

GENESIS Lesson 16 – 2/17/19

400 years and 430 years

15:13: And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

15:14: And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15:15: And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

15:16: But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

15:18: In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

In Genesis chapter 15 God gives Abram a revelation, a prophecy, of what would befall his descendants.

These verses contain a sevenfold prophecy regarding Abram's descendants, the children of Israel, which received a literal and complete fulfillment. The reference in verse 14 of "that nation" has to do with the sojourn of Abram's descendants in the land of Egypt, their bondage there, and their deliverance and return to Canaan.

1. Abram's descendants were to be strangers in a land not theirs (verse 13).
2. In that strange land they were to "serve" (verse 13).
3. In that strange land they were to be "afflicted" 400 years (verse 13) — note that Exodus 12:40 views the entire "sojourning" of the

children of Israel in Egypt as 430 years. They “dwelt” in Egypt 430 years, but were “afflicted” for only 400 years of that time.

4. The nation that Abram’s descendants “served” would be judged by God (verse 14).
5. Abram’s offspring were to come out of Egypt with “great substance” (verse 14), see also Psalm 105:37.
6. Abram himself was to be spared these afflictions — he would die in peace and be “buried in a good old age (verse 15)”.
7. In the “fourth generation” Abram’s descendants would return again to Canaan (verse 16).

We will cover this prophecy point by point.

1. Strangers in a land not theirs

This land is Egypt, the children of Israel would go down to Egypt to escape another famine, remember what Abram did when there was a famine? But this time it would be God who directs them to Egypt.

Exod. 22:21: Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exod. 23:9: Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Lev. 19:34: But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Deut. 10:19: Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

2. They were to serve in that land

Gen. 39:1: And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

Gen. 39:2: And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Gen. 39:4: And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

Exod. 1:13: And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:

So the Israelites served the Egyptians.

3. The would be afflicted 400 years

Here we have a problem. Many take this 400 year affliction as the time they served in Egypt under bondage. And this makes sense, but the timeline does not add up, so we have to find another solution.

Exod. 1:11: Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Exod. 1:12: But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

Exod. 3:7: And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Exod. 3:17: And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the

Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

But when you add the timeline the Israelites were in Egypt the 400 year affliction seems like a contradiction.

Can we calculate from scripture how long the Israelites were in Egypt?

Exod. 12:40: Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

Exod. 12:41: And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

These verses clearly tell us that the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt was 430 years and Gen. 15:13 tells us the affliction was 400 years.

There are verses in the Bible that give us more clues.

Acts 7:6: And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

Gal. 3:16: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Gal. 3:17: And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

The contention lies in the term “four hundred years,” for Moses states in Exodus 12:40 that the sojourning was 430 years, and Paul says that

the law (of Exod. 20) was given 430 years after the covenant which God made with Abram in Genesis 15:13.

Paul messes things up; he tells that 430 years is the time span between the promise God made to Abram and the Law (given to Moses in Exod. 19-20).

Let's first look at the time the Israelites as a nation spent in Egypt, and this in itself poses another problem.

We know Joseph was in Egypt at around the age of 17 (Gen. 37), and 30 years of age (Gen. 41:46) when he became 2nd in command, and 39 years of age (Gen. 45) when Jacob and the rest of Joseph's siblings went down to Egypt. Among those was Levi. Levi was the father of Moses and Aaron; Levi→Kohath→Amram→Moses and Aaron.

Levi lived 137 years (Exod. 6:16), Kohath lived 133 years (Exod. 6:18), Amram lived 137 years (Exod. 6:20), and Moses was 80 when he delivered the children out of Egypt (Exod. 7:7). Adding these years up and assuming Kohath was born right before they entered Egypt and childbearing right before death you get 315 years (133+137+80), way short of 400! And we know this is not the case, there was overlap in the ages—the number is more like 215-235 years they were in Egypt. So there was no way the children of Israel were afflicted 400 years in Egypt.

So where is this 400 year affliction God talks about? Is this a contradiction?

The best answer has given to us by Henry Ainsworth, a British theologian from the early 1600s.

Ver. 13. Knowing Know,] That is, know assuredly: see Gen. ii. 17.
Not Theirs,] Meaning Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan itself;

wherein they were but strangers, Gen. xvii. 8. Psal. cv. 11, 12. and therein afflicted. Gen. xxi. 9. xxvi. 7, 14, 15, &c. but chiefly in Egypt. Four Hundred Years,] **Which began when Ishmael, son of Hagar the Egyptian, mocked and persecuted Isaac**, Gen. xxi. 9. Gal. iv. 29. **which fell out thirty years after the promise**, Gen. xii. 3. which promise was four hundred and thirty years before the law, Gal. iii. 17. and four hundred and thirty years after that promise, came Israel out of bondage, Exod. xii. 41. 2 (emphasis added)

God gave Abram the promise and the prophecy in Genesis 15, and 30 years later Isaac was weaned, and 400 years after that the children of Israel left Egypt.

Gen. 21:5: And Abraham was **an hundred years old**, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

Gen. 21:8: And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast **the same day that Isaac was weaned**.

Gen. 21:9: And Sarah saw **the son of Hagar the Egyptian**, which she had born unto Abraham, **mocking**.

God didn't take kindly to Ishmael mocking Isaac, in fact He calls it persecution!

Gal. 4:28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Gal. 4:29: But as then he that was born after the flesh **persecuted him** that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Now we may ask the question, "How old was Isaac when he was weaned?" He was not an infant, notice what it says in Gen. 21:8: "...the child grew..."

According to Jewish rabbinical traditions, children were weaned anywhere between 18 months and 5 years of age.

When Samuel was weaned, he was old enough to be left in the care of Eli the priest.

1 Sam. 1:24: And when **she had weaned him**, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and **the child was young**.

Now let's look at the 430 years of sojourning.

Based on what Paul says in Gal. 3 and what God said in Exod. 12, we believe the 430 years in each of these chapters are the same. The promise Paul mentions we find in Gen. 12.

Gen. 12:4: So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was **seventy and five years** old when he departed out of Haran.

So Abram was 75 years old when God promised him that He would make of him a great nation. This begins the 430 years of "sojourn." For in chapter 12 where do find Abram?

Gen. 12:10: And there was a famine in the land: and Abram **went down into Egypt to sojourn there**; for the famine was grievous in the land.

If the 430 years starts with the promise to Abram (Gen 12:1-3) and the affliction starts 30 years later, we can figure out that Isaac was 5 when he was weaned, since Abram was 75 years of age when the promise was given (Gen. 12:4).

So now let's see how all this information fits in a timeline.

Age of Patriarch	Event	Passage	Years from Promise	Years to Exodus
Abraham: 75	God makes the promise to Abram, he leaves Haran.	Genesis 12:1–4	0	430
Abraham: 75-85	God tells Abram: descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and serve and be afflicted for 400 years.	Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6		
Abraham: 85	Abram has lived in Canaan for 10 years and takes Hagar as his wife and she conceives Ishmael.	Genesis 16:3–4	10	420
Abraham: 86	Ishmael is born.	Genesis 16:15–16	11	419
Abraham: 100 Ishmael: 14	Isaac is born.	Genesis 21:5	25	405
Abraham: 105 Isaac: 5 Ishmael: 19	Isaac is weaned, Ishmael mocks Isaac.	Genesis 21:8–9; Galatians 4:29	30	400
Abraham: 140 Isaac: 40	Isaac marries Rebekah.	Genesis 24:1–67; 25:20	65	365
Abraham: 160 Isaac: 60	Esau and Jacob are born	Genesis 25:26	85	345
Abraham: 175 Isaac: 75 Jacob: 15	Abraham dies.	Genesis 25:7	100	330
Isaac: 151 Jacob: 91	Joseph is born.		176	254
Isaac: 168 Jacob: 108 Joseph: 17	Joseph is sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt.	Genesis 37	193	237
Isaac: 180 Jacob: 120 Joseph: 29	Isaac dies.	Genesis 35: 28–29	205	225
Jacob: 121 Joseph: 30	Joseph is made second in command by Pharaoh and Asenath as wife.	Genesis 41:46	206	224

Age of Patriarch	Event	Passage	Years from Promise	Years to Exodus
Jacob: 130 Joseph: 39	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers two years into the famine with five years left. Jacob meets Pharaoh.	Genesis 45:4–6 Genesis 47:9	215	215
Jacob: 147 Joseph: 56	Jacob dies.	Genesis 47:28–49:33	232	198
Joseph: 110	Joseph dies.	Genesis 50:26	286	144
Moses: 0	Moses is born	Exodus 2	350	80
Moses: 80	Moses and Aaron speak to Pharaoh beginning the exodus from Egypt.	Exodus 7:7; Exodus 12:40–41; Galatians 3:16–17	430	0

Table adapted from:

<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/how-long-were-the-israelites-in-egypt/>

For your information it was 1487 BC when the children of Israel left Egypt.

And three months later they were given the Law.

Exod. 19:1: In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

4. The nation that Abram's descendants "served" would be judged

Exod. 12:12: For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

And when we get into Exodus you will see how God judged the false gods of Egypt through the ten plagues.

Ex:10:7: And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

5. Abram's offspring were to come out of Egypt with "great substance"

Exod. 12:35: And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

Exod. 12:36: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Psalms 105:37: He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

Psalms 105:38: Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

6. Abram would spared, he would die in a good old age

Self-explanatory.

Gen. 25:7: And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

Gen. 25:8: Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

7. In the "fourth generation" Abram's descendants would return to Canaan.

Jacob→Levi→Kohath→Amram→Aaron→Eleazar

So from these men who entered the land of Canaan? Eleazar, so he was the fourth generation, therefore Kohath was the 1st generation.

So Kohath marks the 1st generation that experienced the brutality of Pharaoh.

Exod. 1:6: And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and **all that generation**.

Exod. 1:8: Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

All happened according to what God said. So it will be in your life, so let God do what He wants in your life, He will bring it pass.

430 years from the day that God promised Abram he would make his descendants a great nation, the children of Israel left Egypt and headed for the Promise Land.

Exod. 12:17: And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in **this selfsame day** have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

Exod. 12:41: And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even **the selfsame day** it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Exod. 12:51: And it came to pass **the selfsame day**, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

Three times God repeats this!

Iniquity of the Amorites

In verse 18 we are also told that the iniquity of Amorites was not yet full. The Amorites were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham.

Gen. 10:15: And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

Gen. 10:16: And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,

The Amorites and their brethren the other Canaanites were exceedingly wicked (for a list of some of their sins see Leviticus 18).

It is clear from this verse that God has a limit on how much sin He will tolerate.

Noah's generation reached this limit, Sodom and Gomorrah reached this limit, Egypt reached this limit, so did the Canaanites, and in the tribulation when man's sin is no longer tolerated by God, He will send His wrath upon the earth.

The conquest of Canaan by Israel and fullness of the Amorites' sin coincided. Only God could do that.

Josh. 24:8: And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.

Amos 2:9: Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

Amos 2:10: Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

John talks about Christians reaching a point in their lives where their sin will lead to death—that is God, will kill you if you cross the line.

1 John 5:16: If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

1 John 5:17: All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Paul mentions this too.

1 Cor. 5:5: To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Boundaries of the Promised Land

A few weeks ago I gave you a map of the Promised Land, two of its boundaries are found in this verse; two rivers. One is still around today the other is not, but we have evidence of where it once was.

Many believe the river of Egypt is the Nile, it is not but it was an ancient river that almost divided the Sinai Peninsula in half. Most scholars identify it with Wadi El-Arish, and I agree with them. If you go to google maps you can see the ancient river bed clearly.



In the 5th century Herotodus said that without the Nile, there is no Egypt.

In Isaiah 19:21-25 the Lord tells us that in millennial kingdom there will be three top nations: Israel, Egypt and Assyria, so the river of Egypt is not the Nile. So I believe the river of Egypt is not the Nile.

There are three words in the Hebrew for river [yeh-ore (Strong's H2975), nahar (Strong's H5102), nachal (Strong's H5158 - also used for valley)], one (yeh-ore) is predominately used when referring to the Nile.

Since the Nile is so interconnected to Egypt, this River of Egypt cannot be the Nile.

The other river mentioned is the Euphrates.



Again, only under Solomon's reign did Israel possess the entire Promised Land, and what was the outcome? Peace.

Next week: the birth of Ishmael