



Within the last stanza, the name “Israel” (reading right to left) is followed by a throw stick, denoting foreigners, and a sitting man and a sitting woman above three plural sticks, denoting a significant population. By 1210 BC, Israel has become established in the land of Canaan.



The Merneptah Stela

Also known as the *Israel Stela*, this 7 foot high stela was discovered in Pharaoh Merneptah’s Theban mortuary temple. Merneptah (r. c. 1210 BC) followed the great Rameses II as ruler of Egypt. The stela primarily recounts the victories of Merneptah over the Libyans, his enemy to the west. But it also ends with a stanza recounting his victories over those living to the northeast, in Canaan, including the first non-biblical reference to Israel:

The princes are prostrate saying: “Shalom!”
 Not one of the Nine Bows lifts his head:
 Tjehenu is vanquished, Khatti at peace,
 Canaan is captive with all woe.
 Ashkelon is conquered, Gezer seized,
 Yanoam made nonexistent;
Israel is wasted, bare of seed (or, *Israel lies fallow, and it has no seed*),
 Khor is become a widow for Egypt.
 All who roamed have been subdued.
 By the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Banere-meramun,
 Son of Re, Merneptah, Content with Maat,
 Given life like Re every day.