8]](#endnote-8) as a commentary on the many false trails of modernizing pseudo-scholarship. If this OTI web page really were a course of study, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, would be the text, secondary only to the Old Testament itself. Had we only known, we would have read OROT first, and saved ourselves a lot of time and trouble. With rare exception OROT presents the very message that we’ve been attempting all along: except that Kitchen does a better job of it. OROT is, if you haven’t already guessed, that mystery book which we foolishly delayed reading, until all else seemed lost.

***Evidence***

More than anything else, even more than Kitchen’s delightful sense of humor, we admire Kitchen’s great respect for evidence, which we find refreshing. Our primary complaint with BBS has been its unscientific disregard for evidence; and its patently dishonest willingness to distort, hide, or ignore evidence whenever it opposed their antiquated theory (1876/77).[[9]](#endnote-9)

Our humble attempt to unmask the BBS fraud has always been handicapped by our limited resources. We are far less than ubiquitous, have only a modest library, and are limited to internet searches for fresh information. Our own basic study foundation in this area is rather old (1971-1976), nearly as outlandish as a buggy whip; we also have minimal archaeological and linguistic skills. Prior to OROT the best archaeology references in the trunk of our old jalopy were ANEP[[10]](#endnote-10) and ANET[[11]](#endnote-11). Even so, we knew enough to see through the BBS fraud and start to expose it.

Kitchen brings a wide range of new (to us) evidence to the table. He has access to the great libraries of England, the British Museum, and the vast hoards of study that Merrie Olde England has to offer. He also has a lifetime of studies in archaeology and linguistics, especially in hieroglyphics, which is far beyond our capabilities. Moreover, Kitchen sees all of this with a depth and scope of understanding which greatly exceeds our novitiate grasp: in short, where we see a phrase or two, Kitchen sees a book or even an encyclopedia of information.

***Scope***

Kitchen’s scope is international. Where we see a tangency, with Shalmaneser Ⅲ, for example, Kitchen sees the whole range of Shalmaneser’s empire and draws implications about it from Mesopotamia or India, to Rome, or even Spain if needs be. Thus he shows what must be expected, as well as what cannot be expected. Hence, Kitchen’s idea of a chronological layer extends as far as necessary across the known civilization and can thus be contrasted with all the other strata above and below it. If evidence of a Shalmaneser Ⅲ layer, or any other major hallmark event for that matter, is observed, the dating for that layer becomes fixed with the rest of the archaeological universe. Yet, more than that, the strata above and below also become anchored by the sequential chain. If several such hallmarks are found, other dates can be corrected, or at least estimated, and an entire history can be built: all because Kitchen is able to see the archeological picture as a whole. How did Kitchen acquire such scope?

***Credentials***

It’s not magic. It’s the result of a lifetime of hard work. Kitchen excels at such scope.[[12]](#endnote-12) The reason that Kitchen has such breadth of scope, such depth of insight is simple enough: he has worked harder at this than anybody else, especially in the field of epigraphy. Not many people, even subject matter experts in this field, read in ten, twelve, or more languages: including over two styles each of both cuneiform and hieroglyphics.[[13]](#endnote-13) Few have epigraphed over “60,000 lines’ [over a million lexemes] worth of Egyptian texts…,”[[14]](#endnote-14) not to mention extensive labors in other languages, plus the publication of over 250 books and journal articles.

We emphasize here that Kitchen is a firsthand observer of these documents, not a second or third hand commentator (some of whom are mere kibitzers); or in our case, merely interested spectators or sports fans. Folks who are not themselves firsthand observers are in no position to critique Kitchen: they cannot possibly have acquired the requisite knowledge base to evaluate this material scientifically.[[15]](#endnote-15)

***Definitions***[[16]](#endnote-16)

**Max, Min**

Maximalism, maximalist, minimalism, and minimalism are not frequently defined. Our own definition is that they describe approaches to evidence that take such evidence either at its greatest possible value, or at its least possible value; sometimes even exaggerating that max or min condition. Au contraire, realism and reality are to be pursued in preference to either of these extreme views; Truth[[17]](#endnote-17) is to be pursued for Truth’s sake alone; evidence is evidence is evidence, it cannot be maximized or minimized at the whim of the observer, it can only be weighed and evaluated: yet, if we're really lucky, it can even be understood... well, at least the surface might be scratched.[[18]](#endnote-18)

As scientific terms, max/min can only be applied to evidence where a great deal of subjectivity is involved. For example, maximalist and minimalist mathematicians usually hold identical views, so the terms do not apply: mathematicians expect absolute universal agreement. On the other hand, experts on global warming frequently differ by wide margins; so that, agreement may not even be expected. Unanimous opinions are common in hard sciences such as chemistry and physics; such agreement is rarer in the soft sciences; whereas in art, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Nevertheless, even mathematicians have their gainsayers: the field of economic growth is ruled by fixed and well know exponential equations; yet, there are still those who claim that copper can be made from lead, and humans have the intelligence to make the earth survive after the sun dies.[[19]](#endnote-19)

A funny thing about minimalism though. As far as diamonds are concerned, I’m a minimalist; I can’t tell them from zircons, and don’t really much care: it’s just quadruple bonded carbon crystal to me; might as well be a lump of coal or a chunk of graphite.[[20]](#endnote-20) However, the longer one studies diamonds, the more inclined one is, to become a maximal realist[[21]](#endnote-21) in that field: such a one does not invent fantasies about diamonds, yet sees more of what is really possible to see in the diamond. The maximalist, on the other hand, may be willing to attribute properties to diamonds that do not exist, and may begin to worship diamonds. That doesn’t make the expert who rejects a sample as zircon or industrial artificial man-made diamond a minimalist, just because he rejects the sample. A minimalist rejects the whole field of study: for example, the opinion that psychiatrists are all frauds and quacks. The minimalist rejects the sample because the field has no value to him/her; views about the sample itself may be highly biased, pure ignorance, or occasionally, accidentally correct. A maximalist, on the other hand has an inflated view of his/her own field, valuing results out of all proportion to reality, ignoring the contributions of related fields. Kitchen is neither a maximalist nor a minimalist.

A biblical minimalist may think that any evidence from Scripture, no matter how well established or supported by other study disciplines, is of zero value. A biblical maximalist tends to think that copies or translations of Scripture, can contain no human embellishments or errors whatsoever: thus Scripture is made into an object of worship, and the sin of bibliolatry is committed. This sometimes results in the most outlandish doctrines; which, no matter how frequently and thoroughly disproved, still manage to persist.

An archaeological minimalist tends to refuse to see the evidence cut in stone even when it strikes him/her in the face. An archaeological maximalist might ascribe powers to archaeology that cannot possibly exist. So, for example, some Egyptologists see their tiny specialty in Egyptology as the whole of the subject matter, refusing to hear the evidence from Assyriology, or even from other specialties in Egyptology.

It is important to realize that Assyria and Egypt, as well as numerous other fields stand on equal ground as far as evidence is concerned, and no understanding develops until all of that evidence is reconciled. Moreover, such studies draw upon a wide variety of scientific disciplines, of which epigraphy is only one, so that no understanding develops until all relevant sciences are reconciled. In such a universe of study, the Bible is every bit as much a source of archaeological evidence as any Egyptian monument or any Assyrian tablet.

Evidence is evidence, and no intelligible results take place until all evidence receives an equal and unbiased evaluation. Truth is truth. Reality is reality. There is no place for either maximalism or minimalism in this work. Only the realistic, neutral point of view may survive.[[22]](#endnote-22) It is simply impossible that the God who created the universe, could possibly disagree with Himself as He speaks to and with human beings. Other viewpoints only lead to unreasoned fanaticism and failure.

There is built into most of us, a strong temptation to discard unusual evidence that we cannot explain or understand: sometimes these pieces of strange evidence are known as outliers. Every time I have yielded to this temptation to discard outliers, I have walked into colossal, expensive, and painful blunders. Outliers are frequently, usually the most important part of the evidence. It is the outlier that resides at the bleeding edge of science, and scientific discovery. Our very inability to understand an outlier deprives the outlier of its just consideration in the whole universe of evidence. No one piece of evidence is inherently more important than any other; yet, the outlier defines the boundaries of evidence, the event horizons.[[23]](#endnote-23) Here is frequently where we must look, at what we don’t understand, to achieve breakthrough discoveries. We neglect the outlier at our own peril.

**Obscurantism**

Obscurantism, obscurantist is the “the practice of deliberately preventing [or the person who deliberately prevents] the facts or full details of something from becoming known:” deliberately causing obscurity of evidence. One who in 2017 continues to advocate for the Documentary Hypothesis in any of its myriad forms, by covering over or denying or hiding the overwhelming evidence that the Documentary Hypothesis is not scientifically sustainable, is an obscurantist. The prevailing wealth of evidence not only fails to support the Documentary Hypothesis; it absolutely and unequivocally contradicts that hypothesis. The Documentary Hypothesis needs to be rejected from all credible scientific discussion: it has become a fraud and a hoax.

**Obstructionism**

Obstructionism, obstructionist is “the practice of deliberately impeding or delaying [or the person who deliberately impedes or delays] the course of legal, legislative, or other procedures.” To repeatedly propose the Documentary Hypothesis as a credible working hypothesis is obstructionist. It blocks the path and studies of credible scientists and makes their work more difficult.

**Divisiveness**

Divisiveness is the practice of deliberately setting two scientists against each other in order to block progress toward reasonable goals, or to advance the progress of a false goal. The schismatic may promote divisiveness with a view to drawing others away to his/her own delusion.

**Acquiescence**

Acquiescence is the practice of deliberately maintaining silence when any of the above, or other false practices are going on; it is the practice of supporting wrongdoing by silence. There are, in some cases, reasonable grounds to acquiesce; silence in the face of blatant or egregious error is not among them.

***Criticism***

There are those who would have Kitchen sit in silence while his gainsayers tear his life work apart. When Kitchen dares to defend his work, and calls out his opponents[[24]](#endnote-24) he is faulted for exposing the truth. There is a point at which this is no longer a disagreement between gentle people of good faith. This nonsense is a hostile attack on truth, which needs to be put away.

The individual who thinks Kitchen is a maximalist is wrong. He/she should have read the whole book. Kitchen seeks nothing more or less than the careful and honest review of all the evidence. As such, he is a realist. This should be the goal of every scientist worth his/her salt. The incessant attempt to propound a theory, and then hammer the evidence until it fits the theory must stop.

A theory is and must be nothing more or less than a proposal, which is best stated as a null hypothesis. The evidence then either does or does not disprove the null hypothesis.[[25]](#endnote-25) The Documentary Hypothesis has been disproved many times over. Our statistical conclusion at this point is that there is no good evidentiary reason[[26]](#endnote-26) to support the Documentary Hypothesis; on the contrary, there is overwhelming evidentiary reason to reject the Documentary Hypothesis. Alternatively, there is no good evidentiary reason to reject the general biblical construct as it stands; on the contrary, there is considerable evidentiary reason to accept the biblical long range view as accurate and true. This is not to assert that every detail of the biblical record is presently supported, verified, or even understood, or that the myriad manuscripts we now possess are without human induced error.

**Balaam**

The attempt to argue a single detail, such as the Tell Deir Alla text, the Balaam Inscription (840-760 BC),[[27]](#endnote-27) is such a case in point.[[28]](#endnote-28) If indeed, this Balaam is the same Balaam, the inscription adds possible local color to our understanding of Balaam: for here Balaam “is associated with Ashtar, a god named Shgr, and Shadday gods and goddesses.”[[29]](#endnote-29) This indicates that Balaam is most likely a false and idolatrous prophet, who was confronted by Yahweh and forced to submit to Yahweh’s wishes. Whether this completely explains the two accounts or not, the two reports are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

What the Balaam Inscription establishes is increased likelihood that Balaam is a real historic character: for if two Balaams are involved, the second is surely named in memory of the first. What the Balaam Inscription does not establish is the necessary existence of any ninth century Balaam: yet rather a ninth century memorial of Balaam, who could be placed at nearly any time prior to the ninth century.

The Balaam Inscription could very well be the result of many copies; that it supports a prior event from five to six hundred years before, is hardly a startling proof that Kitchen has lost his marbles. The carbon copy Balaam, does not disprove the original….

Kitchen’s argument, in part, is that the Balaam motif must be located against an historic milieu that fits all of the evidence in the long range view of things. As a single event in the Exodus, with a preponderance of other evidence, supporting the biblical narrative, there is no good reason to reject that narrative. All we can hope to gain is a richer understanding of what that narrative means. Should additional provenance come to light concerning the life of Balaam, we shall be happy to include it.

In the meanwhile, there is no good reason to believe that Balaam is not an historic pagan prophet who lived in the middle fourteenth to early thirteenth centuries, who also died for his prophetic indiscretions. The Balaam Inscription, in and of itself, is insufficient evidence to justify postdating the entire Exodus by five hundred years; nor is there any warrant whatsoever for questioning the historicity of the record. The Balaam Inscription is not even sufficient evidence to suggest the mere possibility that the entire Exodus may be dated slightly early. The critic should have read the whole book.

**Light**

Let us seek the conclusion of the whole matter from Ephesians 5:8-15 Paraphrased:

For you were sometimes left in the dark; but now, since you have been enlightened by the Lord, behave as children of light … have no tolerance for the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them: for … all things that are exposed are clarified by the light: for the thing that clarifies is light. So see that you walk prudently, not as fools, but as wise.

For those who protest the exposure of maximalism, minimalism, obscurantism, obstructionism, divisiveness, acquiescence, or other forms of lying and self-deception as impolite or rude, we can only say, “Put a sock in it.” We have every intention and right to shine the light on truth. If deception, falsehood, and fraud are embarrassed, exposed, or otherwise held up for ridicule; purveyors of such have only themselves to blame: they chose to persist against reason. Evidence, light, and truth will continue to be our only quest.

***Questions***[[30]](#endnote-30)

This does not mean that we accept Kitchen blindly.

**Merneptah Stele**

We have questioned the value of the Merneptah Stele evidence.[[31]](#endnote-31) Many have questioned the validity of the Israel reading; yet, Kitchen is the master epigrapher: so if Kitchen says the reading is Israel, then Israel it must be.[[32]](#endnote-32)

Still, the Merneptah Stele evidence is weakened by other factors. We cannot locate any certain identification of a place named Yano’am[[33]](#endnote-33). The subject matter is Libya; Israel is an afterthought, barely mentioned among other afterthoughts. The graphic art depicts the main topic, Libya, not Israel.

If Merneptah[[34]](#endnote-34) was almost 60 or even 70 when he began to reign, say 58 or 68; he reigned from age 58 to 68 or from age 68 to 78 (1213-1203 BC): far too old to be leading military campaigns personally. Hence, these are most likely the campaigns of subordinate generals conducted when Merneptah was 63 or older, or possibly even 73 (1208 BC), whichever was his age at the fifth year of his reign. Since he also suffered from arthritis and atherosclerosis, it is dubious that he led much of anything physically. If he moved the capital from Piramesse to Memphis this could indicate a forced strategic retreat to which Egyptians would never admit. However, Piramesse was not abandoned for Tanis until around 1039 BC.

So we still have questions about the value of the Merneptah Stele evidence; especially since BBS seeks to propound a theory for Israel evolving from disgruntled indigenous Canaanites.

**Piramesse**

Ramesses Ⅰ (1292-1290 BC) was a commoner who ostensibly reached the throne because of diligence and hard work: however, he was too old to enjoy a lengthy reign. On the other hand, he was “born into a noble military family.”[[35]](#endnote-35) This seems to indicate that Piramesse[[36]](#endnote-36) could have been a family estate, as well as being important to the pharaohs much earlier than 1290 BC, possibly even as early as the mid-fifteenth century. Indeed, the Ramesside family may have originally achieved fame by driving out the Hyksos as early as 1535 BC. Since the location is in dispute, being incorrectly identified with Tanis, rather than Avaris-Qantir, confusion may arise as with BBS where the error is perpetrated. The exploration of Avaris-Qantir[[37]](#endnote-37) is primarily through ground-penetrating radar.[[38]](#endnote-38) That fact, plus the fact that considerable quantities of artifacts were carted off to Tanis, means that we have little evidence from a physical dig at Avaris-Qantir: the soil structure may simply be too wet to support much of a physical dig.

**440/300**

This means that we wish we could persuade Kitchen to reconsider his position on Judges 11:26[[39]](#endnote-39) and 1 Kings 6:1.[[40]](#endnote-40) In 1 Kings 6:1 a credible case can be made that the Septuagint preserves the correct date, indicating a 1406 BC Exodus. In Judges 11:26 Jephthah’s three hundred years can be maintained without doing violence to anything else.[[41]](#endnote-41) The Judges narrative changes direction completely after Jephthah, which may indicate that the necessary overlap of leaderships in Judges may be the partial co-existence of Jephthah’s narrative with that of Eli, Sampson, Samuel, Saul, and the early Philistine domination. That being said, we are not so stuck on these views that we refuse to bow or listen other evidence and future discoveries. There is a great deal to be said in favor of the long-range historicity of Torah, Joshua, and Judges: this is not a claim that we understand every last detail of the record.

By the same token, Kitchen has persuaded us that we need to reconsider and reevaluate our position on the Exodus population.[[42]](#endnote-42) It is indeed true that אֶלֶף is a very flexible word that seems to have the denotative or explicit meaning of thousand; yet, connotatively or implicitly may mean clan, crowd, family, group, herd, list?, myriad, squad, tribe; chief, head, or leader of any of these; an uncounted, unspecific, or unspecified large number. However, the Israelites were so meticulous with this count that they enforced it with a poll tax. We have trouble with the concept of six-hundred clans of shekels. Moreover, the Hebrew idiom seems to prefer שָׂרֵי הָֽאֲלָפִים, captains of the thousands, over simply thousands-chief. Hebrew also has a distinct word for prince or ruler נָשִׂיא. If Hebrew translation has made such an error, this error seems to be perpetuated by LXX, where χιλιάδας prevails in every instance we checked. Only in Joshua we found an indistinct equation drawn between “heads of fathers’ houses” and “χιλίαρχοι”.[[43]](#endnote-43) To be fair, since there is no reason to believe that these verses were written in paleo-Hebrew; they were more likely written in Akkadian Cuneiform, and since we have no external evidence, we must keep a open mind on this issue until more evidence is forthcoming: even though it seems to lack grammatical and lexical support.[[44]](#endnote-44)

**Style**

Nor would we ever claim that OROT is an easy read. Kitchen is English. American is no longer merely a dialectic variation of English, but rather a distinct language. We get some of Kitchen’s jokes, while others escape us. Kitchen is very technical, as indeed he must be, so we must learn more than a few new words. Moreover, Kitchen is so knowledgeable that he packs many ideas into one-word summaries, which are beyond our understanding. These ideas fly by at such lightning-fast speed that we do well to grasp the mere gist of things. Still, OROT is a worthwhile read, worth several rereads, worthy of intensive study. If one wants to understand the Old Testament, one will profit greatly by laboring in the Kitchen.

**Mathematics**

Some of the players in this field wish to play games with the numbers. Number crunching is in our wheelhouse. All of the growth statistics are described by one variation or another of the equation:

***y = a \* bn;***

where: a is the starting value, b = 1 + growth rate (g), n is an expression of the time or distance over which change takes place.

Thus, a growth from 12 to 225 settlements in 200 years is only 1.5%, about today’s worldwide average: neither huge nor startling by any stretch of the imagination. Even in 100 years, such growth would only approach 3%. Or a growth from 39 to 200 settlements in 150 years is barely above 1% growth.[[45]](#endnote-45) As a matter of fact the Israelite census was actually declining in the long-range view of things. We agree with Kitchen that even such modest growth is best explained by migration and not by births.

Finkelstein, the Vigilante[[46]](#endnote-46) imagines a growth from 21,000 to 51,000 people in 150 years: not even a paltry 1% annual growth.[[47]](#endnote-47) This is not exactly the long-anticipated Israelite sexual revolution; nor is it frenetic, or phenomenal: it is, in fact, banally, all too ordinary.[[48]](#endnote-48) Even a five-fold growth in thirty-three years would only amount to 5% annual growth. As the Scripture notes, the bulk of the Israelites were afraid to step out in faith. Rather than being Canaanites evolving into Israelites, they were Israelites lapsing into Canaanites.

***Progress***

Kitchen has expanded our horizons, so we tentatively suppose that we have learned several new things. We await the grading of our papers; whether by time or by Kitchen.

**Language**

We all realize that language is a moving target: who can understand what the next generation is saying? It is also fairly obvious that writing developed as a means of recording what either happened or was said, as well as providing a means to prove contract or covenant rights. We might not know all the details; yet, a crude outline of language development might include:[[49]](#endnote-49)

* Mesopotamia[[50]](#endnote-50)
1. Sumerian (3350-1800 BC), classically until 100 AD
2. Akkadian Cuneiform (2800-700 BC), classically until 100 AD[[51]](#endnote-51)
3. Aramaic (1000-300 BC)

Ancient (1000-700 BC)

Imperial (700-300 BC)

* Anatolia
1. Hittite (1650-1200 BC)
2. Palaic (circa 1300 BC)
3. C Luwian (1200-600 BC)
4. H Luwian (1200-600 BC)
5. Lydian ((700-200 BC)
* Canaan[[52]](#endnote-52)
1. Phoenician (1100-500 BC)
2. Paleo-Hebrew (1000-400 BC extinction)
3. Aramaic (1000-300 BC)
4. Arabic (1000 BC-modern)
* Egypt[[53]](#endnote-53)
1. Archaic (3300-2600 BC)
2. Old (2686-2181 BC)
3. Middle (2055-1353 BC)
4. Akkadian Cuneiform (circa 1353 BC)[[54]](#endnote-54)
5. Late (1353-700 BC)
6. Demotic (700 BC-500 AD)

So, a cursory glance at some of the Israelite Patriarchs per our latest best guess might look like:

* David (b. 1040; reign, 1010-970; d. 970 BC)
* Moses (b. 1486; exile, 1446-1406; Exodus, 1406-1366; d. 1366 BC)
* Joseph (b. 1660; d. 1550 BC)
* Abraham (b. 1911; call, 1836; d. 1736 BC)
* Heber (b. 2586; d. 2082 BC)

Using these dates as a crude language guideline, we draw the following tentative conclusions:

* Heber (2586-2082 BC) did not speak biblical paleo-Hebrew (1000-586 BC), Hebrew (516-400 BC, 1800 AD-today, at other periods remaining alive only among select experts). We don’t know what he spoke. He may have spoken an ancient Semitic dialect related to an ancestor of paleo-Hebrew, Phoenician, Proto-Canaanite, or something similar. More likely, he spoke Sumerian, or Akkadian, or both, possibly reserving another ancient Semitic dialect for conversation around the tent.
* Abraham (1911-1736 BC) did not speak biblical paleo-Hebrew or Hebrew either. He probably needed both Sumerian and Akkadian to survive in Ur. Akkadian Cuneiform would have been his Semitic dialect. He most likely picked up an earlier form of Hurrian or Hittite as he traversed the Fertile Crescent. His Cisjordan dialect would most likely have been Akkadian Cuneiform. He also needed some skill with Middle Egyptian to survive his altercation with the reigning pharaoh.
* Joseph (1660-1550 BC) may have been the first of the family to escape the southern Mesopotamian languages, but that’s not very likely either: both his mother and grandmother were from northern Mesopotamia, so we’re probably looking at some form of Akkadian Cuneiform. In Egypt, he developed considerable mastery of Middle Egyptian and other geopolitical languages in order to keep his job. Let’s face it, Joseph was a clever, world class politician, at the top of his game: you weren’t going to outwit Joseph by speaking Sumerian behind his back.
* Moses (1486-1366 BC) had the best schools, training, and tutors that Egypt had to offer. That adds up to Middle Egyptian; plus, some form of Akkadian Cuneiform; plus his mother’s Semitic dialect; with possibly other language skills. Let’s face another fact here, Akkadian Cuneiform did not simply fall fresh off the shelf as the international language of diplomacy because it turned up in Akhenaten’s library (1353 BC): it held such a prominent status for many years. The one language that Moses could not have known was biblical paleo-Hebrew or Hebrew, which had not even developed yet. For all we know, Moses could have written Torah in Akkadian Cuneiform, hieroglyphics, or Phoenician.
* What language did the Israelites use between 1406 and 1010 BC? They probably retained a smattering of Middle Egyptian, just enough to salt their own developing language, and tell the old jokes and war stories. Their first language is unknown to us. Priests, Levites, and scribes read whatever Moses wrote, which was probably Akkadian Cuneiform.
* Primarily because of the writing influence of Moses and the prophets; by 1000 BC the language of the Israelites evolved into something we might call paleo-Hebrew, from there it evolved into Chaldean or Neo-Aramaic, to Greek, to Aramaic, up until the relatively modern revival of spoken Hebrew.
* So-called biblical Hebrew, the stuff you can buy in printed versions today is the development of specialized scholars called Masoretes (500-1000 AD),[[55]](#endnote-55) which is not very old[[56]](#endnote-56) and has precious little to do with the historic development of Israelite linguistics.

Our conclusion is that the biblical Hebrew prototype is an unknown evolution of ancient languages over a long period of time ranging from possibilities of Sumerian, Akkadian, ancient Semitic dialects, prototypical Hittite, Proto-Canaanite, Phoenician to Middle Egyptian and Late Egyptian; from a variety of cuneiforms to hieroglyphics; and possibly a number of other influences.

**Retouching**

Kitchen draws attention to the scribal practice of retouching manuscripts. This is what scribes do: write, repair, and update manuscripts, whether in stone, plaster, leather, papyrus, or other material. In Ezra-Nehemiah we even witness a complete translation into what we would call Aramaic: the scribes read the Scripture in the paleo-Hebrew language of 586 BC; then reread or interpreted the Scripture in the Aramaic language of 516 BC, which the people could understand.

One such retouched monument, Kitchen observes, had the plaster scraped off, was re-plastered, and a new message was written on top of the old one. This is called a palimpsest. Over time, wear caused the new to erode, and in places, both messages could be seen on top of each other. Part of the epigrapher’s job is to sort this out.

The point we are driving at is that due to the standard practice among scribes, the language of Heber, would have been translated into the language of Abraham, and so on to Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, and Zerubbabel. No one would have thought it strange that the record be kept straight and up to date. Only modern man would see this as an error.

**Inspiration**

While we’re slaying dragons, let’s take on another. There is a fairly commonly believed myth, an old wives fable, an urban legend that the only inspired languages are Hebrew and Aramaic. The above journey should put that lie to death. There is no such thing as an inspired language. There are only inspired writers, who are free to use any language that God chooses in His conversation with them.

**Oral Tradition**

Another dragon that Kitchen pretty well cremates is the widespread myth of oral tradition. Those (scholars?), who are able to work without reference to evidence love to claim that vast passages of Torah and other writings are the late recordings of vast oral tradition; those scholars have run into a considerable wall here: it was a fatal head-on collision. We have not been here reviewing the history of speech; rather the history of writing and written records. Such written records are a good deal older than Abraham, or Heber, or possibly even Noah himself. Moreover, these written records contain several covenantal, governmental, and other legal documents which are absolutely impossible to maintain in an oral format, and are well attested from antiquity. Who wants to have an oral property deed, or to keep national boundaries on the basis of a handshake? Who will trust government with a verbal receipt for payment of taxes? As the case of the journeying widow shows, the ancients kept such records in writing.[[57]](#endnote-57)

This broad historical backdrop makes it virtually impossible that the books from Exodus on are based on oral tradition, except for the least of petty details: details too minute to discover.

Moreover, such universal use of record keeping make it extremely difficult to believe that all, or even much, of Genesis depends entirely on oral tradition. The covenantal sections, were almost certainly kept in some written form. Given the history of contemporary records, we would probably not recognize such a document even if we held it in our hands: we just do not know what to look for. Discovery would be a happy accident indeed, bordering on the miraculous discovery of the proverbial needle. The point is that even people who cannot read or write go to a professional scribe to have property deeds, births, deaths, marriages, and other significant life events officially recorded. The great covenant events of Genesis could not have been left to oral chance.

**Inerrancy**

Kitchen’s compilation of evidence makes it very difficult to believe many of the common claims for biblical inerrancy. Some of these claims approach a fanaticism that is clearly idolatrous. Our sure confidence is in God Himself and not in written records.

Mind you, we do believe that there is one inerrant copy of Scripture. This copy is in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no mere human is permitted to even read it, let alone touch it.[[58]](#endnote-58) Scripture is inerrant as it proceeds from the mouth of God.[[59]](#endnote-59) As soon as man handles it, Scripture becomes subject to original and personal sin, and is therefore liable to humanly induced error.

Our own investigation into numerical textual variation from a Hebrew prototype across to Greek, Latin, and the Masoretic text shows that the copied manuscripts of Scripture are very reliable; yet, none is perfect: for all contain rather obvious errors.

It is impossible, considering the span of languages from Sumerian up to Greek and Latin, that we would recognize a perfect copy if it bit us on the nose. Our ancestors were not holy enough to produce it; we are not holy enough to recognize it; and we’re sure not pious enough to touch it.

**Providence**

One of the wildest claims is that the omnipotent, omniscient, ubiquitous omni-panto-agapic providence of God keeps the Scripture pure for us. Let us ask ourselves, what exactly does the providence of God guarantee for us? Does it warrantee freedom from sin; from harm, danger, or distress? Does it provide that we will not die? No, it gives no assurance of any of these things. On the contrary, it virtually promises us that we will experience all of these things. Yet, in sin, we may make confession, freely receiving absolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In the grip of pain, poverty, and suffering we are assured that even death will bring resurrection from the dead, and the newness of perfect heavenly life. Providence does not guarantee a perfect Scripture; not in this life. What providence certifies to us is that after the resurrection of the dead and in the heavenly city we will find our King, enthroned, and holding a complete and undefiled record.

**Genre**

Kitchen has forced us to rethink the details of literary genre concerning the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

Evidently Israelites and other ethnic groups sometimes kept day books, diaries, a sort of Log of the Good Ship Jacob. The books of Joshua and following have some of the properties and traits of day books. They almost certainly derived some of their source material from day books. However, not a single one of these biblical books may be classed under the genre of day books.

Day books may be screened to remove the less important, and to emphasize the more important information. Several day books may be observed to acquire an overall picture. Other information is gleaned and added, thus a history is written. None of these books falls under the heading of historic genre.

The editorial page goes beyond history, searching for themes and trends, striving to acquire the greater lessons that history might divulge through diligent searching. This is the literary genre of secular historic analysis; yet, these biblical books are not secular historic analysis either.

Occasionally, a specialist will analyze history from the perspective of their particular specialty. This results in the genre of specialized historic analysis.

If that specialty happens to be seeing things from God’s perspective, from a Theological point of view, we have a Divine, or Theological, or Prophetic historic analysis: or more simply, Prophecy. This is the correct genre of these books: for what we have called historic, the Jews have always called Prophetic.

Prophecy does not relate to the future. Prophecy relates to God’s point of view and the declaration of it. Hence, the correct and proper genre for Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, or Chronicles is Prophecy, Theological historic analysis.

None of these books tell us what happens on a day-to-day basis, give us a complete historical picture, or even analyze general outcomes. This can only be a specific analysis. It is what God thinks about human behavior in Israel from before 1364 to roughly 516 BC. This genre includes, day book, history, and history analysis elements; yet, strictly speaking it is none of these things.

Hence, the more that we can begin to read these books for their prophetic message and value, the more we will begin to understand what they are really saying. Our tendency to falsely interpret what stands written will be greatly reduced.

**Sitz im Leben**

We don’t know why scholars think they have to talk about the real life setting or situation in German; if you didn’t already know, Sitz im Leben means the setting in real life. In the case of Joshua and Judges that involves the way we think about raiding and expansion in the Holy Land.

Kitchen has also forced us to rethink our ideas about the Sitz im Leben concerning Joshua and Judges.[[60]](#endnote-60) Several years ago, some seminary students invented a memory device called, “The Bible Walkthrough,” in order to survive Old Testament exams. Unfortunately, this device summarizes Joshua as “a central campaign, a southern campaign, and a northern campaign;” it summarizes Judges as, “the period of the ups and downs.” These oversimplified summaries leave the impression that Joshua completely conquered Canaan, and otherwise misrepresent the biblical record. The biblical record requires careful and detailed reading, so as not to make it say more or less than it actually says. There is no central campaign, there is only war against two cities, better described as a raid. The central raid is interrupted by a pause for religious repentance at Ai and finished with a worship ceremony at Ebal and Gerizim. After this a major city, Gibeon surrendered without a fight. The southern and northern raids are only initiated when Israel’s adversaries gather great coalition armies to attack Israel. In swift lightning raids Joshua defeats both coalitions, returning to his main camp at Gilgal after every raid. There is no conquest; there are no campaigns, there is no occupation: not in the biblical record of Joshua.

In the last half of the book,[[61]](#endnote-61) Joshua devotes himself to the assignment of real estate deeds. These are sometimes seen as actual possessions, a common mistake; they are only legal rights, and have nothing to do with any actual settlement, which may or may not have taken place.

What we see in Judges is not a record of possession or settlement. We know next to nothing of the actual possession or settlement. From archaeology we see, as Kitchen shows us, that the non specific boundaries of settlement spread from east to west. Biblically we understand that they radiated outwardly from Gilgal. The Transjordan tribes crossed back east over Jordan. In the case of Caleb, they may have jumped a short distance away. In most other cases the Israelites were reluctant to leave the comfort and safety of Gilgal, and failed to possess their legal heritage. Instead, we believe, they slowly pushed westward from Gilgal, claiming the land little by little, maintaining contact with the main body of Israelites. Still, we actually know nothing about how this was actually accomplished, other that that it proceeded with great timidity and much failure, continuing throughout the reign of David.

Nor should we understand the judges themselves in terms of absolutes, even though we continue to believe that they are chronologically connected. So then it is unlikely that the existence of a single judge indicates total rule, but rather the spreading of total fame. This fame predominated because there wasn’t much else going on. Nor should the foreign revolts be understood as conquering the whole nation. Rather, as today, a local tragedy sweeps away the emotions of the nation as other tribes join in sympathetic horror. Thus, in its expansion, Israel is neither totally victorious, nor totally overthrown. What Judges reports from Othniel to Jephthah is the sequential major national news events, the progress of Divine leadership. Philistia is a different matter, arising on the western front, with alliances on the eastern front, Philistia continues as a problem from as early as Shamgar, and becomes a major threat to peaceful settlement, shortly after that. The Philistines seem overlap the record of Jephthah, which is more focused on the eastern front.

***Conclusion***

If you want to have a better understanding of the Old Testament, read Kitchen. If you want to de-bunk some of the mythology that so-called experts are passing around, read Kitchen. If you want to begin to fill in the rich history between 930 and 586 BC, read Kitchen.

[[62]](#endnote-62)

1. <http://swantec-oti.blogspot.com/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Originally circa 1951, Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1983 (Zondervan): 253 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Thiele’s style is cluttered and difficult to follow. He likes to follow paths that are irrelevant or that lead to no resolution. We cannot accept his presuppositions or approach to evidence either. In spite of his claims for an unbiased approach, his pseudo-scientific claims of impartiality all fail. Science does not necessarily care with what sequence a given permutation is approached. Science is far more concerned that the whole permutation is approached. So we were frustrated with the lockstep pseudo-conservative pro KJV, MT, TR attitude. Many pseudo-conservatives have failed to acknowledge that there was a received text already in existence over 1800 years before the TR was conceived; yet are too cocksure of their opinions to bother finding out what it might be. As with most things, honest historical analysis yields more reliable answers. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Originally circa 1913, Anstey, Martin, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1973 (Marshall Brothers): 271 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Besides which, both Anstey and Thiele are beset with that sort of Biblicist mindset, the ultra-conservative kind, which sees infallibility in every word of the KJV, without bothering to note that before KJV, there were Greek and Hebrew, Septuagint before that, Aramaic before that, paleo-Hebrew before that, with some unidentifiable cuneiform and hieroglyphic, Akkadian, Semitic, Sumerian, and/or other prototypical mixture before that. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This sentence is a joke or quip hinging on a pun involving Ussher’s date for creation at roughly 4000 BC.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ussher_chronology> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Hereafter, OROT, page xv [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. ANEP: Pritchard, James B., *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, second edition with supplement (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1969: 396 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. ANET: Pritchard, James B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, third edition with supplement (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1969: 710 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. An idea of the requisite scope may be found at OROT, page xiii ff. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Cuneiform includes Akkadian, Sumerian, C Luwian, and alphabetic styles. Hieroglyphics include Egyptian and H Luwian. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. OROT, page 481 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Kitchen>

Richard S. Hess writes a straight forward book review, nothing more. He does appear to have some firsthand experience and considerable education in epigraphy.

[http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/author.pl/author\_id=836](http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/author.pl/author_id%3D836)

<http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/636738.Richard_S_Hess>

<http://www.denverseminary.edu/article/the-old-testament-in-light-of-the-archaeological-evidence/>

Charles David Isbell has 208 or more publications, impressive; still, we could not establish that he has either training or experience in epigraphy.

<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Isbell-Kitchen_and_Minimalism.shtml> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. This whole section was conceived and added because Kitchen has received so much underserved flak from adversaries. We hope to expose this “scholarly” obfuscation for what it is; namely, lying. The whole max/min discussion, so common in archaeological discussion is a smoke screen hiding extremists from exposure for what they are. The genuine scientist cannot ever be either max or min; truth is the only thing sought after. Even one of the commentators referenced in this article has lifted up the ugly fist of ignorance against Kitchen. There is a point where we must voice our outrage in Kitchen’s defense: we are not free to acquiesce in the face of such nonsense. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Genesis 32:10; Deuteronomy 13:14; Isaiah 43:9; Zechariah 8:3; John 14:6; 18:37; Acts 26:25; Romans 1:25; 3:7; Galatians 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:7… but, most of all — John 14:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. In engineering, mathematics, and science max/min does not refer to exaggerated and falsified extremist opinions; rather, max/min refers to the optimization of a greatest or least reality. Thus, to an engineer, mathematician, or scientist max/min optimization refers to seeking the best possible reality of any given set of circumstances: hence, above or below max/min, performance only drops. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Albert Allen Bartlett (1923-2013) is our favorite expert on exponential equations, on growth or decay matters of all kinds, and of all things Malthusian.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Allen_Bartlett>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Robert_Malthus>

Dr. Bartlett was vigorously opposed by Julian Lincoln Simon (1932-1998). We are happy to nominate Dr. Simon as the preeminent scientific nincompoop of the twentieth century.

<http://fire.pppl.gov/energy_population_pt_0704.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Simon> [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Which is to say, point blank, that, as I am concerning the study of diamonds, some minimalists are nothing more than ignorantists, or obscurantists. Concerning their absurd views about the Bible; they simply reveal that they have never read the Bible. The same observation may be made about some biblicists concerning their attitudes about science in general and archaeology in particular…. Truth requires an earnest commitment to the study of all relevant evidence; not an expressed rejection of any evidence; not an indifferent attitude about any part of the evidence: for optimization only comes by rigorous examination. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Not to be confused with a maximalist. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Termed balanced, rather than neutral in OROT, page 234 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. In a sense, Schrödinger's cat, may be thought of as a description of activity outside of an event horizon.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schr%C3%B6dinger%27s_cat> [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Really criminals…. If this were a discussion between lawyers in a courtroom, Kitchen should be seeking to have people put in jail, assigned heavy financial penalties, or removed from practice before the Bar. Kitchen calls it, “sloppy scholarship, immense ignorance, special pleading, irrelevant postmodernist-agenda-driven drivel: and we concur. OROT, page 457 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Usually, we place the emphasis on disproving the null hypothesis. When we fail to disprove the null hypothesis, we conclude that no evidence was found to disprove the null hypothesis. Even when overwhelming support for the null hypothesis is found, we do not conclude that the null hypothesis was proved; at most we say that the null hypothesis was demonstrated. If sufficient supportive evidence is found, we may write an alternative hypothesis; when known, a probability of success may be included: we are 95% sure that…. If multivariate experiments or tests are involved, probability statements may be included, which specify the measured effect of each causative variable on the outcome: 40%, 30%, 20%, and 5% of the observed effect were caused by A, B, C, and D; an additional 5% of the observed effect is attributed to unknown causes. We also consider things like the necessary and sufficient conditions. A single cause may be necessary to explain an outcome; yet, not prove that outcome: to be sufficient, the proof must identify and measure all the necessary conditions. In the case of the multivariate example with 5% error remaining, we may be ignorant of 5% of all the necessary conditions.

For example: if gasoline and air are found in an optimum gaseous mixture, combustion and explosion are possible, but not necessary: for all of the sufficient conditions have not been met. If sufficient excessive pressures or temperatures are present, spontaneous combustion will usually take place. If a spark or flame is introduced, the mixture will usually burn or explode. These are the necessary and sufficient conditions for IC engines: in the first case, diesel; in the second case spark ignition. The additional necessary condition is minimum ignition temperature, which may be provided by a variety of mechanisms.

If archaeology and bibliology tried to follow these scientific guidelines, there would be much less jumping to unwarranted conclusions, and grasping after straws. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. None, zero, probability 0%. Search for supporting evidence has now been in progress for over a century. No supporting evidence has ever been found. Opposing evidence has been found. At this point any genuine reconsideration of this failed theory should first attempt to overthrow the mountain of opposing evidence. Since opposing evidence has been found and supporting evidence has not been found, the chance of a legitimate revival of the Documentary Hypothesis is very small: on the order of supposing that the sun won’t rise tomorrow; that our entire long range view of history is wrong; that pigs can fly; or that life does not end in death (the current odds of exception are less than 3 out of 14,250,000,000). We expect minor adjustments. Sunrise varies from its scheduled appointment on the ecliptic by a few seconds every day; history is full of little new surprises. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. It appears that the Balaam inscription was dated by pottery. We presume that such a date should have been supported by radiocarbon evidence, since it is written with ink on plaster. There is no reason to expect plaster to be datable, because it rarely contains hydrocarbon or organic materials; ink, however, is usually datable. There is no reason to suspect an “heirloom” error here either, since it was painted directly on the plaster on the wall. The fact that no monument is here, while closing the door on the “heirloom” error, opens the door that this is most likely from copies of older documents: copies that could have any antiquity, even 1366-1364 BC. If radiocarbon were employed, it could easily err by 100 more years, due to calibration error. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. We all remember that Balaam is the famous false prophet, who became so mentally unstable in his disobedience that he ended up talking to his donkey. His disillusion was so great that he maintained his habitation with the very people he knew would be defeated, even annihilated by war. No wonder then, that he forfeited his life as the inevitable and inexorable outcome of his folly. In such an environment, it is possible to understand Tell Deir Alla as a monument to stupidity: this is what happens to people who persist at wrongdoing, when they know to do better. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deir_Alla#The_Balaam_inscription>

OROT, pages 412-413 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Our questioning is that of a fan or spectator. Should real matters of fact surface, we immediately yield to Kitchen, because he is the subject matter expert. Should matters of opinion appear, we defer to Kitchen’s opinion, because he is the subject matter expert. We are willing to question and even argue with others, but we are merely spectators.

Do other epigraphers with equivalent firsthand experience disagree? That is the discussion we wish to hear. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele> [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Redford and Kitchen agree on this point. OROT, page 224

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_B._Redford> [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Spelled Yenoam in OROT, page 228 f

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yenoam> [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah> [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramesses_I> [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Avaris-Qantir are scarcely a half-mile apart. Since Avaris is the notorious Hyksos capital (1783-1550 BC) we conclude that the twin cities were important major cities, likely having continuous occupation from 1783 BC to after 1039 BC when the city was abandoned, and eventually buried in silt.

The scenario that fits here is that the Ramesside family overthrew the Hyksos and drove them out around 1550 BC. The Israelites may have assisted in this effort since they were loyal to pharaoh and Egypt. By 1406 BC the Israelites had fallen into political disfavor, their service to the crown forgotten or ignored, and they were reduced to slavery. This scenario contains no surprises, since the Egyptians were prone to violent prejudices.

There is no archaeological evidence at this point, showing that Piramesse was not a major critical city (1783-1039 BC), whether it was employed as a capital or not: it appears that Qantir was built contiguously with Avaris as can be seen from the Google Earth picture. The Pi-Ramesses articles specifically claim that the Ramessides either abandoned or absorbed Avaris into the newer city, Qantir.

Hence, the biblical reference to the store city, Ramesses, is no impediment to a 1406 BC Exodus of the Israelites. All cities were store cities in some respect or other, because wealth frequently was measured in the accumulation of grain, vegetation products, livestock, or gold; all of which required storage and protection.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qantir>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avaris>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pi-Ramesses>

OROT, pages 255-56, 263 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pi-Ramesses> [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ground-penetrating_radar> [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. OROT, pages 209, 308 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. OROT, pages 202-03, 307-309, 466 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Nor do we have any desire to impose a formal “exactness”, a procrustean bed based on these numbers. Our contention is that these numbers have simple counting coherence because they continue the narrative of Torah: which is to claim that the main point of Torah is about the Shəkinah leading all His people to freedom.

The Joshua and Judges narratives are then, primarily the continuing diary of Shəkinah leadership. The prominent judges named are no more central to the arithmetic than Samuel is central to the Ark’s sojourn among the Philistines. Hence, Judges is a narrative of headlines concerning Shəkinah activities among the Israelites, and they hang together on that basis, not on the basis of human activity, which is only incidental.

Thus, when the narrative sequence suddenly seems to end, it only ends for us, because we have been thinking in terms of human activity; had we been thinking in terms of Shəkinah activity, the sequence would have continued.

Nor would any of the oppressions seemed strange; they are simply milder precedent incidents of the stronger punishments of the Ark’s departure among the Philistines, as well as the Shəkinah (tetramorph) departure in Ezekiel: they repeat the refrain, straighten up and fly right or you will lose Me. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. OROT, pages 264-65 [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. “καὶ δέκα τῶν ἀρχόντων μετ’ αὐτοῦ, ἄρχων εἷς ἀπὸ οἴκου πατριᾶς ἀπὸ πασῶν φυλῶν ᾿Ισραήλ· ἄρχοντες οἴκων πατριῶν εἰσι, χιλίαρχοι ᾿Ισραήλ.” Note the position of the comma, which tends to indicate that the verb belongs to the previous phrase. If an equation is being drawn, we expect “χιλίαρχοι ᾿Ισραήλ εἰσι:” yet, not universally. We think that the verse reads, “And ten of the archons [went] with him, each archon from [a] house of [a] father, from all tribes of Israel: are archons of houses of fathers, Israel chiliarchs. This tends to deny a direct equation between fathers’ houses, or families, or Israel tribes, and thousands. If an equation existed it would be families, or tribes equals captains of thousands. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. For example, Exodus 12:37; Numbers 3:50; 31:52-54; Joshua 22:14 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. OROT, page 225 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x2SvqhfevE&feature=youtu.be> [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. 0.59%, almost 6 mils [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. OROT, page 226 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_writing> [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. OROT, page 3:

Mari (circa 1800 BC), 25,000 tablets, Northwest Semitic dialect and people, Akkadian Cuneiform,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mari,\_Syria#Excavations\_and\_archive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mari%2C_Syria#Excavations_and_archive)

Ebla (circa 2350 BC), 20,000 tablets, Sumerian and Eblaite (Semitic) cuneiform,

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebla>

Ugarit (Ras Shamra, 1400-1100 BC), 420 or more tablets, Northwest Semitic abjadic cuneiform, as well as Egyptian and Luwian hieroglyphs, and Cypro-Minoan, Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hurrian

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugarit>

Emar (1400-1187 BC), 1100 Akkadian tablets, 100 Hurrian tablets, 1 Hittite tablet,

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emar> [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. East Semitic

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akkadian_language> [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canaanite_languages> [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_language#Classification> [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amarna_letters> [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretes> [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leningrad_Codex>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%201&version=WLC> [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. 2 Kings 8:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Revelation 5:2, 4, 9, 12-14 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Matthew 4:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. OROT, page 190 ff [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Joshua, Chapters 14 through 24 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)