

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

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Starting Point for 400 and 430 Years

May 27, 2009

(13) And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger [sojourner] in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred (400) years; (14) And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. (15) And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. (16) But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (Genesis 15:13-16 KJV [NASB])

(40) Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty (430) years. (41) And at the end of four hundred and thirty (430) years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:40-41 NASB)

(16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (17) What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty (430) years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. (Galatians 3:16-17 NASB)

These three sets of verses contain two periods of time, 400 years and 430 years, in relation to ancient Israel and their time in Egypt. On the one hand, we are told that Abram's seed was afflicted as a sojourner (stranger) in a land that was not theirs for 400 years. Notice that the land was not identified. On the other hand, we are told that the sons of Israel, Abram's descendants, lived in Egypt for 430 years, which was a land in which they sojourned and were afflicted. However, as we will see, it was not the only land in which they sojourned. Assuming that these two periods are not biblical discrepancies, how are we to resolve the apparent difference of 30 years? The obvious answer is that the difference must be in the starting point for each period.

It is not unusual to find different starting points in Scripture. For example, Matthew 17:1 states that after six days, presumably on the seventh day, Jesus took three of His disciples up on a high mountain to see Him transfigured in glory. However, the comparable account in Luke 9:28 states that "some eight days after these sayings" Jesus took His disciples up on the mountain. At first glance, one might think that there is a discrepancy in the two accounts, but Luke gives us the key to the difference in that his starting point was with the sayings. In other words, Matthew and Luke had different starting points. Jesus taught His disciples over a two-day period (Matthew 16:13-28; Luke 9:18-27). Matthew simply counted his days following these sayings, and Luke counted his days at the beginning of these sayings. By the way, six days followed by the seventh day, the sabbatical rest, is a vital principle in understanding the appointed time for our present heaven and earth in the plan of God. It speaks of the history of the heavens and the earth. Seven thousand years will complete the history of the second heavens and the second earth. Following these days, a new, glorious eighth day begins. It is *God's day* when all is new. If you are interested in this subject, please read my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 1, Chapter 2. *After Six Days...On The Seventh Day*.

Now, it is usually assumed that Israel literally remained in Egypt for at least 400 years based on the prophecy of Genesis 15:13, but, again, notice that it does not identify the actual place or land or even how Abram's seed would be oppressed. Our starting point must be with Abram's seed that was a stranger in a land, and this seed is none other than Isaac.

(12) And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her

voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. (13) And also of the son of the bondwoman [Ishmael] will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. (Genesis 21:12-13 KJV)

Compare this to what Paul wrote to the Galatians.

But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh [the son of the bondwoman] persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit [Isaac, Abram's seed], so it is now also. (Galatians 4:29 NASB)

Consequently, Isaac was Abram's seed that was persecuted, for he was afflicted by his half-brother Ishmael, a fact borne out by the book of Jasher (21:14) that recounts Ishmael's attempt to kill Isaac when he was 5 years of age. So, we have Abram's seed afflicted, but when was he a sojourner or a stranger in a land? The answer is simple: from his birth. While in Canaan, Abraham confessed that he was a stranger and sojourner (Genesis 23:4), a fact confirmed to the Hebrews: **By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise** (Hebrews 11:9 NASB). Thus, Isaac was a stranger in a land not his, just as his father was, and he was afflicted while in this land at a very early age due to ill-treatment at the hand of Ishmael. Further, we know that Isaac was 60 years of age when he became the father of Jacob, and Jacob was 130 years of age when he went to Egypt to see Joseph after missing him for 21 years (**Jacob's distress**), which means that from Isaac's birth to Jacob and his sons entering Egypt was 190 years. Subtracting 190 from 400, we discover that the sons of Israel were in Egypt for 210 years, which is another prophetic time-cycle referring to Jacob's distress.

But how are we to reconcile the 400 years with the 430 years? According to Moses, the sons of Israel went out of Egypt 430 years to **the very day**, as if to emphasize the exactness of the time. Again, the answer lies in the starting point of the 430 years, and this point is revealed through two sets of Scripture from two Hebrews, one from Moses and the other from Paul.

(17) It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. (18) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates...." (Genesis 15:17-18 NASB)

(16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (17) What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty (430) years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise (Galatians 3:16-17 NASB).

Abram received the promise of God at the age of 70, which was 30 years before the birth of Isaac. Thirty years added to the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 yields 430 years. Thus, the 430 years must have begun when Abram received the promise and ended when Moses received the covenant of the Law.

However, there is one more matter that needs to be resolved that seems to be a contradiction. Moses stated that they lived in Egypt 430 years. It has been shown that they only lived in Egypt for 210 years. How are we to resolve this matter if the 430 years refer back to the starting point with Abram? Since the seed of the sons of Israel came from Abram, the time in Egypt must relate to Abram, the sojourner who was a pilgrim and an alien in a strange land, and his journey that most notably started in Egypt. We know that after leaving Haran, Abram sojourned to Egypt when there was famine in the land. When he departed Egypt with Sarai, he took with him Sarai's Egyptian maid, Hagar, who gave birth to Ishmael. Further, the promise to Abram included land from the river of Egypt. So, Egypt figured prominently in Abraham's life, and it seems that the entire journey from Abram to Moses, from the promise to the Law covenant, is reckoned as an Egyptian journey.

To summarize, there were 430 years between the two covenants, starting when Abram was 70 years of age and ending when Israel came out of Egypt to receive the Law. There were 400 years of affliction and sojourning starting when Isaac was born and ending when Israel came out of Egypt to receive the Law. Notice that the end points are the same; it is the starting point that determines the period of time.