

Joseph was Imhotep of Egypt



Statue of Imhotep holding a papyrus scroll in his lap.

Read in-depth the research on Joseph in Egypt

National Geographic, January 1995, describes a man called Imhotep who saved his country from a famine. "Perhaps most confident was Imhotep, the architect who probably conceived of building Djoser's [pharaoh] tomb completely from stone. Known as a sculptor, a priest, and a healer, Imhotep is considered the preeminent genius of the Old Kingdom. He assembled one workforce to quarry limestone to ship the crude blocks by boat to Saqqara, and yet another to haul the stone to the site, where master carvers shaped each block and put it in place.

"On a granite boulder above the Nile's First Cataract, the formidable rapids at Aswan, a sculptor who lived much later [thus the facts are not totally accurate] chiseled out in hieroglyphs the story of how Imhotep had even saved his country from famine.



In 1890 Charles Wilbour discovered this boulder on the island of Sahal at the Nile, telling a story of Imhotep.

The annual Nile flood, which inundated surrounding fields every autumn before farmers sowed their seed, failed seven years in a row. Djoser asked Imhotep where the source of the river lay. The pharaoh intended to travel there to interrogate the river gods and beg them to show mercy on his people.

"But Imhotep replied that sacred [God] books had given him the answer.... The floods returned, and the famine was over....

"In about 1200 B.C., fully 1400 years after his death, Imhotep, the genius architect of Djoser's reign, was deified by the Egyptians, who built cult temples to honor him."

Joseph in Ancient Egyptian History

By Mary Nell Wyatt

Based on Ron Wyatt's research

It's rather amazing how historians and archaeologists have managed to explain away evidence which validates the Biblical account. Myths and legends derived from actual events of biblical times are found all over the world, such as the multitude of Flood stories, but to the unbeliever these only prove that the Bible was influenced by these myths.

The fact is that these myths are satanic corruptions of the truth, designed by Satan to convince man that in his own cleverness, he is smarter than God. And ultimately this kind of thinking leads a person to deny entirely the existence of God and the truth of the Bible.

Yet, no one seems to think it strange that every known civilization has had some type of religious system. If there is no God, where did this idea of religion and gods come from? It came from the original truths known by the original post-flood family of Noah. The facts which have been found validate the biblical account, not the myths and legends. But there will always be those who simply will not see.

Some of these great evidences relate to the story of Joseph in ancient Egypt. Inscriptions on a monument to Horemheb, a pharaoh several years after the Exodus, provide evidence of the story of the pharaoh in Joseph's day extending an invitation to Jacob's family to come live in Egypt.

It tells of a community of shepherds from the north asking Egypt to allow them to pasture their cattle "as was the custom of the father of their fathers from the beginning." There is also a picture in the tomb of Tehuti-hetep in Bersheh which has a picture of a herd of Syrian cattle entering Egypt with the inscription:

- "Once you trod the Syrian sands. Now, here in Egypt, you shall feed in green pastures." (Light from the Ancient Past, by Jack Finegan.)

The evidences which parallel the story of Joseph are the focus of this newsletter. But first, we must set the stage.

According to our chronology, taken from the biblical record, the flood occurred about 2348 B.C. Abraham left Haran in about 1921 B.C., about 427 years later. Soon after this (we don't know exactly how soon) he and Sarah went to Egypt because of a famine in Canaan.

The biblical account is extremely short on the subject of Abraham's visit to Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20), but we do learn that Abraham misled the pharaoh about who Sarah was, as he told pharaoh she was his sister. This was partially true since she was his half-sister, but she was also his wife.

The pharaoh took her to his palace since she was so beautiful. (Gen. 12:12-15). The king paid Abraham well for Sarah (verse 16) but God intervened, causing some types of plagues to fall upon the pharaoh. (verse 17). When the pharaoh figured out the cause for these inflictions, he called Abraham to account, asking him why he lied to him about Sarah. (verse 18, 19). He then ordered his men to escort Abraham and his entourage out of Egypt. (verse 20)

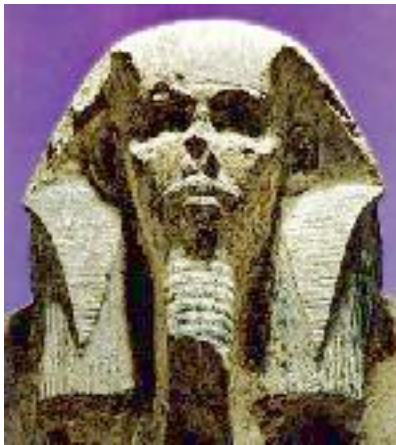
Egypt at this time was already a rich nation, for it was at this time that Abraham became rich in cattle, gold and silver, given to him as payment for Sarah. (Gen. 13:1,2). And there is good evidence that it was at this time that the regulation prohibiting the Egyptians from eating, drinking or fraternizing with foreign shepherds was instituted. (Gen. 46:34).

Josephus relates that Abraham was responsible for bringing the knowledge during the early part of the First Dynasty, about 1915 BC.

It would be about 200 years later when Joseph would be elevated to his high position in Egypt, second only to the pharaoh. During this same time of the 3rd Dynasty, there appears on the scene a most incredible individual in the ancient records- a man called Imhotep.

For many years, Egyptologists had doubted that Imhotep had been a real person -- they found it rather difficult to believe the various accomplishments credited to him in the accounts written over a thousand years after he was supposed to have lived. At times Imhotep has been termed the Leonardo da Vinci of ancient Egypt, but in fact he was more than that. Da Vinci gained the reputation of a genius -- Imhotep was eventually elevated to the status of a god.

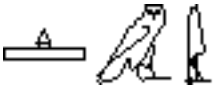
In Egypt's long list of gods, very few were ever actually living among them, but Imhotep did. Manetho wrote that "during his [Djoser of the 3rd Dynasty] reign lived Imouthes [i.e., Imhotep], who, because of his medical skill has the reputation of Asclepius [the Greek god of medicine] among the Egyptians and who was the inventor of the art of building with hewn stone." It was this statement that caused the 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, 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..."



Inscription showing the name and titulary of Imhotep  in the 3rd row to the left, and the Horus-name of Djoser. This inscription was found on the base of a sculpture of Djoser, thus indicating Imhotep was a real man, as opposed to a god.

Does this fit what we know of Joseph? The Bible is quite clear on 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 41:40-44



Left - Stone vase at Saqqara with Imhoteps inscription. See www.sunship.com/egypt/articles/hrdfact3.html for stone vases Joseph made at Saqqara. There were thousands found there which were created by extremely talented people using sophisticated lathes.

In fact, it sounds as if Joseph was the first person ever given such honor by a pharaoh, which is confirmed by evidence in Egypt. If this man, Imhotep was Joseph, surely there must be some evidence tying him with the Biblical account.

Inscription of the 7 Year Famine

Joseph's main position was that of a prime minister and Imhotep appears to be the first who could boast of such a broad range of authority in ancient Egypt. 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 on the island of Sihiel just below the First Cataract of the Nile. (photo at top of page)

This 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 seven year famine and seven years of plenty. Let's look at a few passages from this inscription and compare them with the biblical account, keeping in mind that this was written a millennium after the events it claims to be describing:

- 1. The inscription begins with the great distress of the pharaoh: "I was in distress on the Great Throne..." The Bible: "And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled" GEN 41:8
- 2. In the inscription, the pharaoh is troubled about a famine and asks Imhotep who the god of the Nile is, so he can approach him about the drought: "... I asked him who was the Chamberlain,...Imhotep, the son of Ptah... `What is the birthplace of the Nile? Who is the god there? Who is the god?" Imhotep answers: "I need the guidance of Him who presides over the fowling net,..." The Bible: "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Genesis 41:16

In the Egyptian text above, Imhotep is termed "the son of Ptah", who was the Egyptian god known as the "creator" of everything else, including the other gods.

- 3. In the inscription, Imhotep answers the pharaoh about the god of the Nile and tells him where he lives. In the Bible, Joseph interprets the pharaoh's dream. But, the next part of the inscription tells that when the king slept, the Nile god Khnum, revealed himself to him in a dream and promised the Nile would pour forth her waters and the land would yield abundantly for seven years, after a seven year drought. This passage reflects the fact of a dream

by the pharaoh of seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, although reversed.

- 4. The inscription then goes on to record Djoser's promise to the Nile god, Khnum, in which the people were to be taxed 1/10 of everything, except for the priests of the "house of the god," who would be exempted. The Bible: "And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part, except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's." Genesis 47:26

So 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 seven 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 seven years of plenty, which is reverse from the Biblical account. The pharaoh levies a tax of 10% on all of the population except for the priesthood. The Biblical account tells of a 1/5, or 20% tax, with the priesthood exempt. All of the components of the Biblical account are present in this inscription, except that the story has been "Egyptianized" to fit their religious beliefs.

It is believed that this inscription was written during the 2nd century BC, by the priests of Khnum for the purpose of justifying their claim of some land privileges. Part of the inscription states that the pharaoh dedicated some of the land and taxation to the god. But, this isn't the only inscription with this story - there is a similar inscription on the Isle of Philae, only this one has the priests of Isis stating that Djoser made the same gift to their god for the same purpose. Just as the story of the flood is found in almost every ancient culture but is twisted to fit their own purposes and gods, here we find the story of Joseph, only it is twisted to fit the needs of the priests of the various gods in substantiating their claims to certain land.

"Imhotep, the Voice of the God, Im (I AM)"

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, we all know 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." Exodus3:14
- "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58

God told Moses to tell the pharaoh that "I AM" had sent him because "I AM" was the name by which the Egyptians had known Joseph's God. Could "Im" have been "I AM"?

The Bible states the name that was given to Joseph by the pharaoh, Zaphenath-paneah. It has been translated by some to mean, "the God lives; the God speaks". Since we do not fully understand the meaning of the Egyptian word "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).

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

- "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." Genesis 37:8
- Remember, it was Joseph's dream about he and his brothers binding sheaves- their sheaves stood up and bowed to his. It was this dream which created a great deal of jealousy towards him.
- "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." Genesis 37:20

The Wisdom of Imhotep

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." Genesis 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.

To date nothing has been found of Imhotep's works, however there are several works of "wise sayings" attributed to one Ptahotep, who is only known as a vizier of a king from the 5th dynasty. However, there are five known Ptahoteps, all viziers to pharaohs of the 5th dynasty, all priests of Heliopolis, or On. Evidence seems to indicate that after Imhotep, the trend among viziers became patterned after him, with these later viziers taking credit for Imhotep's actual deeds and his writings -- a practice which the Egyptians and others, were notorious for.

Now, let's do some assuming for a moment -- let's assume that Joseph wrote a collection of wise sayings, inspired by God. Because of his great favor with the king, these came to be revered by the scribes and people. His fame as a sage spread throughout Egypt and became the standard of wisdom. We know that his wisdom came from the true God of Abraham. Would it not be expected that Joseph would pass on his wisdom from God to those around him? In fact, the Bible says that he did:

- "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant... The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance to... teach his senators wisdom." Psalms 105:17-21

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. Thousands of years later, several papyruses are found which purport to be copies of "The Instruction of Ptahotep." Could this scenario have happened?

There are two particular statements in Ptahotep's writings which indicate that this is exactly what happened. At the end of these manuscripts, the writer states that he is near death, having lived 110 years and that he received honors from the king exceeding those of the ancestors -- in other words, he received the most honors ever given a man by a pharaoh. Also, we know that Joseph died at the age of 110 years. Well, it gets even more familiar as we examine the text of these manuscripts.

They begin as Solomon's Proverbs begin, as instructions to his son, with the admonition they are "profitable to him who will hear" but "woe to him who would neglect them". Keep in mind that the Originator of Joseph's wisdom was also the Originator of Solomon's wisdom, and the parallels between the two are undeniable. We are told in the Bible that Solomon knew many, many proverbs:

- And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser... and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." 1 Kings 4:30-32

This statement indicates that the concept of a "proverb" was known to the ancient peoples. We aren't told if Solomon was the author of all of these proverbs or whether they were passed down to him from his ancestors. There are examples of proverbs in many ancient civilizations, but the only ones which Solomon recorded by inspiration and today appear in the Bible are very similar to the ancient Egyptian "wisdom literature" which can be traced back to Imhotep.

This doesn't mean that Solomon copied from the ancient Egyptians- it means that the God of His Fathers gave the same wisdom to his ancestors, who included Joseph. We'll compare a few passages of Ptahotep's writings to the Bible:

- 1) "Don't be proud of your knowledge." (Ptahotep) "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." Proverbs 3:7
- 2) "One plans the morrow but knows not what will be." (Ptahotep) "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Proverbs 27:1
- 3) "If you probe the character of a friend, don't enquire, but approach him, deal with him alone." (Ptahotep) "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another." Proverbs 25:9
- 4) "If you are a man of trust, sent by one great man to another, adhere to the nature of him who sent you, give his message as he said it." (Ptahotep) "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters." Proverbs 25:13
- 5) "Teach the great what is useful to him." (Ptahotep) "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." Proverbs 9:9

We also find parallels in other books, such as Psalms and Ecclesiastes:

- 6) "If every word is carried on, they will not perish in the land." (Ptahotep) "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children." Psalms 78:5-6
- 7) "Guard against the vice of greed: a grievous sickness without cure. There is no treatment for it." (Ptahotep) "A man to whom

God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease." Ecclesiastes 6:2

- 8) "If you are a man of worth who sits in his master's council, concentrate on excellence, your silence is better than chatter... gain respect through knowledge..." (Ptahotep)"The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." Ecclesiastes 9:17
- 9) "The wise is known by his wisdom, the great by his good actions; his heart matches his tongue..." (Ptahotep) "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." Proverbs 18:21
- 10) "If you are one among guests at the table of one greater than you, take what he gives as it is set before you." (Ptahotep) "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee." Proverbs 23:1

God used Joseph to establish in Egypt a safe haven for the growth and development of the "seed of Abraham" until they were ready to be delivered into the land God had promised them. And while in Egypt, surrounded by paganism, God would not leave His people nor the Egyptians without access to His Truth.

The Bible records the fact that Joseph even taught the pharaoh's "senators." While this wisdom was revered by the Egyptians and carried down through the ages by their sages who copied some of his writings (claiming it as their own), some of these same "wisdom sayings" were recorded by some of Joseph's descendants over 700 years later, and ultimately were preserved for us in the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Psalms. But Joseph's wisdom didn't originate with him -- it was

divinely inspired, as was Solomon's wisdom, David's wisdom and the wisdom of all of God's people.

Plywood in Ancient Egypt

In the earlier mentioned book, "Saqqara", on the bottom of page 99 is a statement about the knowledge and use of laminated "plywood" in very early Egypt:

"...within the remains of a coffin whose sides were made of six thin superimposed layers of wood with the grain alternating as in modern ply wood."

As you know the deck boards of Noah's ark were made of laminated (ply) wood, based on the fact that we have an actual specimen. The use of the same material by the early Egyptians proves that this knowledge was available in the early years of ancient Egypt, passed along through Noah's offspring as they began to settle throughout the world. It would probably stagger the imagination if we knew how much technology was lost by man after the flood.

Imhotep Appointed Later in Djoser's Reign

There are several other items concerning Imhotep which continue to fit the biblical account. We know that the pharaoh of Joseph had been king for an unknown period of time when Joseph was finally brought to him to interpret his dream. And the evidence shows that 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.

Imhotep was not the architect of Djoser's tomb built at Beit Khallaf, which was probably undertaken soon after he became king. In this earlier tomb, which is similar to the preceding dynasties at Sakkara, 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 he hadn't been appointed to his position yet.



Location of Saqqara in Egypt

The 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.

All available information about Imhotep continues to point to his identification with Joseph. For example, in some inscriptions, his titles indicate that he was not a member of the royal family, but a "self-made man." This was unique because the son of the pharaoh was usually the vizier.

Imhotep was also the "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. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt." Genesis 41:45

Since Asenath was old enough to marry Joseph at this time, it follows that her father was probably at least in his forties. In ancient Egypt, the people didn't live too much longer than about 50. At his death or disability, it follows that his son-in-law would be assigned his position,

especially if that son-in-law were so highly regarded by the pharaoh as Joseph was.

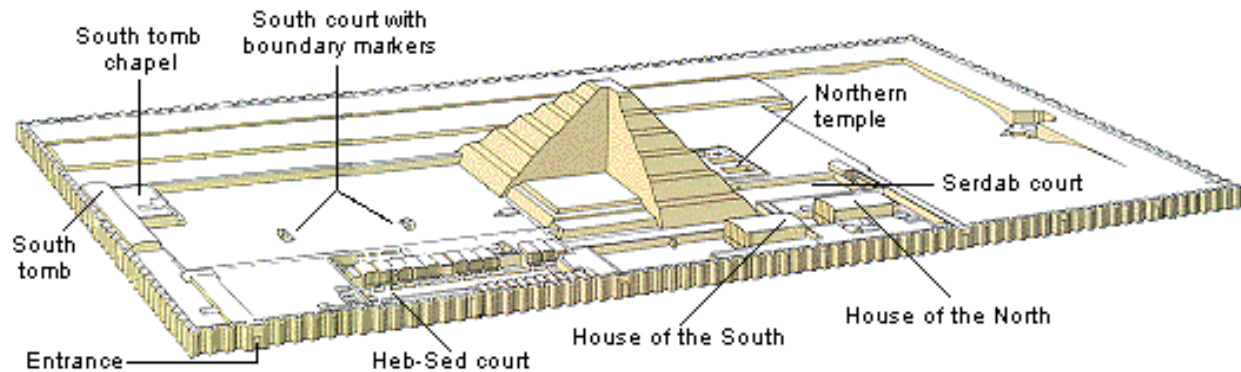
If Joseph became the "Priest of On," was he being unfaithful to the true God? Absolutely not -- the pharaoh had recognized the power of the God of Joseph, and even though the Egyptians remained idolaters, Joseph made them aware of his God and was unswerving in his loyalty to Him. The "Priest of On" was not termed the priest of a particular god -- but the title instead seems to indicate a position of high honor and political importance.

Imhotep, the Architect of the 1st Pyramid



It was Imhotep who is credited with having designed the first pyramid (above) and began building with hewn stone instead of all mud brick. If we look at ancient Egyptian history, we can see evidence which shows that it was during the time of Djoser that Egypt became a truly great nation -- since it had gathered the wealth of all the surrounding nations by selling them grain during the famine.

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



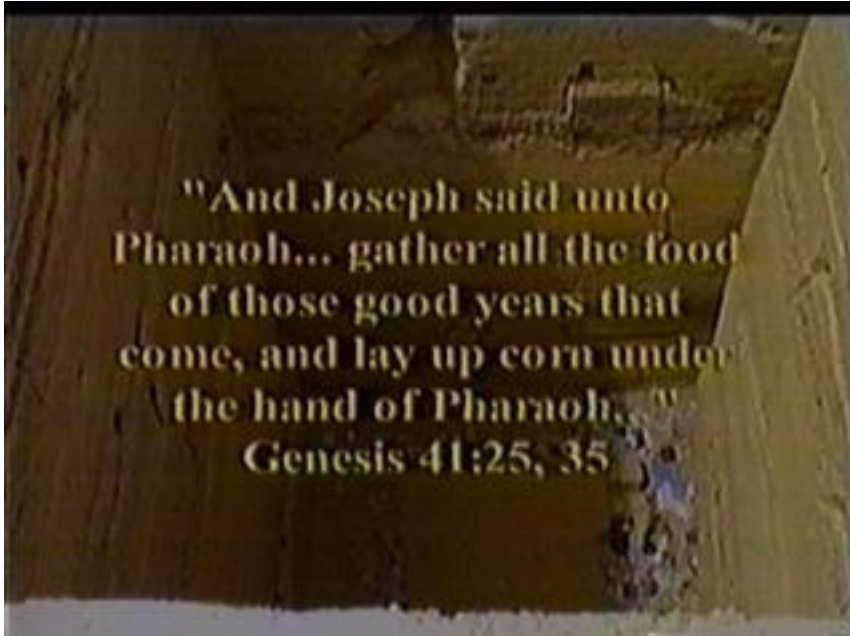
The complex at Saqqara Egypt was built during the reign of the pharaoh Djoser. Imhotep - Joseph built this complex.

A large complex was built which contained the future burial site of the pharaoh but also included a walled-in center which contained huge grain bins. There was only one entrance into this center and there was an outside entrance into the system of storage bins. The Step Pyramid complex at Sakkara is the complex which we will now discuss.

Grain Storage Bins

Surrounding the Step Pyramid, the first ever built, is a very beautiful and elaborate wall containing 13 false entrances and one real. 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 connected to the main wall by a perpendicular wall, forming small rooms between each column. As you exit this colonnade and walk straight ahead, you come to a series of very large pits which extend deep into the earth. See below:







Above are some of the grain storage bins.

These are extremely large in size -- much larger than any burial chambers; they are all centrally accessible by a connecting tunnel, extend to well above ground level, and one has a staircase extending down to the bottom (see below). 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.



Above is the staircase that leads to a central exit point for all the grain storage bins. (6 photos from Investigating The Findings of Ron Wyatt, video, by Keith and Ross Patterson)

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 all the other ancient cities, whenever large bins such as these were uncovered, they were recognized 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 and his family's afterlife- and in these bins were found grain and other food stuffs.

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:

- "Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities."

Joseph had given this plan to the pharaoh prior to his appointment as vizier or prime minister, and since it would be impossible for him to oversee the gathering and storing for the entire country, we know he implemented this plan. We also know that when the famine began and the Egyptians began to cry for food, they were told to go to Joseph and do whatever he said, which indicates that he gave the orders for the distribution of the grain:

- "And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all

the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt." Genesis 41:55-56

But when the foreign peoples came to purchase grain, we learn that they went directly to Joseph:

- "And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." Genesis 42:6

Joseph's brothers came directly to Joseph in person. We believe it is Sakkara to which they came -- where the remains of this fantastic complex are preserved. And it was here that Djoser had eleven extremely large pits constructed which can only be grain storage bins.

Every city had stored grain from its region, but at this complex at Sakarra, 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 this complex, as we described earlier, there are forty 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.



There could have been several cashiers of each language group to handle the purchases of those who spoke the various languages. Of course, the Egyptologists think all these little cubicles were for statues, however, no pedestals were found in the remains, which is a very important point, because these statues were always erected on pedestals. Statues may vanish, but pedestals remain.

The design of the eleven pits is impressive. There are eleven of them, with only one containing a very elaborate stairway 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. Last of all, grain was found in the floor of these pits, which has been explained by Egyptologists as having been from foods buried with deceased who were buried there -- however, no evidence of burials was ever found in these pits.

Does this fit the Biblical account? When Joseph's brothers came to him for grain, they talked to Joseph and paid for the grain. When they received the grain, it was already in sacks:

- "Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth." Genesis 42:25-27

The complex at Sakkara is unique -- nothing like it has ever been found. It was described by William Hayes as being a "veritable city in itself, planned and executed as a single unit and built of fine white limestone from the nearby Mukattam Hills." (*The Scepter of Egypt*, Vol. 1, p. 60.)

In fact, Egyptologists tend to term everything they find as a royal tomb, which is what they have called this complex. But it in fact exhibits every feature indicative of being a center of great activity, a feature which again fits with the story of Joseph.

When Joseph's brothers came to get grain, they came face to face with Joseph who was overseeing the distribution. Where did they go to get the grain? They went to wherever the grain was stored, and this was where Joseph was. And the storage of such a massive amount of grain would have required a large storage area, such as the extremely large pits found in this complex. It is also reasonable to expect to find the storage pits within an enclosure such as this complex, with an area for the payment of the grain. This was a business and would have required a center of administration.

A great deal has been written about this complex, and most mention the uniqueness of it -- something they cannot explain. In fact, when you ask

the Egyptians what the huge pits were for, they admit that they just don't know.

Some ancient historians have written of the fact that the pyramids were once believed to be "Joseph's storage bins" for the grain, and perhaps this story has its roots in the fact Joseph designed the first pyramid in the same complex in which the grain was stored. But regardless of what the experts want to believe about the Step Pyramid complex, the circumstantial evidence fits the story of Joseph perfectly. And, it is one of the best preserved sites in Egypt -- certainly of the very old structures -- and this is consistent with God's preservation of important evidences which confirm the total accuracy of His Word.

The Search for Imhotep's Tomb

We know from the Bible 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. But, when the children of Israel left during the Exodus, his bones were taken with them:" Genesis 50:26
- "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." Exodus 13:19

This leads us to think that Joseph would have had a royal tomb in Egypt, but that it was possibly taken over and used by someone else, we just don't really know. But one of the big mysteries for Egyptologists has been the tomb of Imhotep -- they simply can't find it although they know it should be somewhere in Sakkara. So important is Imhotep to Egyptology, that 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.

In our discussion of "Imhotep, the Physician," we mentioned that ancient Greek texts speak of a place near Memphis where people came to worship Imhotep and be healed. When excavators continued to search for Imhotep's tomb very near the Step Pyramid, they found an incredible labyrinth of underground tunnels, full of mummified ibis (birds) and bulls in separate galleries. Inscriptions and coins found here show that people came here to be healed! They had found this "sanctuary to Imhotep" written of by the Greeks.

After the deification of Imhotep as "god of medicine," he was given the title, "Chief One of the Ibis" -- and this was the connection of this labyrinth with Imhotep. These hundreds of thousands of ibis were mummified and brought here as tribute to Imhotep, filling these tunnels.

It was later discovered that these galleries connected to a pit that extends down to a funerary chamber which contains an empty coffin. They also discovered that this chamber belonged to a very large mastaba tomb which contained a second chamber full of broken stone vessels, and in the tomb's storerooms were jars whose clay-stoppers had the seal impression of 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 the east, as the other pyramids and mastabas are. This was an important tomb of someone from Djoser's time -- but the sarcophagus was empty.

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.