

● Lesson 10

CULTURE & WORSHIP OF EGYPT

After Joseph had been in Egypt for many years, he brought his father and his brothers to live there because of the famine in Canaan (Genesis 45). With permission of the Pharaoh, the family settled in the land of Goshen (Genesis 47:1-6). Goshen was a fertile area on the east side of the Nile delta, the “best of the land” (Genesis 47:6).

The religious life and culture of this new land were different from what Jacob’s family had known. We get some idea of the life and religion of ancient Egypt from records in art and literature. The Egyptians had many gods. Some of these gods included *Seth*, the god of the earth; *Khepra*, the sacred beetle god; *Serapis* and *Isis*, the gods of fire and water; and the sun god, *Ra*. The ten plagues that God sent during the time of Moses were not only a judgment upon hard-hearted Pharaoh, but ultimately were a judgment upon the gods of Egypt from the one true God of Israel.

Records of religious beliefs of ancient Egypt are also found in the pyramids, marvels of engineering which are still present today. The largest one, the great pyramid of Cheops at Giza, is as tall as a 48-story building and would cover ten football fields. It probably took 20 years to build, and it contains 2.5 million stone blocks all fitted together so well they didn’t even need cement to hold them in place! The



pyramids were **tombs** (burial rooms) for the pharaohs.

The Egyptians believed the “**afterlife**” was the same as life here, only much better. They believed it was a place ruled by Osiris, the god of the dead and ruler of the Egyptian underworld. The Egyptians developed a process of mummifying bodies, which they believed would preserve them for the afterlife. Along with the body, tombs included food, clothing, weapons, and other valuables that they thought would be used in that next life. People thought these practices were a way for them to take the good things of this world with them to the next, using magical means to do so.

Much of what we have learned about the Egyptians was found in paintings on the walls of their tombs (pyramids). These paintings usually told a story. They were stories told

Memory Verse

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

John 11:25-26

1884 B.C.

1876 B.C.

1845 B.C.

Joseph becomes Egyptian official

Jacob takes his family to Egypt

Israelites become slaves



with pictures, not words. Make your own tomb painting of something you would want people to know about you or your life if they found it 1,000 years from now.

EGYPTIAN MUMMIES

The Egyptians treated their dead with special care. We call the process they used “mummification.” It took 70 days to preserve a body. The brain and internal organs were removed and put in special jars. Then the body was covered with natron, a salty chemical which dried it out for 40 days. Melted resin or tree sap was poured over the skin to preserve it. Then the body was stuffed with wads of linen or sand to give it shape. After all this, each arm, leg, finger, toe, and body part was wrapped separately with linen. This process could take 15 days! Mummies have been found that are 3,000 years old, still preserved!

Elaborate preparations were made for the dead because the Egyptians believed this would help them gain the afterlife. Magic spells written on **papyrus** were placed on or near mummies, which the people thought would help them pass safely through the underworld to the afterlife.

All religions have some way of dealing with life and death, but all except Christianity are based on man’s faulty reason and understanding. The one true God, who broke the power of the Egyptian gods and delivered His people, has revealed the true way of life and death in His Word, the Bible.

What does the Bible teach about life after death?

1. How do we obtain life after death? Read John 3:16, Romans 6:23, and I John 5:11-13.

2. How does the Bible describe believers who have died? I Thessalonians 4:13-15 _____

3. What does the Bible say about death for those who trust in the Lord? Psalm 116:15 _____

4. What will happen to our earthly bodies? Read I Corinthians 15:51-52 and Philippians 3:20-21.

5. Describe life after death for the believer?

Read Revelation 21:1-4. _____

6. Who will enter the holy city, the new Jerusalem?

Read Revelation 21:27. _____

7. Will there be a temple in the new Jerusalem? Explain. Revelation 21:22 _____

8. What will provide light in the holy city?

Revelation 21:23-24, 22:5 _____

Because of sin, our bodies die and decay and return to the ground. But God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, sent His only begotten Son to redeem us from sin and death and the power of the devil. We do not need to preserve our bodies for the next life or provide for them in the next life. A believer who dies goes home to be with the Lord. When Jesus comes again, our bodies will be raised to be like the resurrected body of Jesus, and we will live with Him forever in heaven.

Fast Fact: Hieroglyphs



- Hieroglyphs used pictures instead of letters to write the language of the ancient Egyptians.
- This form of written language was used for 3,000 years.
- Hieroglyphs were written on long scrolls of papyrus, a paper-like substance made from reeds that grew along the Nile River.

Catechism Corner

1. Is the Bible then the only safe rule of our faith and duty? (Q. 6)

Yes; the Bible alone contains full information of the will of God concerning our salvation.

2. Is he who thus believes and lives in fellowship with Christ sure to be saved? (Q. 388)

Yes; when he continues steadfast in faith until death.

3. What can I say to my friends who want to know how they can live forever? _____
