

Lecture No. 2.

at which the civilization of Egypt was at its best, while before and after there were periods concerning which we know a great deal, but which were periods inferior to these three. The first of these the so-called Old Kingdom, embracing what are called the third, fourth, fifth and sixth dynasties. It is a period of more than five hundred years, running from 2980 to 2475 B.C. During this period the great pyramids were constructed. After this period, there is about three hundred years of disintegration which is followed by a period of splendor superior to that of the Old Kingdom, called the Middle Kingdom. The Old Kingdom had its capital at the place where Upper and Lower Egypt come together, where the king of the first dynasty had founded a city to represent his control of both parts of Egypt. This city was called Memphis. The Middle Kingdom was established by the supremacy of a family which lived four hundred miles south of Memphis at Thebes, a town which had previously been of no particular importance. Thebes now became the centre of the Egyptian government and for the next fifteen hundred years, it was one of the most important cities of Egypt.

After the Middle Kingdom had lasted about four hundred years, many rebellions broke up Egypt into small districts ruled by rival factions. During this period of disunity a powerful invader came in from Asia and succeeded in establishing a foreign domination in Egypt. These kings have been called the Hyksos. It is not certain to what race they belonged, whether they were Semitic or Hittite, or belonged to still another race. At any rate, they were Asiatics and were regarded by the Egyptians as foreigners. It is most probable that it was during this period when these foreign kings were ruling in Egypt that the Israelites came into Egypt.

The Egyptians hated the domination of the foreign kings and eventually succeeded in driving them out of the country. The