

Why Moses?

The Pentateuch has details that would be used by an eyewitness with first hand experience. The information is descriptive and specific.

The author of Genesis and Exodus uses a higher number of Egyptian words than any other Old Testament book.

The author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, describes a desert atmosphere and lifestyle.

The Pentateuch does not reveal much familiarity about the land of Canaan.

Only Moses, who was born, raised and educated in Egypt, and did not enter the Promised Land, was qualified to be the eyewitness and author of the Pentateuch. No less than 13 inspired authors and Jesus attest to this.

Of Egyptian words, geography, and culture

The author exhibited knowledge of Egyptian names. For example: Joseph's name *Zaphenath-paneah* means "Nourisher of the Land of the Living One (Pharaoh)." *Asenath* means "The Favorite of Neith (an Egyptian goddess)." *Potiphera* means "The Gift of Ra (the Egyptian sun god)." *On*, in the Egyptian writing language of Coptic, was one of the three major cities in Ancient Egypt located near the Nile river delta and was the center of sun worship (Gen 41:45).

The author exhibited knowledge of Egyptian cities. Exodus 1:11 mentions the cities of "Pithom and Raamses." According to archeologists, there are two possible sites for Pithom: Tell el-Maskhuta and Tell er-Retabah. Most believe that Tell el-Maskhuta is Pithom and excavations indicate that it was likely a grain storage city. The archeological location of the city of Raamses remains unknown, but the biblical text suggests that its function was similar to Pithom. These "storage" cities are believed to be military or garrison strongholds that not only stored supplies but also were a part of the eastern defenses of Egypt.

The author exhibited knowledge of Egyptian court manners and customs. For example, the term "Pharaoh" does not mention the name of the current Egyptian king, as was the custom of the Egyptian official language. The Israelites did not begin recording the names of the Pharaohs until King Solomon's time. This subtle point should cause the destructive critic to wonder, if the Pentateuch was written after the time of King Solomon as they presuppose, why isn't the name of Pharaoh listed?

Pharaoh's dreams play a determinant role in Joseph's life, and archeologically, from 2000 BC onward, Egyptian literature surpasses neighboring civilizations in the number of recorded dreams and their interpretations. Thus the prominence of dreams adds additional evidence that the account was written contextually within its correct time frame.

The Hebrew word used for "magician" (in other translations "wise men") originated from the Egyptian term *har'tom*, which means "chief reader." Some Egyptian texts describe *har'tom* as one who is knowledgeable of astrology and horoscopes and with a skill in writing and deciphering hieroglyphics. Other texts describe them as magicians (Gen 41:8).

Another Egyptian court mannerism can be seen in Genesis 41:41-44. Derived from Egyptian origins, the Hebrew term "signet ring" (*taba'ath*, from the root word *taba'*, which means "to sink down," refers to impressing into clay) gives the owner authority to sign documents with the equivalence of royal authority. Fine linen" was derived from the Egyptian word *šēš*. "Bow the knee" was from the Egyptian expression *'abrēk*. Gifts of "gold necklace" and the "second chariot" are consistent with the intent of Pharaoh of introducing and validating his representative to the people.

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Another mannerism involves process of embalming mentioned in Genesis 50:2-3, 26. While the period of embalming varies, 40 days as one possibility among many, Jacob and Joseph were embalmed in the Egyptian manner. Joseph was "placed in a coffin," which, during this period, was a coffin with a portrait face at the head end. Seventy days of mourning was characteristically Egyptian and Joseph's death at 110 years was significant to Egyptians as being the ideal life span and signifying divine blessings upon him.

The author exhibited knowledge Egyptian society and culture. For example, the rescue of Moses contains many Hebrew words that originated from Egyptian such as "wicker basket," "pitch," reeds," and "bank of the Nile." Moses' name originated from the Egyptian term "Water-son" (Ex 2:1-10).

In this example, the source and containers of water are archeologically correct for Egypt at this time (Ex 7:19).

This example describes seasonal agricultural facts consistent with Egypt (Ex 9:31-32).

This example describes the type of food known and archeologically confirmed for lower classed Egyptians, and its use is appropriate within the context of former Hebrew slaves (Num 11:5).

Compared to all other books of the Old Testament, Genesis and Exodus stand out as having the greatest number of Egyptian words. The author had to have a very close interaction with both Hebrew and Egyptian cultures and at all socioeconomic levels: royalty, priesthood, and commoner. For destructive critics who believe that the Pentateuch was written during the first millennium in Canaan, the use of Egyptian terms would not have made sense for the Israelis of that time unless an attempt was made to explain them. The apparent lack of explanation for Egyptian terms lends support to the idea that the original audience was familiar with Egyptian culture.

Only Moses had the education and background to be the author. He was raised in the court of Egypt and had the benefits of a royal education.

Of desert atmosphere and lifestyle

The author exhibited knowledge of a desert and its lifestyle. For example, the numerical details of a desert oasis are noted here (Ex 15:27).

In Exodus 25:5 of this example, "porpoise" is the translation of *tahash*, which is the sea cow or dugong found in the Red Sea. This would be consistent and accessible with the wanderings of the Israelites in the Southern Sinai wilderness.

In this example, Acacia trees are found in arid and semiarid regions and are indigenous to Egypt and Sinai Peninsula **not Palestine**. Its wood was mentioned only in connection with the tabernacle and was used as the material to construct the ark and its poles, the table and its poles, the altar of incense and its poles, the altar of burnt offering and its poles, and the Tabernacle's supports and its poles for the hanging of the curtains. With its construction of wood poles, boards, and curtains, the Tabernacle was constructed for portability, which is consistent with a nomadic lifestyle (Ex 25:10; 37:1-29; 38:1-20).

This example describes the organized manner that the nation of Israel traveled in the Sinai desert. The details of the order and names of various leaders lends credibility to this eyewitness account (Num 10:13-28)..

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This describes the taste of manna, which was food that could be easily made in the desert. This information was likely provided so that later generations of Israelites could understand what manna was like (Num 11:7-8).

This example describes personal hygiene in a nomadic lifestyle. The account of Exodus through Deuteronomy was clearly set against a desert background. The details of the lifestyle were pertinent to a nomadic group of people devoted to a God whom they worshipped with a portable Tabernacle. The referenced geography was located in the arid Sinai Peninsula, and the plant and animal life were indigenous to the area as well (Deut 23:12-13).

Only Moses had the personal relationship with God enabling him to lead his people in worship and to the Promised Land. As an eyewitness participant, Moses had the personal knowledge of the wandering in the wilderness. Furthermore the entire Pentateuch lacked the description of any flora, fauna, or geographical point of interest of the Promised Land, which Moses failed to enter and experience.

13 inspired authors and Jesus attest to Mosaic authorship

Only Moses, who was born, raised and educated in Egypt, and did not enter the Promised Land, was qualified to be the eyewitness and author of the Pentateuch. No less than 13 inspired authors and Jesus attest to this.

1. God Himself chose Moses to author the Pentateuch (Ex 34:27-28; 17:14; Josh 1:7-8).
2. The Pentateuch itself attests to Mosaic authorship (Ex 24:4; Num 33:1-2; Deut 31:9-13, 24-26).
3. Joshua, the successor to Moses, recognized Mosaic authorship (Josh 8:30-32; 23:6).
4. King David acknowledged Mosaic authorship (1 Kings 2:3).
5. The historian of Jewish kingships referred to Mosaic authorship (2 Kings 4:6; 1 Chron 22:13; 2 Chron 5:10; 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 33:7-9; 34:14; 35:12).
6. The prophets of God cited Mosaic authorship (Ezra 3:2; 6:18; 7:6; Neh 1:7-8; 8:1, 14; 9:14; 10:29; 13:1; Dan 9:11, 13; Mal 4:4).
7. Jesus did not question Mosaic authorship (Matt 8:4; 19:7-8; Mark 1:44; 12:26; Luke 24:27, 44-46; John 5:45-47; 7:19, 23).
8. The Apostles referenced Mosaic authorship (John 1:17; Acts 13:38-39; 15:21; 28:23; Rom 10:5, 19; 1 Cor 9:9; 2 Cor 3:14-16; Heb 9:19).