

BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

Vol. II, No. 7

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July, 1990

THE MOSES CONNECTION

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We can trace the chronology of the patriarchs up to the death of Joseph at age 110. It brings us to the year AM 2369. (Details can be found in the works of Anstey and Mauro.) At that point, however, we have a break in the chronology, which takes up again with Moses' birth 80 years before the Exodus. Here again, a new covenant means a renewed chronology, another "year zero."

The Scriptures provide a bridge over this break in Exodus 12:40-41, which states that "the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was 430 years. And it came to pass at the end of the 430 years – on that very same day – it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."

An isolated reading of this verse suggests that from the time Jacob and his sons moved into Egypt (AM 2298) to the exodus was 430 years (AM 2728). A careful reading of Genesis, however, will make this interpretation difficult. First of all, God told Abraham in Genesis 15:13, "Know certainly that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them 400 years." As we shall see, it matters where you put the commas in this verse. For now, however, we have 400 years of affliction. If we assume that this has to be affliction in the land of Egypt, it must begin when there arose a Pharaoh who did not acknowledge Joseph (Ex. 1:8). This adds about a century more to the chronology, and completely breaks it. In other words, if the 430 years begins with Jacob's descent into Egypt, but the 400 years of affliction don't begin until the anti-Hebrew Pharaoh took over, then we have a contradiction because Joseph ruled in Egypt for 70 years after Jacob's descent. If we add 400 years of affliction, that makes a total of 470 years in Egypt. This casts serious doubt on this interpretive approach.

Moreover, Exodus 1 indicates that Moses was born not too long after the affliction began, which was 80 years before the exodus. Thus, Exodus 1 intimates that the post-Joseph affliction only lasted about a century in all.

Maybe, then, being strangers is what lasts 400 years, and not the actual affliction. We can punctuate Genesis 15:13, "Know certainly that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs – and will serve them, and they will afflict them – 400 years." The Hebrew punctuation of this verse sets the 400 years off from all the preceding clauses, which goes better with the punctuation we have given in English.

This can fit with a 430 year sojourn in Egypt, but then the question is this: Why didn't God say to Abraham that it would be 430 years? Some have said that 400 is just a round number, and thus equal to 430. This is straining at a ana

Strangers in the Land

Now we move to another consideration. In point of fact, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham moved his family out of the land of promise into the land of the Philistines, which was not part of the promised land (Gen. 15:18-21). The first thing that happened to him there was that he was attacked by Abimelech, though peace eventually ensued (Gen. 20). Isaac was born right after this. Abraham dwelt in Philistia for many years (Gen. 21:34). Isaac later had repeated troubles with the Philistines (Gen. 26). Both Abraham and Isaac dwelt around Beersheba, which at that time was part of Philistine territory, and thus not part of Canaan (Gen. 22:19; 26:23; 28:10). After living 77 years in Philistia, Jacob spent 20 more years outside Canaan in Mesopotamia. Jacob returned and lived in Canaan, where his daughter was raped and his sons committed sacrilege (Gen. 34). After 33 years, Jacob moved to Goshen. Thus, God's statement to Abraham that his seed would be strangers in an alien land began to be fulfilled at the time the seed (Isaac) was born. Only for very brief periods of time did any of the patriarchs camp in the lands promised in Genesis 15.

(Later on, these Philistines no longer held Beersheba and its territories, and those areas were taken over by Canaanites. Thus, when Israel conquered the land and took over the lands of the peoples listed in Genesis 15:18-21, they took these areas also. We see from this that the boundaries of the land were not geographical but social. God granted to Israel the lands possessed by the tribes mentioned in Genesis 15, wherever they were between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates. God did *not* grant to Israel all the land between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates, as we see from the fact that Israel was forbidden to conquer Moab, Ammon, and Edom.)

If this is true, it puts the beginning of the 400 years back in the time of Isaac. If we assume that the 430 years begins when Jacob descends into Egypt, then the 400 years overlaps the first part of the 430 years, for a total of 605 years. In fact, Hebrews 11:9 says that Abram "lived as an alien in the land of promise, as *in a strange land*." In other words, the sojourning begins when Abram moved into Canaan. This is a much more likely beginning point for the 430 years of sojourning.

Sojourning in Egypt

Now we move to a third consideration. Genesis 10:13-14 states that "Mizraim [Egypt] begat Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim)." In other

etc. For our purposes, however, the book of Genesis states that the Philistines are to be regarded as a sub-group of the Egyptians. Wherever they came from, by whatever route, they were descended from the Egyptians and are regarded as Egyptians.

This is extremely important for Old Testament theology. It means, for instance, that when Saul and David had to defeat Philistia in order to set up the Kingdom, this is parallel to God's defeat of Egypt in order to set up the Hebrew Republic under the Judges. It also means that when Abraham moved into Philistine territory after the destruction of Sodom defiled the land, he was moving into Egyptian territory.

In fact, everything indicates that Egypt exercised hegemony over the promised land from the time Abraham arrived there. The first thing that happened after Abraham's arrival was a famine, and Abraham went to Egypt (Gen. 12). Thus, 430 years of sojourning started when Abram moved to Canaan, out of the shadow of the Mesopotamian kingdoms, and this was also the beginning of 430 years of sojourning under Egypt's shadow. The 400 years of affliction for the seed began right after the birth of Isaac.

Only Four Generations in Egypt

Yet another consideration is found in Exodus 6, which provides only four generations from Levi to Moses, and states that Moses' mother was a daughter of Levi. This does not mean granddaughter or extended daughter, as we see from Numbers 26:59, "And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam." This clinches it completely. There is no time for 430 years here, and the year-figures in Exodus 6:16, 18, 20 can only fit a 215-year Egyptian sojourn.

Here is a plausible reconstruction:

- c. 2256 Birth of Levi (Jacob's third son)
- c. 2286 Birth of Kohath (Levi is 30)
- AM 2298 Descent into Egypt
- c. 2350 Births of Amram (Kohath is 64) and Jochebed (Levi is 94)
- c. 2393 Death of Levi at 137.
- c. 2419 Death of Kohath at 133.
- AM 2433 Birth of Moses (Amram and Jochebed are 83)
- c. 2487 Death of Amram at 137
- AM 2513 Exodus

We can play with these approximations, but several things emerge from this. First, the Hebrews lived long lives in Egypt. Second, they were fruitful for many of their lives, and must have had lots of children. Exodus 1 stresses this repeatedly, but when we consider their long lives, we can see that a couple might easily have 30 children each! (We shall consider population statistics below.) The most important thing that emerges from this, for our purposes, is *proof positive that the Egyptian sojourn could not have been 430 years*. In fact, the traditional figure of 215 years is really the outside limit.

Along these same lines, we see that God told Abraham, "Then in the fourth generation they shall return here" (Gen. 15:16). Some expositors want to equate the four generations with the 400 years, as if each generation were a century. This is absurd. Generations are people, not centuries, regardless of their length. Exodus 6 clearly indicates the fulfillment of this promise, using the family of Levi and Moses as base line. Here again we see evidence that there is a distinction within the 400 years of Genesis 15. The "fourth generation" is clearly not the fourth generation from Abraham. It has to be the fourth generation backwards

eration that went into Goshen.

(Of course, other genealogies would have had more than four generations during this period. If we start with the proposed date of Kohath's birth, AM 2286, who was the second generation, and go with simple 30-year generations, we find the ninth generation born in AM 2496, which is still 17 years before the exodus. Thus, God's prophecy to Abraham about the fourth generation had a specific fulfillment in mind, and Exodus 6 gives that fulfillment. This is important to the theology of Exodus 6, which stresses the fact that the God who will deliver Israel from Egypt is the God who made promises to the fathers, and who keeps His promises. After all these years, and many generations, the Hebrews were wondering about this "fourth generation" promise. The genealogy of Moses and Aaron proves that God had kept His word.)

Now all of these factors destroy the naive reading of Exodus 12:40. That verse can be read in any of three ways: (a) that the Jews lived in Goshen for 430 years; (b) that the sojourn of the Israelites—who lived in Egypt—totalled 430 years; or (c) that the Jews lived under Egyptian domination for 430 years. From what we have seen, (b) and (c) are major possibilities, while (a) is simply impossible.

The Children of Israel

But, but, but: Exodus 12:40 says that "the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years." Surely, Abraham and Isaac were not sons of Israel! Don't we have to assume that this figure begins with Jacob's descent, with his sons, to Goshen?

No, because the expression "sons of Israel" does in fact include Abraham and Isaac and Jacob himself. It is a technical term for the Hebrew covenant line from Abraham forward. I have discussed in my book *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988), how each successive covenant in the Old Testament provides a new name for God and (by reflex) a new name for His people. The name for God's people before the Flood was "sons of God." The name in the patriarchal era was "Hebrew." The name in the Mosaic era was "Sons of Israel." The name in the Restoration era was "Jew" (lit. "Judahite"). The name in the New Covenant is "Christian."

Thus, the Mosaic name for God's circumcised people was "sons of Israel," but this is a technical term, and embraces all from Abraham forward. If this explanation seems a bit strained (and it is not strained at all, in fact), remember that Exodus 6 and Numbers 26 firmly establish that the 430 years cannot begin with the descent into Goshen. This unalterable fact forces us to see the expression "sons of Israel" in Exodus 12:40 as a technical term.

New Testament Evidence

This entire question seems to be settled by Paul in Galatians 3. Paul quotes Genesis 12:3, the first statement of God's covenant with Abraham, and then says, "the law, which was 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed by God in Christ" (Gal. 3:17). Paul seems quite clear: The exodus happened 430 years after Abram arrived in Canaan at the age of 75.

There are objections to this interpretation also, however. My commentaries on Galatians are split about 50/50 on this, with the older ones preferring the interpretation that we have given, and newer ones expressing either confusion or else advocating alternative views. One alternate view is that Paul is simply saying that there were 430 years before the giving of the law, without saying how many more years there were between Genesis 12 and the giving of

Another alternative view is that Galatians 3:17 says that there were 430 years between the time the covenant was confirmed and the giving of the law. God confirmed the covenant the last time with Jacob at Bethel in Genesis 35. This was about 30 years before Jacob's descent into Egypt. Thus, it is argued, Paul's 430 years begin in Genesis 35, while the 400 years of Genesis 15 begin when Jacob goes into Egypt. This leaves Exodus 12:40 unaccounted for, however, since this verse says that the Israelites sojourned for 430 years. Jacob does not begin "sojourning" anywhere in Genesis 35. Moreover, the Greek of Galatians 3:17 cannot be pressed to mean confirm in the sense of re-ratify, so as to exclude Genesis 12, especially since Paul quotes Genesis 12 right in the passage.

These interpretations are not impossible if we consider Galatians by itself, but as we have seen, the evidence of Genesis and Exodus is all against such hypotheses, and the clear genealogical statements of Exodus 6 and Numbers 26 make it impossible. The only possible interpretation of the 430 years is the traditional one, which begins the period in Genesis 12, with 215 years of sojourning in or around the promised land, and 215 years in Goshen.

The Commentators

As we have found already, the older commentators are more conscious of the details of chronology than are most of the more recent ones. Calvin, for instance, goes to considerable length to make a case that the 430 years begin with Abraham, not with Jacob. Matthew Poole also discusses the matter in detail, insisting again that the period begins with Abraham, and he is followed in this by Matthew Henry. George Bush and J. G. Murphy agree. Older commentators on Galatians also take the traditional view, such as Alford, Ellicott, and Eadie. Modern evangelical commentaries on Exodus and Galatians usually side-step the question. A few go with the traditional view (presented here), and others say that the Jews lived in Goshen 430 years.

(A word to the wise: Older commentators are much more likely to interpret Scripture by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Modern evangelical commentators tend to interpret without reference to other passages. Thus, modern interpreters tend to ignore Galatians when interpreting Exodus, for instance, and to downplay genealogical and chronological statements in the text. Modern evangelical interpreters also, it is clear, do not read older works, because often they do not interact with traditional interpretations at all.)

The Population Question

Those advocating a long oppression, and a stay of 430 years in Goshen, often do so on the basis of population. It is impossible, they say, for 70 people to become 2,000,000 in only 215 years. This is wrong on two counts. First, although only 70 of Jacob's immediate family went down into Egypt (Ex. 1), their servants went along as well. Abraham had 318 trained fighting men in his sheikdom. Estimates range up to 3000 or more for his complete household. These servants multiplied and became those of Isaac and Jacob. It might have been 10,000 people who moved to Goshen.

Ten thousand people may mean 5000 males. If each man had five sons, the next generation would be 25,000. If each son had five sons, the third generation would be 125,000. If each son had five sons, the fourth (exodus) generation would be 625,000, which is roughly the number of males that exited Egypt (625,550; Num. 1:46; 3:39). But that fourth generation was Moses' age, who was 80 at the time of the exodus. Thus, there is room for

of 3,650,000 males. Obviously, the population could easily have increased that much in 215 years.

Let's assume that there were 1000 males who went to Goshen. Assume five sons for each male. Second generation is 5000, third is 25,000, fourth is 125,000, and fifth is 625,000. It still works just fine. And remember, the "four generations" are very stretched out. There were actually more generations in most lines.

But let's assume that only Jacob's immediate family went down to Egypt. J. B. Murphy writes, "As the average of seven generations from Arphaxad to Nahor was 31 years, when men lived from 348 to 148 years, we may safely assume 30 years as a generation, and, therefore, seven generations in 210 years. As Abraham had six sons by Keturah, and Jacob six by Leah, we may also suppose each parent to have four sons on an average, when the divine blessing of fruitfulness was promised (Gen. 35:11), and actually bestowed in Egypt (Ex. 1:7). With 68 males for the first term, 8 for the number of terms, and 4 for the common ratio, the last term, or the number of males at the exodus, would be 1,114,112. This is considerably above the actual number, and therefore allows for a smaller number of generations in particular lines, as that of Moses. With a special promise of fruitfulness, and an exceedingly fertile soil [Goshen], this cannot be regarded as either an impossible or improbable increase" (Murphy, *Commentary on Exodus* [Minneapolis: James Pub. (1868) 1976], pp. 131-32.)

Gary North has discussed this question in detail in his book *Moses and Pharaoh* (Tyler, TX: ICE, 1985), chapter 1. North argues conservatively that in terms of biological reproduction we can get close, but not close enough, to the 2,000,000 figure. North argues further, however, that there were many circumcised converts that joined the Hebrews, especially in the early years of the sojourn when Joseph was popular. Elsewhere I have argued that Genesis 41-50 consistently presents a picture of a converted Egypt (Jordan, *Primeval Saints*, chapter 10; available for \$12.00 postpaid from Biblical Horizons, Box 132011, Tyler, TX 75713). Thus, based on Genesis 41-50, I think North has got it right.

Chronological Summary

Jacob went down into Egypt at age 130 (Gen. 47:9). Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:26). Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born (Gen. 25:1). This comes to 290 years. Subtract 75 years for the age of Abram when the covenant of Genesis 12 was made, and we get 215 years. This means there were 215 years of sojourning in and around Canaan, and 215 years of sojourning and oppression in Goshen and Egypt.

The 400 years of Genesis 15 began when Isaac was five years old. This is approximately the time when Isaac was weaned, and when Ishmael was seen laughing by Sarah and was cast out. Ishmael's mother was an Egyptian, as the text is careful to point out in this context (Gen. 21:9). While there was no direct oppression involved in Ishmael's simple laughter, yet when we remember that the name Isaac means "he laughs," we can understand Sarah's fear that Ishmael would be a counterfeit Isaac. Paul in Galatians 4:29 says that this laughter constituted "persecution," in the sense that it detracted from Isaac's place as heir. Thus, Paul identifies the beginning of the 400 year oppression with the weaning of Isaac.

What about the sojourn in Goshen? Joseph lived to be 110 (Gen. 50:26). Joseph was 39 when Jacob arrived in Goshen at age 130 (Gen. 45:6). This means that Joseph protected the Israelites in Goshen for about 71 years. Moses was born 80 years before the exodus. That ac-

Sometime during that period, let's say at the center, the oppression began.

- AM 2008 Birth of Abraham
- AM 2083 Genesis 12 covenant, Abraham 75, beginning of 430 years
- AM 2094 Birth of Ishmael, Abraham 86
- AM 2108 Birth of Isaac, Abraham 100
- AM 2113 Weaning of Isaac, beginning of 400 years
- AM 2168 Births of Jacob and Esau
- AM 2276 Joseph sold into Egypt, age 17
- AM 2289 Joseph becomes viceroy of Egypt, age 30
- AM 2298 Jacob moves to Egypt, age 130
- AM 2369 Death of Joseph, age 110
 - c. 2401 Oppression begins
- AM 2433 Birth of Moses
- AM 2513 Exodus

We have found a clear and fixed chronology from creation to the exodus. The proof positive for the period of the sojourn in Egypt's being only 215 years is Numbers 26:59, which states unequivocally that Levi was Moses' grandfather.

A Note on Faulstich's View

E. W. Faulstich and the Chronology-History Research Institute have produced a tremendous amount of material on Biblical chronology. Sadly, most of it is completely wrong. Faulstich relies heavily on eclipse data, which we

have seen is highly questionable (*Biblical Chronology* 2:1). He is also committed to erroneous views of prophecy, and to the development of unsupportable cyclic schemes. Also, Faulstich and his associates have produced eccentric and clearly erroneous interpretations of such basic chronological data as the births of Arphaxad and Abram (*BC* 2:5,6) and the length of the Egyptian sojourn.

Faulstich asserts, with no argument or evidence, that the 430 years begins with the birth of Jacob (Faulstich, "Biblical Chronology: Part IV," *It's About Time* [October, 1986], p. 2.) This is impossible, as we have seen from the genealogies of Exodus 6 and Numbers 26. It is also pure speculation. There is nothing in the text to indicate that any kind of sojourn or persecution began with the birth of Jacob, except perhaps the persecution of Jacob by Esau. Since the persecutions in view in these passages are those that come from outsiders (Egyptians in general), this does not fit.

While some of the research and speculation produced by Faulstich and his co-workers may be of some value, in the main their work is highly questionable and completely untrustworthy. This is a sad evaluation to be forced to make of men who have devoted so much time and effort to their work, but we have to make it. We can hope that at some juncture they will revise their programme and return to more accurate interpretations of the fundamental, inerrant, Biblical text.