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RAMSES II: FORMIDABLE PHARAOH- (Presentation with slides)

There are many reasons to refer to Ramses ii as a formidable Pharaoh. Ramses ii, the third Pharaoh of Egypt's Nineteenth Dynasty, was known as Ramses The Great because of his immense popularity, the extensive building he accomplished, Egypt's prosperity during his reign, and his successful military campaigns. Rameses ii (1279-1213BCE) was known to the Egyptians as Userma are setepenre, which means, "Keeper of Harmony and Balance, Strong in Right, Elect of Ra (one of their many spiritual deity gods). He is also known as Ozymandias and as Ramses the Great.

To begin, a Pharaoh is a Monarchial Ruler. In ancient Egypt, as an Egyptian Ruler, Pharaohs were both heads of state and the religious leaders of their people. The term Pharaoh means Great House, a reference to the palace where the Pharaoh resides. There are several distinctions between a Pharaoh and a King. The main difference between both terminologies is, that a Pharaoh is connected with the divine according to ancient Egyptian beliefs. There was such awe-inspiring honor to the title of Pharaoh to the point that he was virtually recognized as a god himself, they were often worshiped as gods and treated as mortal vessels for spirit deities. A King is generally recognized as a mortal man who rules over a given territory. The Pharaoh provided an important link between the Egyptian people and their gods. Maintaining religious harmony and performing ceremonies were part of the Pharaoh's role as head of the religion.

Pharaohs could either be male or female. Well-known female pharaohs were Nefertiti and Cleopatra; as opposed to the term king, only males are Kings.

Pharaohs built great tombs and temples for their gods and for themselves. The tombs the Pharaohs built for themselves were flamed by the belief that they could take much of their possessions in their tombs so they could live well in the afterlife. Pharaohs ruled in dynasty successions, passing down heirs to the throne from dynasty to dynasty. Dynasties could last from hundreds to almost thousands of years of heirs to the throne. Pharaohs were believed to be incarnate of the spirit deity or the gods that ancient Egypt believed and worshipped; as a result, many of these ancient pharaohs, as told in many ancient historical texts, possessed extraordinary abilities of intellect and physical prowess, and strengths. The Pharaoh was the high priest of every temple in Egypt. It was the Pharaoh's duty to build great temples and monuments, celebrating his own achievements, and pay homage to the gods of the land who gave him the power to rule in his life and would guide him in the next life, this was their belief. The prosperity, how Egypt stood above the other nations in his time, all the possessions Ramses ii had; from all the narratives about Ramses ii, he indeed through all the thousands of years of Pharaoh dynasties, was one of the most prestigious and most successful Pharaohs. Ramses ii was one of the longest-reigning Pharaohs. He ruled for about sixty-seven years and lived to be almost one hundred years of age.

As lord of the land, the Pharaoh made laws, owned all the land in Egypt, collected taxes, and made war or defended the country against foreign aggression. Warfare was an essential aspect of the rule of the Pharaoh, especially when it was necessary for the restoration of balance and harmony in the land. This concept of war was manifested in the poem of Pentaur, written by the scribes of Rameses ii, the Great (1279-1213BCE), regarding his victory over the Hittites at

the battle of Kadesh in 1274BCE The Hittites, according to Ramses ii had disrupted the balance of Egypt and so needed to be dealt with severely. The Pharaoh had a sacred duty to defend the borders of the land, all this was also inspired by the deep sensitivity of his beliefs in his deity gods, that it was their will for this to be. Everything in Egypt was influenced and surrounded by their beliefs and their deep engagement with their spirit deity gods. The Pharaoh had the sacred duty to attack neighboring countries for natural resources if it was thought this was in the interest of harmony and balance.

The early life of Ramses ii revealed that he was the son of Sety 1 and Queen Tuya. Ramses ii was born into a family of intense, skillful military background. His grandfather, Rameses 1 had been a general and a vizier (one who supervises the running of a country, much like a prime minister) under king Horemheb, who, lacking an heir to the throne, appointed Ramses 1 as his successor in a move designed to ensure that the supreme leadership remained in the hands of men trained as warriors. Ramses 1's son, Sety 1, was well-versed in the art of warfare when he came to the throne after his father's brief reign. Sety's 1 eldest son Rameses ii, it is claimed that already at the young age of ten years old, Rameses ii was appointed commander and chief of the army, under his father Sety 1.(Freedman, 618)

An interesting known fact about Pharaohs is the unique and distinguished crowns they wore. The Pharaoh wore a crown that had an image of the cobra goddess. Only the Pharaoh was allowed to wear the cobra goddess. It was said this goddess would protect the Pharaohs by spitting flames at their enemies.

Ramses ii was known for his artistic architectural genius. Ramses ii built a very famous temple by the name of Abu Simbel. The historic site comprises two massive rock-cut temples: in the village of Abu. Ramses ii went to Abu Simbel with his wife, in the twenty-fourth year of his

reign. Ramses ii built the Abu Simbel temple in Egypt to intimidate his enemies and seat himself amongst the gods. Abu Simbel is one of the most recognized ancient sites in Egypt. For three thousand years it sat located on the west of the Nile River, between the second cataracts of the Nile...