

The Church of God
(La Iglesia de Dios)

430 & 400 years – By Don Roth

430 Years of Exodus & 400 Years of Genesis Clarified/Combined

Most certainly the Bible is a book of truth. This truth is only obtained by diligent study. II Tim. 2:15. *“Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

It is vital when studying biblical events, especially prophetic events that one should consider all of the scriptures pertaining to what happened over the span of time involved. By following this method of study God will reward one with understanding. This is true when looking at a prophetic event, such as Genesis 15:13-16. *“Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’”*

Abraham’s descendants will be *“strangers in the land that is not theirs.”* Do other scriptures define where these descendants will be “strangers?” Who are the descendants being spoken of, and what land is being referred to? By carefully studying God’s word the scriptures will reveal the answers.

It should be clear that there are many places where God tells Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He is giving them the land. A point to remember is: When were they to receive this land? Something needed to take place before they received the land. This was explained in Gen. 15:7-8. *“Then He said to them, ‘I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.’ And He said, ‘Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?’”* God answers Abram’s question in Gen. 15:16. *“But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not complete.”* The land does not become their possession until the fourth generation and the Amorites degenerate morally. The following scriptures show that Abraham and his immediate offspring were strangers in the land that was not theirs at that time.

Acts 7:2-5, *“And he said, ‘Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,’ And said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.’ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession and to his descendants after him.”*

Gen. 37:1 says, “Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father (Isaac) was a stranger in the land of Canaan.” And in Gen. 36:6-7, “Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers (both Esau and Jacob) could not support them because of their livestock.”

The question is: when did the Promised Land become the possession of Abraham’s descendants? It was when Moses and Joshua started conquering the Promised Land, and not before that time. Deut. 1:20-21, 39, “And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. ‘Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’” Vs. 39, “Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.” God was in the process of giving them the land; it was not theirs yet.

Deut. 2:24, 31, “Rise, take your journey, and cross the river Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle.” Vs. 31: “And the Lord said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon over to you, Begin to possess it that you may inherit his land.’”

The ownership of the land by the Israelites began at this point, not before.

Notice two key words in the Genesis 15 prophecy; “serve,” Number 5647, and “afflict,” Number 6031. The word serve basically means to serve by assisting, but also may include the idea of slavery. The Bible translators used the word slavery in the Exodus story, and many visualize what they saw in the Hollywood movie “THE TEN COMMANDMENTS,” which is not what the Bible describes as the Israelite’s slavery.

The Israelites occupied their own area of land described in Ex. 8:21-22. “Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land.”

The Israelites also owned livestock as shown in Ex. 9:3-4. “Behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep – a very severe pestilence. And the Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.”

The Bible states that the Israelites had just one job and that was to produce a certain quantity of bricks for the Egyptians. Ex.5:7-8: “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’” This does not picture how slavery is understood in our present day, but amounts to a type of forced servitude.

The first recognized descendant of Abraham was Isaac. Gen. 26:15-22. *“Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.’ Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them. Also, Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, ‘The water is ours.’ So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. And then he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it.”* If the water had belonged to the herders of Gerar then the land that produced the water also belonged to them, not Isaac.

First the Philistines stopped up the wells Abraham had dug. Next they sent Isaac away. Then the first two wells Isaac dug in the new area were taken from him and he was again forced to move. Clearly the land was not Isaac’s – he was a stranger and sojourner in the land, meaning that this was the first generation *“in the land that was not theirs.”* Isaac was under a type of servitude to those who actually possessed the land.

The dictionary definition of a generation is: “The act or process of generating; procreation; reproduction; the fact of being generated; descent or genealogy.” This definition of generations applies to individual families. Remember, the fourth generation is a general term. It is the 400 years which gives the exact timing.

Isaac was the first generation of Abraham. That generation ended when his sons Jacob and Esau started their own families.

The second generation was Jacob until his twelve sons began their families. The third generation was the twelve sons up until their offspring started their families. The fourth was the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob. This fourth generation would have been Jochebed and Amram. Ex. 6:20. *“Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father’s sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven.”*

This scripture shows that Jochebed is Levi’s daughter, and is the beginning of the fourth generation which is confirmed in Num. 26:59. *“The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.”* It means that she and her offspring would be the fourth generation. They were the ones who came out of Egypt. God makes special note about tracking the generations through Levi’s daughter and her family. The Bible standard is to track families through the male, but here God uses a daughter because He wants it understood who constitutes the fourth generation.

Regarding the length of life of Amram who lived 137 years, the following supposition is presented: Amram married Jochebed at about age 25, and Moses was born when Amram was approximately age 35, leaving 102 years of life for Amram after Moses’ birth. As it will be shown, Moses was 80 years old at the year of the exodus. Therefore, it can be concluded that Amram was still alive and left Egypt in the exodus. He would have been part of the fourth generation.

This is confirmed in the Bible in Num. 26:57-59. *“And these are those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.”* This is confirmation that the statement in Genesis 15 regarding the fourth generation leaving Egypt is true.

Returning to the statement made in Genesis 15 the second word is “afflict,” number 6031 in Strong’s. The Complete Word Study Dictionary Old Testament gives the following definition of this word: “a verb indicating to be afflicted, to be oppressed, to be humbled. It refers to being oppressed, in a state of oppression. It means to bow down, to humble oneself, to be humble (Ex. 10:3; Isa. 58:10).”

The Bible shows that the humbling of Isaac began in Gen. 21:9 and continued into his adult life. The Philistines had no respect for Isaac. They filled in the wells of his father after Abraham died. Isaac needed these wells for his people and animals and then they forced him to move.

In addition, the first wells that Isaac dug in the new area were taken from him by the herdsmen of Gerar as noted in Genesis 26:17-22, showing that he was under their subjection, a humbling experience.

As previously noted the other scriptures defining where the offspring of Abraham are called strangers are found in Gen. 36:6-7 and Gen 37:1.

THE 430 YEARS OF EXODUS 12:40 – THE 400 YEARS OF GENESIS 15:13

How are the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 related to the 400 years of Genesis 15:13? Also, what was the approximate number of years the Israelites were in slavery (servitude) in Egypt? The years in slavery are often misunderstood to be the 400 years of Genesis 15:13.

The above questions can be answered by looking at the ages of the men who lived through this period of time. God has recorded their ages at critical times in each of their lives to give us a better appreciation of the continuity and interaction of them and their history.

This continuity explains how their experiences and prophecies were passed down to Moses who recorded all of them for us. The starting point is Ex. 12:40-41. (Note: All scripture is quoted from the New King James version unless otherwise noted). *“Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of 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.”* Note: Israel here represents the whole family beginning with Abraham.

Therefore, it means that the sojourn starts with Abraham and should not be taken to mean only the time the Israelites spent in Egypt as is shown in Galatians 3:16-17. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘and two seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to your Seed, Who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.’”* The covenant was confirmed and the law given to Israel in the third month of the Exodus Year.

The questions which need answers are: 1. At what point in Abraham's life did the 430 years begin, and 2. When did the 400 years begin? The following will show their relative position in history.

The 400 year prophecy is stated in Genesis 15:13 *"Then He said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and will afflict them 400 years.'"* There are two important points to note here.

This prophecy pertains to Abraham's descendants, not to him, and because he had no descendants at this time the starting point for the 400 years occurred in the future. Then when did the affliction begin?

Abraham was 100 years old at Isaac's birth, and 75 years old when God gave him the first promise. Gen.12:4 *"So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran."* This would account for 25 years, so that the beginning of the 400 years would occur at another juncture in his life. That occasion is shown in Genesis 21:8 *"So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned."*

The key to the start of the affliction is found in Genesis 21:9. *"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, scoffing."* The word "scoffing" in Strong's is #6711, and is defined as "a verb meaning to laugh, to make a joke, to mock." Genesis 21:9 has the same sexual licentious overtones found in Exodus 32:6. *"They rose up early the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."* (#6711)

Genesis 21:12 explains who would be the seed of Abraham. *"But God said to Abraham, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.'"* This verse puts God's stamp of approval on Isaac as Abraham's seed by Abraham sending Hagar and Ishmael away.

This is the point at which the 400 year prophecy begins; five years after Isaac's birth. It is when God lets Abraham know that his seed is in Isaac and no other. Also, it was the scoffing of Isaac by Ismael that initiated the affliction. The 25 years from Abraham leaving Haran to the birth of Isaac plus the 5 years to his weaning is a total 30 of years which is the difference between the 400 years and the 430 years.

It should be clear that the 400 years and the 430 years culminate at the same time in Exodus 12:40. This is confirmed in Acts 7:6. *"But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years."*

Remember this prophecy is saying that his offspring would be afflicted four hundred years. It can be seen as the starting point of the affliction in Genesis 21:9. *"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, scoffing."*

Now the number of years of slavery in Egypt can be determined by beginning to count the years forward from Genesis 12:4 to determine the passage of time to the death of Joseph. This would have been the earliest point of time to start to figure the slavery of Israel.

Genesis 12:4	Abraham is 75 years old.
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Genesis 21:1-7	Abraham is 100 years old at Isaac's birth.
Genesis 25:26	Isaac is 60 years old at Jacob's birth.
Genesis 47:9	Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt.
Genesis 41:46-47	Joseph was 30 years old when he gave the Pharaoh the meaning of his dream at the start of the seven years of plenty
Genesis 47:9	Records that Jacob was 130 years old when he came to Egypt in the second year of the famine, making Joseph 30 plus 7 years of plenty, plus 2 years of famine, or 39 years when his father came to Egypt.

The following is a summary of time from Abraham's leaving Haran to go to the Promised Land and Jacob's arrival in Egypt.

Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran, and 100 years at Isaac's birth.	25
Isaac was 60 at Jacob's birth.	60
Jacob age when he went to Egypt.	130
This shows the elapsed time from the beginning of the 430 years to Jacob's arrival in Egypt	
Total	215

Joseph dies at 110 years – see Genesis 50:22. 110 minus 39 = 71 years that the Israelites lived in Egypt peacefully, (not in slavery) during Joseph's lifetime. It took 215 years for Israel to arrive in Egypt. 215 years plus 71 years to the death of Joseph is 286 years. Beginning with the original 430 years, minus the 286 years = 144 years of possible slavery in Egypt. These 144 years of slavery assumes that it started at Joseph's death.

Based on this the following observations can be made. The Israelites came out of slavery at the 430th year when Moses was 80 years old. Moses died at 120 years of age; (Deut.34:7), so Moses' age of 80 at the time of the Exodus gives his birth year, which was 350 years after the original promise given to Abraham. The 350 years minus the 286 years to Joseph's death leaves 64 years meaning Moses was born 64 years after Joseph died. His birth year was 2439AM/1608BC.

This can be understood when realizing that Moses' mother was the daughter of Levi. Num. 26:59. *"The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam."*

Two scriptures explain that Jochebed was the daughter of Levi. Exodus 6:18 says: *"The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel,"* showing that Amram, Moses's father, was a grandson of Levi through Koath, the son of Levi.

Amram married his aunt—Jochebed—his father’s sister. Exodus 6:20. *“Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father’s sister, as wife;.....”* It clearly shows that Jochebed was the daughter of Levi. The word “daughter” in Numbers 26:59 is a general term which can be rendered either daughter or granddaughter.

The beginning points of the two prophecies are 30 years apart, but once the 400 year prophecy begins they run simultaneously to the concluding point of Exodus 12:40. The most time the Israelites spent in slavery in Egypt would have been 144 years.

There are many scriptures telling that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are being given the land by God, but at what point did they receive it? Several scriptures point out that they did not receive possession of the land while they were alive. The offspring of the fourth generation would receive the promise of the land.

God makes the point in Ex. 6:20 of using Levi’s daughter and her offspring as the fourth generation. Levi was Leah’s third son. His birth year is not stated, but does fit into a time about the fifth year to the seventh year after Jacob’s marriage to Leah. Joseph was born at the end of the fourteen years of Jacob’s service to Laban, for Leah and Rachel: Reference Genesis 30, verse 25. Levi died at the age of 137. Ex. 6:16.

The years from Joseph’s death to the exodus can now be determined.

When Joseph died in Egypt at 110 years old, Levi was 117 to 119 years old. The fact is that Levi lived longer than Joseph by about 27 years.

Remember this prophecy says that his offspring would be afflicted four hundred years. It can be seen as the starting point of the affliction in Genesis 21:9. *“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, scoffing.”*

Now the number of years of slavery in Egypt can be determined by beginning to count the years forward from Genesis 12:4 to determine the passage of time to the death of Joseph. This would have been the earliest point of time to start to figure the slavery of Israel.

Genesis 12:4	Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran.
Genesis 21:1-7	Abraham was 100 years old at Isaac’s birth.
Genesis 25:26	Isaac was 60 years old at the birth of Jacob and Esau.
Genesis 47:9	Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt.

The key to the time Israel spent in slavery is found in Ex. 1:6. *“And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation.”* It is clear that Israel did not go into slavery until all the sons of Jacob had died. Levi died at 137, which is 18 to 20 years after Joseph’s death.

The original assumed length of 144 years should be reduced by 18 to 20 years, correctly giving the length of servitude as 124 to 126 years.

All the scriptures presented here support the statement the Bible makes that the 430 years and the 400 years are correctly documented in this article.

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