

Outline Studies
in
Biblical Chronology

**A Continuous Chronology
from
Creation to the Cross**

**Chapter 3
The Genesis-Exodus Connection:
Chronological Details**



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Ch. 3: The Genesis–Exodus Connection: Chronological Details

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The Genesis–Exodus Connection: Chronological Details

Introduction

The Book of Genesis contains a continuous chronological record of the history of creation beginning with the first man, Adam, and continuing through the patriarch Joseph, doing so entirely through its internal collection of “*toledeths*” (i.e., texts delineated by the phrase “*these are the generations of*”; see Ch. 2, pp. 36-37). This chronological record can be constructed by direct appeal to biographical-age data compiled from named individuals forming a succession of generations as recorded in Genesis as summarized in Ch. 1. However, any further development of a continuous chronological history of man beyond the death of Joseph as recorded in the closing verse of Genesis can only be obtained by tracing the history of the nation of Israel. Now the birth of the nation of Israel, in any distinct sense, occurred at the celebration of the first Passover and the exodus from Egypt or, even more precisely, at the giving of the Law at Sinai two months following the inaugural Passover in Egypt. Hence, the pivotal step in compiling a continuous Biblical chronology that bridges across the time gap existing between the closing verse of Genesis and the opening chapter of Exodus requires several varied inputs:

- time-specific promises given to the patriarch Abraham pertaining to that nation through whom God would bless the entire world
- data regarding the early generations of Israel following the life of Jacob, the progenitor of the 12 tribes forming the nation of Israel
- historical and chronological statements recorded in the Book of Exodus.

Year Ann. Hom.	Event	Comments
0	Adam created	Beginning of time
•		
1656	Methuselah died	Flood began
•		
2008	Abraham born	
2083	Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan	Promise given
2108	Isaac born	Abraham 100 yrs. old
•		
2168	Jacob born	Isaac 60 yrs. old
2183	Abraham dies	Abraham 175 yrs. old
2259	Joseph born	Jacob 91 yrs. old
2288	Isaac dies	Isaac 180 yrs. old
2289	Joseph begins to rule in Egypt	Joseph 30 yrs. old
2298	Jacob moves to Egypt	Jacob 130 yrs. old
2315	Jacob dies in Egypt	Jacob 147 yrs. old
2369	Joseph dies in Egypt End of Genesis	Joseph 110 yrs. old
•		
•		
•		
?? date ??	Exodus begins	Moses 80 yrs. old

Genesis–Exodus Time Gap

Note:
The year “**Ann. Hom.**” denotes the year since the creation of man; the year of the “**era of man**” (**Anno Hominis**); alternatively, years **A.C.** (**After Creation**).

Note:
The objective of this chapter is to bridge the time gap between the death of Joseph and beginning of the exodus.

Foundational Texts Pertaining to the Genesis-Exodus Connection

The key texts establishing the most definitive framework for a chronological connection between Genesis and Exodus are reprinted below. To gain clarity regarding the terms of these texts, particular phrases are reprinted in the text boxes from different translations. The nuanced differences between these translations are deemed important not only in seeking the true sense of the original texts, but also to ensuring a coherency and consistency with all other related texts.

“And [God] 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 **400 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 **4th generation** they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.’” *Gen. 15:13-16* (NKJV)

Gen. 15:13, (Geneva): “Know for surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, **400 years**, and shall serve them.”

Gen. 15:16, (Geneva): “And in the **4th generation** they shall come hither again.”

Comment:

This text provides two statements containing explicit chronological detail pertinent to the

Genesis-Exodus Connection:

- a 400-year period
- a 4-generation period

Note: The sense of the text seems quite clearly to imply that these two predicted periods are overlapping and should have a simultaneous fulfillment. In any case, an accurate chronology must include a wholly compatible reckoning of both time periods.

“Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was **430 years**. And it came about at the end of **430 years**, to the very day, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

Ex. 12:40-41 (NASB)

Ex. 12:40, (NASB footnote):

“Now the time of the sons of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was **430 years**.”

Ex. 12:40, (KJV):

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was **430 years**.”

Ex. 12:40, (Septuagint & Samaritan):

“The sojourning of the children of Israel who sojourned in Egypt and Canaan was **430 years**.”

Ex. 12:40-41, (NIV): “Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was **430 years**. At the end of the **430 years**, “to the very day”, all the LORD’S divisions left Egypt.”

Comment:

The text of *Ex. 12:40-41* refers to a period of **430 years** – a time-specific period that was to culminate with the exodus from Egypt. The text contains wording that is intended to be accepted as precise – emphasizing even God’s revelatory purpose of providing an exact counting of days.

General Perspective: The rendering of *vs. 40* in some modern translations (e.g., the NIV) is quite “loose” in comparison to the precision implicit in the listed translations. This “looseness” of translative choice appears to stem particularly from a ‘less-than-rigorous’ attention to the building of a consistent and coherent chronology. Consistency and coherency checks imposed by careful and detailed chronological considerations form a constraining requirement on a text, and most particularly so when both time-specific and overlapping periods are encountered, either in an isolated text or in related Biblical texts.

The foregoing prophetic texts highlight two distinctly different periods of time pertaining to Abraham's offspring, the "sons of Israel": a 400 year period and a 430 year period. These noted periods are spoken of as being central to the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham in some deeply significant way. The historical record in *Ex. 12:41* emphasizes that the 430 year period would encompass a precise counting of days. Furthermore, the prophetic record in *Gen. 15:16* indicates that a span of four (4) generations would be involved in some meaningful way within this predicted period of "sojourning" in a "land that is not theirs".

Questions

The quoted texts stimulate several questions pertinent to this issue of chronology.

- When was the 400-year period noted in *Gen. 15:13* scheduled to begin?
- When was the 430-year period noted in *Ex. 12:40* scheduled to begin?
- When was the counting of 4 generations mentioned in *Gen. 15:16* scheduled to begin?
- Are the 4 generations intended to bridge across the full span of the 400-year period?
- Do these different chronological markers overlap and, if at all, how?

Observation

There is no apparent implication that the 400-year period is intended to be separate from the 430 year period. To the contrary, both time periods deal with Abraham's offspring being in a foreign land, being oppressed, and subsequently being able to return and possess the land originally promised to Abraham. Further, both texts identify the exodus from Egypt as the concluding event for the two different periods. Hence, we should expect that these distinct, 4-century-long periods were, at least for the major portion of the indicated times, fulfilled concurrently.

Further Relevant Texts

"Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you'. Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, God removed him into this country in which you are now living. *And He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground;* and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that He would give it to him as a possession, and to his offspring after him. But God spoke to this effect, that *his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land,* and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for **400 years**. 'And whatever nation to which they shall be in bondage I Myself will judge,' said God, 'and after that they will come out and serve Me in this place'." *Acts 7:2-7*

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. *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; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." *Heb. 11:8-10*

A key point of information is consistently emphasized in these two texts. Both the statement of Stephen in his address before the Sanhedrin recorded in *Acts 7:5* and the statement in *Heb. 11:9* note that neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob ever "possessed" any part of the land of Canaan during the time they dwelt there prior to Jacob's move to Egypt. They simply sojourned as "aliens" in that land throughout their days in Canaan. Their time of sojourning in Canaan should necessarily be, therefore, included in both the 400 year and the 430 year periods. In this regard, we recall from *Gen. 15:16* that the Amorite was still in possession of Canaan at the time

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt there. The only ground these patriarchs ever “owned” was the site Abraham purchased at Machpelah (*Gen. 23:17-20*). In this regard, we should note carefully the expression of Abraham in his negotiation for the purchase of the plot where he buried Sarah.

“Then Abraham arose from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, ‘I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a possession of a grave among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.’” *Gen. 23:3-4*

Conclusion re the 430-Year Period

The clear statement of *Ex. 12:40-41*, taken together with other enlightening texts, reveals that the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt began precisely on the 430th anniversary of Abraham coming into the “Promised Land” and hearing Yahweh deliver the first communication concerning the Covenant Promise (*Gen. 12:1-3*).

Hence, since the date of Yahweh’s communication of the Abrahamic Covenant was in the year 2083, the exodus from Egypt began in the year $2083 + 430 = 2513$ Anno Hominis (the year 2513 of “the era of man”; i.e., 2513 years following the creation of man).

Point: A firm basis built entirely on Biblical texts exists allowing the continuous chronology of Genesis to be carried forward into Exodus without any time gaps.

Test of the Conclusion

To solidify our conclusion that the 430 year period specified in *Ex. 12:40-41* should be measured from Abraham’s entry into the land of Canaan when he was 75 years of age (cf., *Gen. 12:4*), we can apply tests for consistency and compatibility. That is, we can examine the Scriptures and make certain that our conclusion comports with the entirety of the inspired Word of God.

Galatians 3:8, 13-17

vs. 8: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you.’ ”

vs. 13-14: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’ – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

vs. 15: Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man’s covenant, yet when it has been ratified, not one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

vs. 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.

vs. 17: What I am saying is this: *The Law, which came 430 years later*, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.”

Comment:

The question that naturally arises after reading *Gal. 3:17* is: **430 years later** than what previous “initiating” event?

The full text quoted in the adjacent text box seems to declare quite clearly that the Law was given to Moses **430 years** following Abraham’s receipt of the Covenant Promise; that is, **430 years** following Abraham’s first entrance into the land of Canaan at 75 years of age. Now, a comparison of *Ex. 12:1-6* & *Ex. 19:1-2* reveals that the Law was given at Sinai two months following the inaugural Passover in Egypt launching the exodus.

Summary Conclusion: The consistency test pertaining to the 430 year period is satisfied!

The 400–Year Period

With the 430-year period settled, the further chronological markers of the 400-year period and the “4th generation” remain to be clarified. The start of the 400-year period revealed to Abraham in *Gen. 15:13-16*, and its meaning, can be explored by working backward under the assumption that the 400 and the 430 year periods have a common ending date; namely, the beginning of the exodus. As reasoned conclusively above, the 430-year period specifies the time extending from the first enunciation of the Abrahamic Covenant in the year 2083 An. Hom., when Abraham arrived in Canaan at 75 years of age, and the giving of the Law at Sinai two months after the inaugural Passover in Egypt and the beginning of the exodus in the year 2513 An. Hom.. Hence, assuming the 400-year period ended at the same time as the 430-year period, and that there are no time gaps in the 400-year period, the beginning of the 400-year period can be calculated. The conclusion reached by reasoning along this line is illustrated in the brief chart below.

Relationship Between the 400 & 430 Year Periods				
Event	Year An. Hom.	Year An. Hom.		
Abraham born	2008			
Promise given	2083	2083		
Isaac born	2108			
??	2113		←	
•				
•				
•				
Exodus begins	2513	2513		

400 yrs.

430 yrs.

Conclusion
 Year **2113** An. Hom. coincides with the year Isaac was 5 yrs. old → very likely the year Isaac was weaned and Ishmael was sent away. If so, Isaac becomes “*the seed*” in **2113**
Note “*your seed*” in *Gen. 15:13*. Compare also with *Gen. 21:8-21*.

Remaining Questions:

- What is the meaning of “*the 4th generation*” appearing in *Gen. 15:16*?
- Is the proposed start of the **400-year** period consistent with 4 generations living in a land where they would be “*enslaved and oppressed*?”

Texts Relevant to the Identification of the “4 Generations”

To validate the “4-generation” prophecy we must examine Biblical texts that set forth specifics about Jacob’s family during their stay in Egypt. There are two such texts.

<p><i>Gen. 46:5-7, 11</i> vs. 5-7: “Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; ... and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.” vs. 11: “And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.”</p>	<p><i>Ex. 6:14, 16-20</i> vs. 14: “These are the heads of their fathers’ households.” vs. 16: “And these are the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon and Kohath and Merari, and <i>the length of Levi’s life was 137 years.</i>” vs. 18: “And the sons of Kohath: Amram and Ishar and Hebron and Uzziel; and <i>the length of Kohath’s life was 133 years.</i>” vs. 20: “And Amram married his father’s (Kohath’s) sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and <i>the length of Amram’s life was 137 years.</i>”</p>
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Based on the passages quoted in the two text boxes appearing immediately above, we can construct the following chart noting possible “**4-generation**” sets, each composed of successive generations. The reader will note that each set begins with a particular member of Abraham’s family that initially lived in Canaan and subsequently moved into Egypt. The first column considers the possibility that the preposition in the phrase, “in the **4th generation**”, might be alternatively rendered “after” – “**after the 4th generation**”. As such, the counting of the generations of “Abraham’s seed”, properly begins with Isaac, and Moses is part of the first generation of Abraham’s descendants to depart from the land of servitude.

Fulfillment of the “4 Generation” Prophecy to Abraham (Gen. 15:16)				
4 Generations	4 Generations	4 Generations	4 Generations	Life Span
Isaac	Jacob	Jacob	Levi	137
Jacob	Levi	Levi	Kohath	133
Levi	Jochebed	Kohath	Amram	137
Jochebed	Moses	Amram	Moses	120
Moses				

There are multiple ways to see the fulfillment of the “**4-generation**” prophecy. However, the text of *Gen. 15:16* says explicitly: “*But in the **4th generation** they shall return here.*” The return to the land promised to Abraham occurred under Moses; that is, “**in/after the 4th generation**”. Hence, either the *4-generation* span from Isaac → Moses (“**after the 4th generation**”), or from either Jacob → Moses (“**in the 4th generation**”) or Levi → Moses satisfies the terms of the prophecy.

If, as many commentaries and Study Bibles suggest, the children of Israel truly “lived” in Egypt for 400 years, then the generations must be excessively long. Assuming Levi lived 100 years in Egypt before Kohath was born, and that Kohath and Amram were each 100 years old when their respective sons were born, and with Moses being 80 years old at the exodus, the sum only yields a span of 380 years – falling short of the prophesied 400 year span. The alternative is that the genealogies given in *Gen 46* and *Ex. 6* must have missing generations.

By contrast, the proposed chronology satisfies *both* the required time frame of 400 years *and* encompasses exactly 4 generations ... and does so without resorting to any genealogical gaps and with entirely reasonable generational age spans. Of course, the consequence is that by no means were Abraham’s offspring (seed) oppressed in Egypt for 400 years – a quite commonly *presumed* fact.

Summary Note:
 Both the 400-year period and the 4-generation span were stated as time-specific chronological markers by Yahweh in a context where He elevated the truthfulness to His word to the highest possible level – to the level of the eternal immutability of His own Being (see *Gen. 15:12-21*).
 We should, therefore, confidently expect to find that both statements have been fulfilled with impeccable fidelity. Careful chronological and textual analysis confirms that all terms of these time-specific prophecies have indeed been fulfilled with impeccable fidelity.

Summary of the “Genesis–Exodus” Chronological Connection

Year An. Hom.	Event	Comments	430 year period	400 year period
2083	Promise given Abraham enters Canaan	Start of 430 yr. period	year 0	
2108	Isaac born		year 25	
2113	Isaac weaned	Start of 400 yr. period Isaac assumes the position as the sole seed	year 30	year 0
2298	Jacob moves family to Egypt		year 215	year 185
2369	Joseph dies in Egypt	286 years since the promise is given to Abraham	year 286	year 256
2433	Moses born	64 years since the death of Joseph in Egypt	year 350	year 320
2473	Moses flees Egypt settles in the wilderness	Moses age 40 104 years since the death of Joseph in Egypt	year 390	year 360
2513	Inaugural Passover Exodus begins	Moses age 80 144 years since death of Joseph in Egypt	year 430	year 400

Comment:
 The historical record, together with the prophetic message given to Abraham in his great encounter with Adonai Yahweh as detailed in *Gen. 15* (esp. vs. 13-16), provided ample and solid foundation for Amram and Jochebed to “believe God” in regard to their son Moses, and also for Moses to be strong in faith as noted in *Heb. 11:23-25*.

Comment:
 The chronology set forth here illumines an inseparable prophetic-redemptive connection between the Covenant Promise (*Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-5*) and the giving of the Law at Sinai (*Ex. 19-20*). The Law was given through Abraham’s seed (national Israel), but the fulfillment of the Law (which universally condemns and demands death) was only to be realized in and through the ‘greater seed’ promised in the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant → Israel’s Messiah.

The rigorous fulfillment of this smaller segment of God’s redemptive working can be shown, by careful chronological analysis, to extend with equal rigor to a tracing of the Messianic line from Adam until “*Messiah the Prince*” is “*cut off*” (*Dan. 9:25-26*). The redemptive purpose of God is highlighted in a most poignant way by the fact that His “breathed-out” revelation provides such a precise record of His ordering of all events in history on a schedule He has fixed from before the world began.

Summary of the “Abraham-to-Exodus” Chronology

Year An. Hom.	Patriarchal Event	Important Chronological Intervals
2008	Abraham born	
2083	Covenant Promise given to Abraham	
2108	Isaac born	
2113	Isaac becomes the (sole) seed Isaac weaned/Ishmael sent away	
2168	Jacob born	
2259	Joseph born	
2289	Joseph begins rulership in Egypt	
2298	Jacob moves family to Egypt	
2315	Jacob dies in Egypt	
2369	Joseph dies in Egypt	
2433	Moses born	
2513	Exodus begins	
2553	Exodus ends	

Appendix: Notes Extracted from Study Bibles and Study Guides

Reformation Study Bible

Gen. 15:13 note: **400 years.** “A round number for the period spent in Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:40-41).”

Ex. 12:40 note: **430 years.** “See Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6 note.”

Acts 7:6 note: **400 years.** “Ex. 12:40 has “430 years” but Stephen is speaking in round numbers, and may have been following the text of Gen. 15:13 which has 400 years.”

Gal. 3:17 note: **430 years.** “In Ex. 12:40 this figure is given for the length of Israel’s stay in Egypt. In the Greek O.T. (Septuagint) version of Exodus, the time of the patriarchs’ stay in Canaan is included in the 430 years. But Paul is not necessarily following the Septuagint in alluding to the passage. It is enough for his purpose to show that centuries passed before the law given at Sinai (cf. Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6).”

MacArthur Study Bible

Gen. 15:13 note: **400 years.** “This represents an approximated number which is precisely 430 years (cf. Ex. 12:40).”

Ex. 12:40-41 note: **430 years.** “Abraham had been told that his descendants would be aliens mistreated in a foreign land for 400 years, using a figure rounded to hundreds (Gen. 15:13).”

Acts 7:6 note: **400 years.** “This is taken directly from Gen. 15:13-14 where God Himself rounded off the exact length of Israel’s sojourn in Egypt (430 yrs., Ex. 12:40).”

Gal. 3:17 note: **430 years.** “From Israel’s sojourn in Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:40) to the giving of the law at Sinai (ca. 1445 B.C.). The law actually came 645 years after the initial promise to Abraham (ca. 2090 B.C.; cf. Gen. 12:4; 21:5; 25:26; 47:9), but the promise was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:24) and later to Jacob (ca. 1928 B.C.; Gen. 28:15). The last known reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob occurred in Gen. 46:2-4 (ca. 1875 B.C.) just before he went to Egypt – 430 years before the Mosaic law was given.”

Defender’s Study Bible (Dr. H.M. Morris)

Gen. 15:13 note: **400 years.** “This may be intended as a round number, for the more precise value being 430 years (Ex. 12:40). See note on Ex. 12:41.”

Ex. 12:41 note: **430 years.** “These 430 years of “sojourning” in Egypt (Ex. 12:40) seems to conflict with the statement by God to Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a land that would “afflict them 400 years” (Gen. 15:13) and the similar statement by Stephen (Acts 7:6). These amounts are not just round numbers. Note the stress on “the self-same day”. Varied interpretations have been offered for the discrepancy of the 30 years but the most appropriate seems the inference that the first 30 years in Egypt (17 years before Jacob died, 13 years after his death) were years of favor under Pharaoh, but when the new king arose “which knew not Joseph” (Ex. 1:8), then the Israelites were soon resented and persecuted, and eventually enslaved, remaining in disfavor for exactly 400 years.”

Acts 7:6 note: **400 years.** “Gen. 15:13 also says 400 years, where Ex. 12:40 and Gal. 3:17 say this period was 430 years. Probably the Israelites were treated well for the first 30 years, then evil, as Stephen says, for 400 years.”

Gal. 3:17 note: 430 years. “The 430 years from the Abrahamic promise until the giving of the law to Moses and the 430 years of Israel’s extended stay in Egypt parallel each other, provided that the reference to “the covenant” here in Gal. 3:17 refers to the final ratification of this covenant, as confirmed to Jacob just as he and his family were leaving Canaan for Egypt (Gen. 46:1-4). This seems quite reasonable in the current context of Paul’s argument; see also comments on Acts 7:6 and Gen. 15:13.”

Bible Study Fellowship Note re Gen. Ch. 15

“The 400 years were a prophetic round number for the 430 years (or 400 years of affliction) which Israel spent as slaves “in a land not theirs” – Egypt (see Ex. 12:40).”