KING TUT, EGYPT, AND SCRIPTURE

A guide developed for Tutankhamun and The Golden Age of The Pharaohs with contributions from Dr. James K. Hoffmeier, professor of Near Eastern History and Archaeology at Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois.

Disclaimer: The information presented in the following document represents suggested interpretations of the biblical material and its possible relationship to the ancient Egyptian artifacts in this exhibit.

Ideas expressed in the text, however, do not always correspond to information in contemporary mainstream Egyptological scholarship, nor in popular publications. The material promoted by the author does not represent the ideology off the exhibition company, its advertisers, nor the supporting institutions.
How To Use This Guide

OVERVIEW
This guide has been developed to help those interested in Hebrew and Christian Scripture to understand better the religious and cultural environment of ancient Egypt.

As you enter each exhibition gallery, refer to the information in this guide to learn more about Egypt’s 18th Dynasty, especially the tumultuous time known as the Amarna Period, when the religion of Egypt changed drastically. Find out how it impacted the lives of its citizens.

EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
A few of the objects in this exhibition seem to have some connection to events in Israel’s history, and others may suggest associations between the two cultures.

As a result, this guide includes references to a number of artifacts that may help the visitor visualize some of the aspects of ancient Egyptian life and culture that appear in many passages in the Old Testament.

Whenever you see EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION in this guide, you’ll know that the particular gallery you are in has artifacts that will allow you to explore further the connections between Egypt and Israel.

POINTS OF REFLECTION
Reflection Points are included throughout this guide, and are provided to help the visitor reflect on their own faith in light of ancient Egyptian beliefs.
EDITOR’S NOTE: Read this introduction anytime prior to entering the exhibition, preferably while you are standing in line.

Welcome to Tutankhamun and The Golden Age of The Pharaohs. All of the Egyptian artifacts you are about to witness are over 3,300 years old, and come exclusively from the 18th Egyptian Dynasty (c. 1355-1346). Study the timelines below to see where the 18th Dynasty falls in relation to other Egyptian dynasties.

The 18th Dynasty
King Tut (Tutankhamun) reigned only about a decade toward the end of the 18th Dynasty (c. 1355-1346 BCE) of Egypt’s New Kingdom. The following list chronicles the rulers of Egypt’s 18th Dynasty and the estimated years in which they ruled:
Egypt and The Israelites
Scripture records that the Israelites spent a total of four centuries in Egypt before their departure (Gen. 15:13; Exod. 12:40). Modern timelines that include this period in their discussion have debated when the Exodus took place, some suggesting the end of 18th Dynasty, others later, in the early part of the 19th Dynasty.

No records in Egypt, textual or archaeological, indicate the Exodus event. It should be noted, however, that in ancient Egyptian custom, hieroglyphic inscriptions did not contain events that were negative to pharaoh and Egypt.

Throughout its history in the Holy Land, Israel lived in the shadow of its neighbor, Egypt. In later times, King Solomon (ca. 970-930 BC), perhaps a contemporary of the founder of the 21st Egyptian Dynasty Sheshonk I (Biblical Shishak), made a marriage alliance with Egypt (1 Kings 3:1). In fact, Egypt's Third Intermediate Period and the Kingdom of Judah appear to have been contemporaneous.
EXHIBITION ENTRANCE – VIDEO INTRODUCTION

As you enter the exhibition, pay particular attention to the description of King Tut in the introductory video. Remember that in ancient Egypt, people saw the Pharaoh as a living god.

Next Gallery: STATUE OF TUTANKHAMUN

Read the wall panel STATUE OF TUTANKHAMUN.

Pay particular attention to its inscription. It describes Tutankhamun as a divine ruler who restored traditional (Egyptian) religion: “the good god who founded Thebes, upheld good laws, and maintained order.”

POINT OF REFLECTION 1
Reflect on the radical views of those who believed in one god, and how that belief may have been received in a culture based on traditional Egyptian beliefs.
Next Two Galleries: ANcient Egypt
Now enter the next gallery, where you will be introduced to Tutankhamun’s family, life in Egypt during this century of time, and the traditional beliefs of his land.

Egypt and Israel Cultural Connection
Enemies under the ruler’s feet.

View the following artifacts to visualize imagery of the Pharaoh overtaking Egypt’s enemies, an image that one will recognize as being described numerous times in Scripture.

Tuthmosis IV and His Mother
This statue shows Tuthmosis IV (1400-1390 B.C.) along side his mother. On the base, one can see nine bows, representing the traditional enemies of Egypt carved in the stone under the king’s feet. Throughout their history, the Egyptians portrayed their enemies in submissive positions to indicate their subjugation.

Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections
The motif of the enemies under the feet of the king is well known in Scripture:
• “The LORD says to my Lord; ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’” (Psalm 110:1).
• The Psalmist credits Israel’s victory to God: “Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes” (Psalm 44:5)

Model Boat
This wooden model represents a ceremonial royal barge that would have traveled up and down the Nile. At the front and rear of the boat are various protective images painted on the surface. One can also see several representations of the king in the form of a sphinx trampling his enemies.
Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections
Another Psalm of David reads, “With God we will gain the victory, he will trample down our enemies” (Psalm 108:13).

• For Christians, this image is also applied to Jesus Christ in the book of 1 Corinthians: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he has put all things under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25-27).

Read TRADITIONAL BELIEFS text panel on the far wall and pause for the following point of reflection:

POINT OF REFLECTION 2
As you pass through the next room and onto the DEATH, BURIAL, AND AFTERLIFE gallery, reflect upon the belief that Pharaoh was seen as an intermediary between mortals and gods during his lifetime, and how his destiny of becoming a great god after death impacted the beliefs of citizens of ancient Egypt. How would the Israelites have viewed this belief?
Next Gallery: DEATH, BURIAL, AND THE AFTERLIFE

Read DEATH, BURIAL, AND THE AFTERLIFE text panel on the wall to the right.

“The tomb was a symbolic miniature universe for the deceased, an eternal resting place.”

EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION

Burial and Mummification.

View the following artifact to learn of the burial and embalming practices of ancient Egyptians.

GILDED COFFIN OF TJUYA

This gilded coffin, like many others for both the elite and royalty, was made of wood and gilding, amongst other materials. Its spells and divine imagery protected Tjuya’s mummy and ensured a successful transition to the afterlife.

Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections

The Israelites did not practice embalming, nor did they traditionally use coffins like this artifact. Mummification and burial in such coffins were uniquely Egyptian funerary practices.

The Scriptural description of Joseph’s death, however, seems to follow Egyptian standards. For much of ancient Egyptian history, 110 years was an ideal old age: “So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.” (Genesis 50:26)

Genesis also reports that the embalming took 40 days, and a period of mourning lasted 70 days (50:3). This type of information was not available in Egyptian texts, and the most complete description of the process exists much later in the work of the Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BCE), a time period some scholars have suggested might have been close to the actual setting of the Joseph story.

POINT OF REFLECTION 3

Before entering the next gallery, reflect on the following passage, which can be read on the next gallery’s adjoining wall, and how it might have impacted the lives of every ancient Egyptian:

“Breaking with tradition, Akhenaten radically changed the (Egyptian) religion, introducing belief in and worship of a single god.”
EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION
Worship of the sun.

View the following artifact to learn more about Akhenaten’s monotheistic religion, and how the prominence of the sun in the Near East played a role in all religions in the area.

PART OF A BALUSTRADE SHOWING AKHENATEN AND FAMILY UNDER THE ATEN
This relief from a ramp in Akhenaten’s palace in Armarna focuses on the Aten (solar disc), the core of his new religion. While the solar religion of the Aten was practiced in the open within temple courts and not in the dark recesses of a sanctuary, it was very exclusive, with the king being the god’s only high priest, and access to the sacred place extremely limited.

Some in ancient Israel, to the chagrin of the prophets, confused the solar imagery attributed to God in Scripture (see Malachi 4:2, and Psalms 31:16, 67:1, 80:3) and actually worshiped the sun in ceremonies.

Ezekiel 8:16 reports this activity within the temple in Jerusalem: “There at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east.”

People interested in Scripture frequently ask if there was a connection between the Israelites and Akhenaten’s new monotheistic religion. This question, while perhaps interrelated, is complex and not easy to answer.

It deals with several issues, among which is the question of whether Moses, as described in Scripture, is indicated at all in ancient Egyptian records. In fact, the textual records have no mention of him, nor of any aspect of the story. The designation “Moses,” however, occurs in Egypt, mainly as the second element in personal names after the name of a god, such as Tuthmosis and Ramosis. Archaeological evidence in Egypt has not brought to light any supporting data. Complicating the issue is the fact that the composition of the bible itself and the manuscripts used, while referring to more ancient times, actually date to a much later period than the incidents they describe.

Historians currently hold two main dating schemes regarding when the Exodus may have occurred.
In the earlier dating scenario, landing around 1447 B.C., coincides with the lengthy reign of Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.), nearly a century before the reign of Tutankhamun. This date is derived from the information provided in 1 Kings 6:1. It states that the construction of Solomon’s temple began in that king’s 4th reignal year, ca. 967 B.C., which coincided with the 480th anniversary of the exodus. Adding these figures results in the 1447 date, landing squarely in the 18th Dynasty.

In this dating scenario, Moses would have led the Israelites out of Egypt over a century before the time of Akhenaten and Tutankhamun, meaning a connection between the religion of Akhenaten and that of Moses would not be possible.

If one accepts this dating scenario, it is clear that Akhenaten’s “monotheistic” revolution predated God’s revelation to Moses, but there is no evidence that the idea of only one god was passed from Akhenaten via some theoretical followers to Moses. In the end Akhenaten’s religious program did not even last twenty years and it died with him.

Interestingly, however, many of Akhenaten’s hymns remained in and around Akhetaten, and some were not totally destroyed. Some scholars feel that there is a striking resemblance between them and Psalm 104.

**POINT OF REFLECTION 4**

Compare the following passages from Psalm 104 and Akhenaten’s Great Hymn to the Aten:

### Hymn to the Aten

Your dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,  
O living Aten, Beginning of life!  
When You rise in the Eastern horizon,  
You fill every land with Your beauty.  
You are beautiful, great, glittering, high above every land,  
Your rays, they encompass the lands, even all that You have made.  
You are Re, and You carry them all away captive;  
You bind them by Your love.  
Though You are far away, Your rays are upon the earth;  
Though You are on high, Your footprints are the day.  
When You set in the western horizon of the sky,  
The earth is in darkness like the dead;

### Psalm 104

1 Bless Yahweh, my soul, Yahweh, my God,  
how great you are!  
Clothed in majesty and splendour,  
2 wearing the light as a robe!  
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,  
3 build your palace on the waters above,  
making the clouds your chariot,  
gliding on the wings of the wind,  
4 appointing the winds your messengers,  
flames of fire your servants.  
20 You bring on darkness, and night falls,  
when all the forest beasts roam around
Next Gallery: THE BOY KING
The job of restoring the Egyptian orthodoxy fell to the young Tutankhamun and his advisors.

After you pass through the video gallery of Howard Carter discovering Tut’s tomb, read the text panel THE BOY KING to learn how Tutankhamun ultimately reinstalled the priesthood that Akhenaten banished.

All of the objects in the remaining five galleries were discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun:

EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION
The Ankh - Sign of Life.

*View the following artifact to learn more about the cultural significance of the Ankh symbol.*

MIRROR CASE IN THE SHAPE OF AN ANKH

The hieroglyph ankh is the Egyptian word for “life,” and a similar sounding word meant “mirror.” When Christianity developed in Egypt, the ankh-sign was appropriated and slightly modified and used often in representing the cross. Apparently, the early Egyptian Christians saw a connection of some sort between the visible (written) expression of “life” in Egypt, and the cross on which Jesus died, the genuine sign of life for the Christian believer.
EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION

The Pharaoh as shepherd.

*View the two golden statues to examine references to King Tut as a shepherd to the people of Egypt.*

TUTANKHAMUN AS KING OF UPPER AND LOWER EGYPT

Together the two gilded statues signify Tutankhamun as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt. He wears the conical “white crown” of Upper Egypt and the flat “red” crown of Lower Egypt.

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**Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections**

The king holds a flail in his right hand and a shepherd’s crook in his left hand. In the 23rd Psalm, there is a reference to the latter: “The LORD is my shepherd ... his rod and his staff they comfort me.” Already by the Old Kingdom, the crook, in a shortened form (also exhibited in this gallery), had become a symbol of kingship. It was also a hieroglyph, meaning “to rule” or “ruler.” In Exodus, it might be recalled, that Moses used his shepherd’s staff to perform miracles in defiance of Pharaoh (see Exodus 4:2-4, 7:9-20).

**Next Gallery:**

In the next gallery, notice the headlines around the room, which describes the various roles that King Tut reinstated as Pharaoh in the traditional Egyptian religion:

“HEAD OF STATE”

“COMMANDER IN CHIEF”

and most importantly, in marked contrast to Akhenaten’s monotheist practices:

“HIGH PREIST OF EVERY GOD”
EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION
Religious shrines.

*View the following artifact to learn about the importance of darkness in the dwelling place of shrines in the cultures of both ancient Egypt and Israel.*

**GOLDEN SHRINE**
This shrine was once the abode of a deity. Only the carved footprints in the pedestal are all that remain of the image, stolen in antiquity.

The statue (missing here) was a tangible image that represented the divine presence, once the deity would inhabit the figure. Over the door and on the top of the shrine are winged sun-discs that were symbols of protection. This shape of the shrine is common, appearing from the earliest periods. The original deity would have remained within its sealed doors, except during daily rituals. Larger versions of this type of shrine were kept within the innermost parts of the state, cult, and funerary temples, and the statues would emerge during special ceremonies.

*Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections*
In the Old Testament God’s revelation at Mt. Sinai is marked by darkness. Exodus 20:21 tells us that “Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.” This sense of darkness is also how the temple of Solomon is described (1 Kings 8:12). Additionally, inside walls of the holy of holies in Solomon’s temple was made overlaid with gold. There was, in counter distinction to Egyptian temples, no images of the Lord in the Jerusalem temple.
EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION
Silver trumpets and rallying troops for war.

View the following artifact to learn about the use of trumpets in the cultures of both ancient Egypt and Israel.

TRUMPET DEDICATED TO AMUN, RE, AND PTAH

Tutankhamun’s tomb contained a pair of trumpets, one made of copper and the other, in this exhibit, of silver, a very rare material in Egypt.

Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections
In Numbers 10:1, God commanded Moses to have two silver trumpets made. Since trumpets were made and used in Egypt during the 18th Dynasty, perhaps the expertise in making such an instrument was somehow passed on to Hebrew artisans. Interestingly, the stated purpose of trumpets in the Bible is for calling civil and religious assemblies, and to rally troops for war (Numbers 10:1-9). Scenes from New Kingdom temples show trumpets being used during religious festivities and in a military context.
Next Gallery: CAUSING HIS NAME TO LIVE

As you enter into the next gallery, you will find a single, stunning coffinette of gold of Tutankhamun, which was one of four miniature coffins which held the internal organs of the king.

Read the text panel on the right wall, CAUSING HIS NAME TO LIVE.

EGYPT AND ISRAEL CULTURAL CONNECTION

Wings symbolizing Divine protection.

One of four miniature coffins which held the internal organs of the king, this container, along with the others, were placed in a calcite chest, which in turn was enclosed within a gilded wooden outer chest. Much of the decoration on the surface of this coffinette consists of a feather pattern, but around the upper part are wings of a vulture encircling the king. Other parts of the goddess are visible on the sides. Wings of vultures and falcons often appear in royal iconography and can represent divine protection.

Egypt and Israel Cultural Connections

Wings also represented divine protection in Scripture. Winged cherubim, possibly sphinxes, are described over the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-20, 37:9). Clearly the Scriptures are not suggesting that the God of Israel was a falcon or vulture deity. Rather it appears to be using wings in a symbolic sense for protection. “The cherubim had their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them.”

Exodus 37:9; Psalm 17:8, 18:10, 36:7, 57:1
Next Gallery: TOMB GALLERY
As you enter the Tomb Gallery, read the following entry written on the adjoining wall:

“For Ancient Egyptians, death was an end to earthly existence, but also marked the transition to a permanent place in the world inhabited by the gods.”

As you leave the TOMB Gallery and enter the final room of the exhibition, read the following entry written on the adjoining wall;

“The tomb represented the hopes, beliefs, and aspirations of an Egyptian king who died more than 3,000 years ago. By the discovery of his hidden burial, Carnarvon and Carter have caused the name of Tutankhamun to live once again, granting the young king the eternal life he so desired.”

POINT OF REFLECTION 5
How did the views on death differ from the Ancient Egyptians and the Israelites?
How was the eternal life desired by Tutankhamun finally obtained?