

### Second Intermediate

The Second Intermediate period is defined by the presence of the Hyksos rulers in Egypt. According to Redford, the Hyksos appear from archaeological work in Egypt to be ethnically indistinguishable from the Canaanite culture which had revived in the Promised Land.<sup>20</sup> This suggests the possible identification of the Hyksos with the descendants of the Biblical Philistines of Samson's day.

If this is correct, then the picture which emerges from Biblical and extra-Biblical sources taken together is one of increasing Canaanite/Philistine domination of Israel for several centuries following the death of Samson. With time these Canaanite/Philistines were able to extend their influence into the eastern Nile Delta region of Egypt and eventually gain control of that country. This causes us to see the Second Intermediate period in Egypt as the height of Canaanite/Philistine power.

### New Kingdom

Hyksos domination came to an end with the rise of the powerful 18th Dynasty under Ahmose. Israel, however, was unable to regain control of the Promised Land and continued to be oppressed. She was trampled down at will—her lands, her produce, and her people were all up for grabs. Egypt ultimately, brutally, cemented direct control over the entire region, absorbing the Promised Land into its New Kingdom empire.

The Egyptian empire was maintained in the Promised Land until the coming of the so-called "Sea Peoples" around 1200 B.C. The "Sea Peoples" were simply a coalition of people groups from the northwest Mediterranean region who left their homelands in a massive migration by land and sea. It is not clear what factors set them in motion. They swept away the ancient power of the Hittite kingdom in the north and pressed on through Palestine toward Egypt. Their advance was finally halted by Ramesses III of Egypt in a great battle which took place *ca.* 1176 B.C.

The "Sea Peoples" remained in Palestine, initiating the Iron Age I period there. They appear archaeologically to be the Biblical Philistines whom

we encounter in 1 Samuel during the days of Eli, Samuel, Saul and David.

This raises the question of why the Bible uses the same designation, "Philistines" for these obviously new immigrant Sea Peoples at the time of Eli and Samuel as it had used for the Canaanite people nine centuries earlier at the time of Samson. The following points are revealed by Biblical research of this question.

People designated as Philistines were found in Canaan from the time of Abraham (over a thousand years before the time of Samson) onward.<sup>21</sup> The Bible informs us repeatedly that the Philistines were immigrants to Canaan whose original homeland was Caphtor.<sup>22</sup>

Caphtor is generally believed by scholars to correspond to the island of Crete and/or possibly other islands in the Aegean. This, in fact, is the region from which the Sea Peoples came. Thus, the most simple answer to the Philistine question appears to be that the Sea Peoples migration was just the latest episode in a long history of colonization of the coast of Palestine by the sea-going occupants of Caphtor.

### Third Intermediate

While Egypt was able to survive the onslaught of the Sea Peoples, it had lost its grip on Palestine within a century of their arrival. Following the reign of Ramesses III, Egypt seems to have entered a period of declining power and influence culminating in the Third Intermediate period, which would last some three and a half centuries. It is during this period of reversed Egyptian fortunes that the Biblical historical narrative resumes and monarchical Israel is born.

During this period and at the close of the span of history of interest to this study, Biblical and secular histories intersect once more with the invasion of Palestine by the Egyptian pharaoh Shoshenq I (1 Kings 14:25-26) *ca.* 925 B.C.

<sup>21</sup>Genesis 21:32,34; 26:1.

<sup>20</sup>Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 100.

<sup>22</sup>Deuteronomy 2:23; Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7. See also Genesis 10:14 which seems to imply an original distinction, albeit close relationship, between the Philistines and the Caphtorim.