

Exod 03-08-17b

Let's resume our study now in the Word of God in Exodus chapter 14 and as we continue, we're going to take a look at something that I promised we would talk about, and then I have sort of delayed, but it is pertinent to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and the timing in which that takes place. This is important for a number of reasons. I've wrestled with whether or not to present it because it doesn't immediately suggest itself as something to draw upon for application and sustaining us through the day, but it is nevertheless something that we're going to cover.

So here we go. The Word of God, and let me give you the argument for the traditional view first. In the normal understanding, you have Genesis chapter 15.

This is where it begins. You remember Abraham, the animals are cut in half. He waits all day, shooing the buzzards away.

These animals in the hot sun are dead and laying there. And then towards sundown, God comes and walks between the pieces like a smoking lantern and a burning torch. And then God speaks in prophetic utterance and says that the descendants of Abraham are going to serve in a land that is not their own.

They are going to, this is Genesis 15, 13. Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs and they will serve them. Now this is serve the people who are in this land 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 fourth generation, they shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Now, the Amorites are the current indigenous dwellers in the land that God is in the process of promising to Abraham. Amorite is kind of a general term.

It goes back to Amurra, A-M-U-R-R-A in the ancient Near Eastern text. Amorites is kind of a catch all for all the different ites, kind of another word for Canaanites, that are in this land that Abraham has been promised. So what do we have in the substance of this declaration? The descendants of Abraham will be strangers in a land that is not theirs.

They will be subservient. They will be afflicted and this will last 400 years. In the fourth generation, they will return to this land for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

So working backward in the fourth generation, the iniquity of the Amorites is going to be complete. It will be full. Reminds us of what the Lord said about Jerusalem being trodden underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

And when the plan of God reaches the point that the Gentiles no longer need to be trampling Jerusalem underfoot, then you're going to have the day of the Lord. In the same way here, these dwellers in Canaan are going to go from bad to worse. Their idolatry, their immorality is going to come to the full.

And in the fourth generation, the descendants of Abraham are going to come back to this land and wipe them out. Their iniquity will be full. Their court case in terms of what they have done and their guilt will be manifest to all.

And that's why when the Israelites come back, they are going to be told kill everything, kill the men, kill the women, kill the children, kill the animals, kill everything in sight, hack, slash, slay, destroy, wreak havoc. By the way, when you talk about havoc, it is wreak, W-R-E-A-K. I heard somebody say wreck havoc this past week.

They're going to wreck havoc like W-R-E-C-K. It's wreak, W-R-E-A-K. You wreak havoc.

If you did it yesterday, it is not wreaked. Wreaked is the way something smelled yesterday. It is wrought, W-R-O-U-G-H-T.

I wrought havoc yesterday and I will wreak havoc today. Anyway, just a little side note there for your edification. So, people say fine, this land where they're going to be subservient is Egypt.

That's a no-brainer. So, how do we make the calculations? They must have been in Egypt 400 years in bondage and then came out in the fourth generation. Well, let me read you a little tidbit here presenting this view.

The entire period of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt is said to be 430 years in Exodus 12, 40 and 41. We've already seen, right? Now, the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was 430 years. And it came to pass at the end of 430 years, even the selfsame day, it came to pass that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt.

That's what it says in Exodus 12, 40 and 41 in our English Bible. However, the Greek Septuagint, which was translated from much older manuscripts than what we have, until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the oldest manuscripts we had of much of the Old Testament were 11th century A.D. And these were copies of copies of copies of copies of copies of copies of copies of copies that were made by the Masoretes. And then some books have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls that are far older.

But the text of the Septuagint of Exodus 12, 40 allows only 215 years for the Egyptian sojourn. Now, the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt, this is what the LXX says, the Septuagint. The time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt and in the land of Canaan was 430 years.

So this is all of the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchal period up in Bethel and the other places that they sojourned up there before they came down. Dwelt in the land of Egypt

and in the land of Canaan was 430 years. So if you take the traditional view, ignore the Septuagint and accept the biblical figures as they stand, the patriarchs spent 215 years in Canaan and then the Israelites spent 430 years in Egypt.

Well, we know that the Exodus was circa 1440 B.C. So you add up the 430 years of bondage in Egypt and the 215 years from the time of Isaac's birth and so on until Jacob and his sons go down to join Joseph in Egypt. And 430 plus 215 equals 645 years. So the time of Abraham then would be in B.C. years, you take 1440 or 1441 or 1447, somewhere in there, when the Exodus takes place, add your 645 years, go backward, and you find that the date for Abraham is along about 2086 B.C. for when he enters Canaan, 2161 B.C., the date of his birth because he was 75 years old when he left Haran for Canaan, we know this from Genesis 12.4. Well, see, we're getting bogged down in numbers.

This was my fear if I launched into this whole 430, 215 thing. Suffice it to say, what do we have? The Exodus is, I think, 1447 B.C. I think that's the actual year. Go back, add the 430 years backward, and you get to the time of the prophecy to Abraham.

You go back another, I mean, the 430 is when Jacob comes down, 215 before that, you get to Abraham, 615 years. So you have basically 2100 B.C., somewhere around in there is Abraham. Now, if this is not correct, if the Septuagint is correct, then you have 215 years from Abraham to the going down into Egypt, and then 215 years from the going down in Egypt until the Exodus for a total of 430 years.

All right. What makes me think, which you know that I do, that it's not that total of 645 years, it's not 400 years in bondage. Not only do we have the witness of the Septuagint, but you remember the Jewish historian Josephus? He wrote the Jewish Wars.

He wrote a lot of things just around the time of the Apostle Paul. He was sort of a contemporary of Paul. Josephus, in Antiquities 15.2, says that the sojourn in Egypt was 215 years.

Josephus, why is this important? I mean, Josephus got some things wrong in his study of the Scriptures, but he had access to a lot of the documents that had formerly been housed in the temple at Jerusalem and had been sacked and taken to Rome and put in the libraries. The Romans had taken them out. Lots of old records, chronicles of the kings and things like this.

Josephus, because of his unique position in the Roman world and as a Jew, had access to these old, old documents from which to draw his information. So, Josephus has access to old documents. You have the Septuagint, which was translated 300 years before Christ.

This is our earliest independent witness to the Old Testament text. A third witness to the Old Testament text is the Samaritan Pentateuch. You may remember that after Ezra and Nehemiah, they come back from the captivity, come back into the land of Israel.

The people who stayed and didn't go into captivity sort of caved in. They were viewed as being co-operators. What do we call those people? You know, like in World War II that went in with

the Germans.

There's a name for them. Yeah, but there's a... Collaborators. They were viewed as collaborators, conspirators, whatever they were.

They co-operated. They caved in and did whatever they were asked to do. They collaborated with the enemy.

So, this is why the Jews developed this great animosity toward the Samaritans. Well, the Samaritans got their back up and said, well, who died and left you in charge of the truth of God? And so, they took the first five books of Moses and adopted that as their Bible and started making their own copies. So, the Samaritan Pentateuch is the Samaritan copy of Genesis through Deuteronomy and has its own independent text tradition.

The Samaritan Pentateuch also has this verse in the form 430 years in Canaan and in Egypt. So, we have three old independent witnesses that all say that 430 years encompasses the patriarch's time in Canaan and the bondage in Egypt. Along with this, and I've mentioned this before, many of the genealogies indicate that there had to have been time to have the descendancy that is listed for some individuals.

For example, it is argued by the people that say, well, there needs to be 400 years of bondage. They say, well, look at Joshua's genealogy in Chronicles. 1 Chronicles 7, 23-27 gives eight generations between Ephraim and Joshua.

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim, which is Joseph's son. And there are eight individual generations listed from Ephraim to Joshua. And they say, now see, in 215 years, if 40 years is a generation, eight times 40, 320, you couldn't fit the 320 years of eight 40-year generations into a 215-year slavery, right? Are you still with me? Is everybody kind of glazed over and bombed out here? We're talking about how much time does it take for all of Joshua's ancestors to live and have children? Well, people appeal to the idea of a 40-year generation and say, well, everybody was 40 before they had their first child.

Well, we know that's not so. What did it tell us in the beginning of Exodus? It said that the Israelites were miraculously prolific. They were hugely prolific.

They multiplied in unheard-of numbers and in unheard-of rapidity. Their numbers swelled and grew alarmingly. This is why the Egyptians said, we've got to start killing some of these babies.

These people are going to outnumber us. This is what's happening in the Middle East, where those who convert to Christianity or follow some form of Eastern Orthodoxy or any other brand of Christianity, Catholicism or whatever, tend to try to limit their families. And the average number of children in a Christian Middle Eastern family is two-something, kind of like it is in the United States, 2.5 children, something like that.

The Islamic community, on the other hand, believes in multiplying as much as you can. And

they are winning the war of ideologies over there just by sheer numerosity. Anyway, it seems like my dad had me look that up once and maybe numerosity is not a word, but you know what I mean.

So here's the idea. What about Joshua? Eight generations Ephraim to Joshua. Can you do that in 215 years? Well, think about it.

If each guy was 25 years old when he had his next son, eight times 25, 215 years left over for slack. So that's not that difficult. Ephraim, by the way, was about five years old when Jacob came down from Egypt to join Joseph.

Joseph had already married Tafnei-Paneah, whatever name was, and had his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. They were about five years old. So, let's think about this now.

Does this comport with what God told Abram in Genesis 15? He said they will sojourn, they will be strangers in a land that does not belong to them. Well, this is just as true in Canaan. Remember, Abraham, even though the whole land has been ceded to him by God, when Sarah dies, he goes to the sons of Heth and he buys the cave of Machpelah from them.

He buys it because he's a stranger. He doesn't say, excuse me, but my God told me all this land is mine. I'd really like this cave to use as my burial grounds.

He pays money for it from the sons of Heth. So, they are strangers in a land that is not theirs and they are subservient. They have to leave.

You see Isaac being driven from well to well to well because people say, get out of here, this is our well, even though Abraham dug it. These other people took it over and they say, Isaac, we don't care where the well came from, it's ours now, beat it. So, he moves to the next well.

They say, hey, my father dug this well. We don't care who dug this well, it's ours now, beat it. He has to keep going and going and going until he finally finds a place where they don't chase him off.

He's subservient. You watch him when he goes to Gerar, Abimelech, the king of Gerar and that whole thing. They are subservient.

They are guests. They are the ones who have to travel and move and be at the behest of others. It says they will be afflicted for 400 years and they were afflicted in the land of Canaan.

They suffered not only from the inhabitants, but also from the weather, from drought and so on. God says, the nation whom they serve, I will judge. This is any nation.

It's kind of like saying, the man who afflicts you, I will afflict. Well, it's not just one man that's going to afflict you. Any man that afflicts you, God says, I will afflict.

So, the nation whom they serve, I will judge. What does he say at the end of verse 16? When the

iniquity of the Amorites is complete, you will come back and they will be judged. These Amorites who are running you around, they will be judged.

So, there's nothing in what God says to Abraham that excludes or makes untenable the view that this time is included. How about in verse 16, in the fourth generation they shall return here. Now, you're going to have to dig way back, way back in time to when we studied Genesis.

And in Genesis, we, I don't know if you remember, but back before the flood, we talked about how everybody's age and the times that are given and so on all seem to be multiples of 60. It is as though there was a 360 day year and that there were exactly 12 months of 30 days or 6 months of 60 days or whatever. But everything seems to be related to 60.

And there are a lot of sixes. Well, in the old economy and even down to the time of Abraham when people were living so long, generations were longer. You didn't have the 40 year generation idea.

I think that coming down through the flood and into the days of the patriarch, patriarchal times, generations were 60 years. If you think about a 60 year generation, and once again you go back to this 13 through 16 idea here, a 60 year generation, if he says they will return in the fourth generation, what is 4 times 60? It's 240 years. So when they come out with great possessions, he says in verse 14, after this affliction, after their judgment, they will come out with great possessions.

So now the clock is running. They come out with great possessions. How long is it going to be? This land that has been judging them.

Starting from the time of the making of the covenant promise, there's going to be a total of 430 years. 30 years after this, Isaac is going to be born. So 400 years from Isaac's birth is going to be the fulfillment of this promise.

So when they return in the fourth generation, that is going to be after 240 years have passed. When did they leave the land? You have to leave something to return to it, right? So now you're at the time when Jacob goes down to Egypt. And they will return in the fourth generation.

Well, 4 times 60 is 240, it has to be before 240 years have passed. Well, it winds up being after 215 years have passed. When they leave the land, and then it's 40 years before they go in.

So you have it returning in the fourth generation, when circa 240 years have passed. They come out 215 years after they went in. They wander for 40 years, right? So you have a total of 255 years, and that's right around your fourth generation.

4 times 60 is 240. 15 years after that, in they go. So this is what I think is going on.

Now there are some other passages that relate to this. We're not going to look at all of them, but we'll look at one. Galatians, chapter 3, verse 17.

Paul makes a reference to this time. He's talking about the promise that God made to Abraham. And he says in Galatians 3.16, To Abraham and his seed were the promises made.

He does not say, and to seeds as of many, but and to your seed as of one, 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. Paul says, God made this promise about the seed to Abraham.

And 430 years later, the law came. Right? So does Paul believe in a 215 year slavery? Or in a 400 year slavery? Because if it's a 430 year slavery, and 215 years from Abraham to going into slavery, then he would have had to say 645 years later, the law did not annul the promise that God made to Abraham. But the Apostle Paul joins the witness of the Samaritan Pentateuch, joins the witness of Josephus, joins the witness of the Septuagint, in putting a time between the giving of the promise to Abraham until the coming out of bondage as 430 years.

Notice he doesn't even say 400, he says 430 years. The other reference, as long as we're covering this, let's just do it completely. Acts chapter 7, you have the speech that Stephen gives.

And it is such a great speech, and it is so well received that he gets stoned to death for it. But he's talking in Acts chapter 7, and he says, you can pick this up in verse 9, the patriarchs who sold Joseph into Egypt, God was with him, delivered him out of his troubles, gave him favor and wisdom, famine and great trouble came, Jacob heard that it was grain, he comes down, Jacob comes down and joins Joseph with his 75. Then in verse 17, when the time of the promise drew near, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose who did not know Joseph.

This man dealt treacherously with our people, oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies so they might not live. He goes on talking about the raising up of Moses, the slaying of the taskmaster, the passing of 40 years, the appearance of the angel in the bush. He's rehearsing everything that we have seen in the beginning of Exodus.

And somewhere in here, I've lost my verse. He mentions 400 years. Does anyone see it? My eye has glanced right over it.

In which? Verse 30? It says when 40 years had passed, but Stephen mentions the 400 years that passed from the time that they were in bondage and the giving of the promise until they are delivered. And it's somewhere there in Acts 7. Some kind of way, my eye has glanced over it. But when he mentions 400 years, I'm sorry, it's Acts chapter 7 and verse 6. I started too late in the chapter.

Acts 7, 6. When 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 400 years, then he gave the covenant of circumcision. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the 12 patriarchs. Well, you'll notice that he says 400 instead of 430.

And people say, well, what about this? Was Stephen just under pressure because he was facing a hostile audience? Why does he say 400 years? Paul says 430. The Word of God says 430. They would bring them into bondage and oppress them 400 years.

Well, the 400 years measures from Isaac's birth. Abram was, actually, it's probably the circumcision of, or the dedication, the bar mitzvah of Isaac, the point where Ishmael laughs and is driven away. It's 13 years.

If you do the math, and I won't give you all the gory details, Abram's 75 when he leaves Ur of the Chaldees and comes to the land. You figure the time until he gets the promise from God. He's 100 years old when Isaac is born.

You come forward another 13 years to the time of the bar mitzvah. You add everything together, and from the time that Abraham has a descendant, in other words, it's going to be 400 years. So, there is no, the point here, and as I said, I have wrestled with the idea of what is the application if we slog through all of this.

But here's the point. Where the Scriptures, where the text of Scripture has suffered some scribal interference, which is what has happened in the case of the Masoretic text in Exodus 12, 40 and 41, where they drop out the phrase, and in Canaan. And it says, 430 years in Egypt alone.

Somebody thought they would help the Lord out by fixing that text. Where that has happened, and it has happened all through Scripture, God preserves the evidence to let us get back to the actual text. You have Paul in Galatians.

You have the Samaritan Pentateuch. You have Josephus. You have the ancient witnesses that all cooperate together to let us know the timing.

It's also important for archaeology, because Abraham lives in 1800 B.C., not 2000 B.C. You wind up introducing a 215-year error when you look for Ur in the time of Abraham. Because people will take the 400 years, put him back in 2000, and say, well, some of the things that are said about Ur, or about his sojourn in Haran, or something like that, cannot have taken place in the Bible, because archaeology finds that there wasn't anything there at that time. It doesn't match, and so on.

Well, it's important for us to understand chronology. It's equally important for us to understand the chronology of the time of the Exodus, that it is 1447 B.C. Who was in Egypt at that time? In that case, it's not the Bible that needs straightening out. It is Egyptian chronology.

This is the book David Roll, Pharaohs and Kings, or you can go back to the 1950s, Velikovsky, Ages and Chaos. It is well known that there are problems in Egyptian king lists, and so on, that was the basis for the Ten Commandments, saying that Ramses and Sethi and Nefertiri and all of that were on board running Egypt at that time. They're off by about 300 years.

Ramses was not the pharaoh of the Exodus. Sethi was not the father of the pharaoh of the Exodus. And when you work backward to find the pharaoh in the time of Joseph, it's not the one that people calculate it to be, because they do not understand these chronological issues.

And that leads to attacks on scripture based on archaeology. And the bottom line is, God knows what he's talking about. When God makes a promise, it absolutely comes true.

It is much easier to understand that once the Egyptians put the Israelites into slavery, which is, they didn't do it on day one. As soon as Jacob walked into the land, 215 years before the Exodus, the pharaoh didn't say, well, Joseph, I don't like the look of your father, I'm going to enslave this whole family. They lived there for a generation.

They lived there until the pharaoh who knew not Joseph, which, 40, 50, 60 years, right? When it says they will come out in the fourth generation, if you don't like my 60 year explanation, here's another thing I will offer you. The slavery probably lasted about 160 years. Four times 40.

Because you allow for the fact that they were not enslaved until after Joseph died, and the pharaoh died who knew Joseph, and then this gradually came into being. You can easily see your four 40 year generations fitting into a 215 year time frame, where in a 430, you still wind up scratching your head saying, how do you get four generations? They would have had to have been generations of, what, 110 years each or something to even approach that. So, every word in Scripture is significant.

The promises of God are true. And if there's one thing we can learn from this digression, and first of all, if you want more of the science, I can give you a lot more detail on the other places in Chronicles where there are other genealogies besides Joshua that indicate how much time passed from the entrance of the sons into the land until the time of the exodus. But what really matters here? There is no discrepancy, there's no contradiction in Scripture.

When Paul says, from the giving of the promise to Abraham until the giving of the law on the mountain was 430 years, he's right. He knows his Scriptures a lot better than we ever will. And if all the rest of this was water under the bridge or over the roof or whatever, just remember this, when you go to Galatians and you see Paul say, from the giving of the promise to Abraham until the giving of the law on Sinai was 430 years, take that to the bank.

Everything else has to fit that. And it does. In particular, our better witnesses to the text on that verse of Exodus 12:40 does.

So, having said all that, we ask ourselves the grand final question, so what? God decreed that there would be tribulation and that it would last a certain period of time. Jesus told us, in this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. He doesn't just tell Abraham, your descendants are going to have a lot of trouble and then stop.

He says, they will come back, they will return, they will lay hold of the inheritance. You and I have tribulation. You and I are sentenced in this life to challenge and difficulty as well as our

blessings, and we tend to always talk about challenges.

We have a lot of blessings and a lot of prosperities, but we also have these oppressions and afflictions that come our way. If we, just like in our first lesson this morning, if all we do is look at the affliction, we're going to fade. We're going to let fear overmaster us.

We're going to fall and drop, and it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. God told Abraham, from the smoking torch in the dark, your descendants will be oppressed, but they're going to return in the fourth generation. They will take hold of this that I am promising you.

God tells us the same thing. Don't fade. Don't let fear overmaster you.

Yes, it's going to be dark. Yes, there is going to be affliction, but remember the God who calls us. Remember the God who promises us.

Remember the God who preserves His Word and doesn't let it become subject to error or misinterpretation. If you seek, you will find. If you ask, it will be given.

If you knock, the door will open. He doesn't say it will open on the first knock. He doesn't say it will be given at the first request.

But if we keep on asking, if we keep on seeking, if we keep on knocking on the door, the one who has promised is faithful. God has never yet failed to fulfill a promise, not once. He fulfilled this promise to Abraham in the fourth generation.

After 430 years, those people came out of bondage with great possessions, just like God promised. Israel is going to go back into the land again in the millennial kingdom, just like God promised. Jesus will sit on the throne of His Father David, just like God promised.

You and I will be resurrected and or transformed in the twinkling of an eye and will dwell with Christ for the thousand-year millennium and beyond into the kingdom of the Father. It is a rock-solid promise. Our question is, how do we want to spend that time? Do we want to spend it near the Lord, reflecting His glory, equipped for service, equipped to make a difference? Or are we going to fade and drop in the wilderness and be saved yet so as by fire, arrive with nothing but a thin white robe of righteousness? We sang Mansion Over the Hilltop this morning.

I like that song because it says, I want a mansion. I want that robe of righteousness. I want a crown.

Not all of us will receive a crown. Not all of us will do anything other than arrive. And we have so much more potential from the plan of God.

We have so much more potential from the provision of God. We are called. We are exhorted.

We are encouraged. We are equipped. We are strengthened.

We are provided for. We are graced out every day for the sole purpose of fulfilling this potential. What a shame to end up as a Korah or a Dathan or an Abiram, dropping in the wilderness because we got occupied with our problems, occupied with our self and our status, distracted from the promise of God.

The promises of God are true, whether it's 430 years or whether it is the promises that Jesus makes at the end of each of the seven letters in Revelation 2 and 3, to the one who overcomes, I will grant. We want to be those overcomers, don't we? All it takes is treating what God says as fact. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for the promises that you have made to us, for the Lord Jesus Christ who did the work that makes those promises real and available to us. We pray to God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts so that we will live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.