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Tsiyon News

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter - Vol 8.39 - 08/07/6013 TAM - 10/12/13 AD



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Afflicted in Egypt

Exodus 1+2

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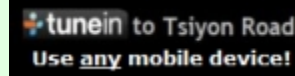
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Listener Q+A

Listener Question: *How long was Israel afflicted?*

I've been doing the math on the 'begats' as we went through Genesis, and I've seen that it is fairly easy to create a continuous timeline of Genesis events doing that. However, at the end of Genesis, with Joseph, sufficient data is not given to continue the timeline using that method. Exodus says Israel lived in Egypt "four hundred thirty years." This doesn't seem to agree with Genesis, where God tells Abraham; "your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years." Consulting reference works hasn't helped resolve the differences. Some of them say Israel was actually afflicted in Egypt only 215 years. So which is it, 215 years, 400 years or 430 years? - and why don't these numbers agree?

Tsiyon Answer: Thanks for your excellent question. It is great figuring chronology in Genesis since it is mostly a simple matter of adding the father's age at birth of the son, for each generation. As you've discovered, this gives an unbroken genealogy through Genesis - until, that is, we get to Joseph. With Joseph that unbroken son-to-son genealogy stops. That doesn't mean we cannot continue the timeline, however. It just means it is not so easy anymore. You've correctly targeted the next step, which is resolving the period of Israel's affliction using verses for which definite years are attached. The problem with this is: how do we resolve the differences in the verses pertaining to this?

Here is what Exodus says:

*Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was **four hundred thirty years**. It happened at the end of four hundred thirty years, even the same day it happened, that all the armies of YHWH went out from the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:40-41*

This directly states "Israel lived in Egypt .. four hundred thirty years." If we could stop with that we would have the definite number we are looking for. However, this verse does not seem to agree with what YHWH told Abram in Genesis:

*He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. **They will afflict them four hundred years**. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great wealth. Gen 15:13-14*

This seems to present a difference of 30 years. Some try to resolve this by saying YHWH was simply giving Abraham a round number in hundreds whereas the Exodus number is more specific. That could possibly resolve the difference, if it were not for Galatians 3:17. Paul said:

*Now **the promises were spoken to Abraham** and to his seed. He doesn't say, "To seeds," as of many, but as of one, "To your seed," which is Messiah. Now I say this. **A covenant confirmed beforehand by God in Messiah, the Torah, which came four hundred thirty years after**, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. Galatians 3:16-17*

Here, Paul also mentions 430 years, as does Exodus. However, this DOES NOT agree with the Exodus verse!

Exodus says Israel "lived in Egypt" 430 years – while Paul says the entire span of time from when YHWH gave the promise to Abraham (made at the time he entered into Canaan at the age of 75) until the giving of the Torah was 430 years! In other words, the 430 years mentioned by Paul began before Isaac, Jacob, Jacob's sons, and all their offspring, were ever born – NOT being just the time Israel "lived in Egypt."

Paul is not the only witness from his generation with this understanding. Josephus, the 1st century Jewish priest and historian states that the Israelites "left Egypt in the month of Xanthicus (Aviv) on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt." As a priest Josephus undoubtedly had access to the best Hebrew manuscripts housed in the Temple of Jerusalem from which to glean his chronology, which perfectly agrees with that of Paul. (Ant. II. 15.2)

As we look at the above passages in our Bibles we may be confused with the seeming discrepancies between the three passages. There is no way that these passages, as written, can possibly agree with each other. Yet Paul, who wrote well after the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was completed, comes across as quite confident of his timing, supported even more by the confirmation of Josephus. Could Paul, perhaps, have known something we don't readily know today?

Paul ministered primarily to the Greek speaking world of his day, requiring him to use the Greek translation of the Scriptures in his ministry. That Greek translation is called the Septuagint (LXX), having been translated from Hebrew into Greek by 70 eminent Hebrew scholars between the 3rd and 1st century BC (*Before Christ*). By contrast, most English Bibles translate the "Old Testament" from the Hebrew Masoretic Text, which is a copy of the Hebrew Bible that was written by the Masoretes between the 6th and 10th centuries AD. In other words, when Paul wrote Galatians, the Hebrew text our Bibles are based on, the Masoretic Text, would not be completed for another thousand years. Let's compare Exodus 12:40-41 from an English translation of the LXX to see where Paul was getting his information.

I have highlighted the additional data given in the LXX in red.

*And the **sojourning** of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt **and the land of Canaan**, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass after the four hundred and thirty years, all the forces of the Lord came forth out of the land of Egypt by night. Exodus 12:40-41 LXX Brenton*

Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred thirty years. It happened at the end of four hundred thirty years, even the same day it happened, that all the armies of YHWH went out from the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:40-41 English translation from Hebrew Masoretic Text

The LXX presents more information. Rather than simply *living in Egypt*, the LXX presents a period of *sojourning* – not only in Egypt, but *in the land of Canaan* as well. Paul's comments in Galatians 3:16-17 agree with this, viewing the 430 years as being the entire sojourn of Yah's people beginning with Yah's promise to Abraham, until the Exodus.

Why the difference between the LXX and the Masoretic Hebrew copy from a thousand years later? Probably this is due to a scribal error in which

“and the land of Canaan” got dropped from the copy. Such errors are extremely rare in the Masoretic Text, however, since these copies were made by hand, absolute perfection in copying can not reasonably be expected. That's where comparisons between different texts, as we've seen here, can shed light on apparent copy omissions. In this case we see that **the 430 year time period is not just the time the Hebrews were in Egypt, but actually covers all the time of the sojourning from the time Abraham received the promise on first coming into Canaan, until the Exodus.**

Now that we have identified what the 430 years covers, what about the 400 years spoken to Abraham? In other words, what of the 30 year difference? Let's look again at the words spoken to Abraham:

*He said to Abram, “Know for sure that **your seed will live as foreigners** in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them **four hundred years**. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great wealth. Gen 15:13-14*

Here, YHWH is telling Abraham about his “seed.” Logically, the time period in this passage starts, not with Abraham, but with his “seed” - namely, Isaac. The prophet Stephen confirms this, saying;

*God spoke in this way: that **his seed would live as aliens in a strange land**, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for **four hundred years**. Acts 7:6*

Let's break this down.

430 years – Starts with sojourn of Abraham and Sarah in Canaan.

400 years – Starts with sojourn of Abraham's seed, omitting Abraham himself.

This later period begins with Isaac, since in Isaac the promised “seed” was to be “called.” However, this period does not start at the birth of Isaac, since Isaac's status as the promised “seed” was still under challenge by Hagar and Ishmael after his birth. Isaac's uncontested confirmation as the promised heir came by the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael the day Isaac was weaned. This event, then, must have occurred 30 years after Abraham started his sojourn in the Land at 75 years old. How old was Isaac? (Gen. 21:8-10, Galatians 4:29,30)

Let's do the math:

430 years to Exodus – Abraham is 75 years old.

405 years to Exodus – Abraham is 100 – Isaac is born.

400 years to Exodus – Abraham is 105 – Isaac is weaned at 5 years old.

With this math all the time periods mentioned have been reconciled AND tied directly to the ages of Abraham and Isaac, to continue the Biblical Timeline from Genesis to the Exodus. Happy figuring!

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From Elijah

Our *Midrash Marathon Madness Contest Grand Prize Winner* is:

Rick Miller

Congratulations Rick!

You are the Grand Prize Winner of the beautiful Silver Kingdom Shekel pendant, pictured at right.

Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the contest so much fun! Find our weekly and Grand Prize winning entries posted [here](#).

Don't miss our 1st program from Exodus!

We are very excited to be starting our study of Exodus with the newest EBD bet Midrash. Folks, this is the Book where our nation is established and our Constitution is set forth! Every citizen of True Israel needs to know and understand what is in this book!

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Blessings and Shalom!

Eliyahu ben David

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