

DOES LSM's *RECOVERY VERSION* RESOLVE BIBLE DIFFICULTIES?

The Length of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt—a Case Study

LSM's *Recovery Version* is described as¹ "One of the most comprehensive study Bibles available today." Its vaunted benefits include resolving Bible difficulties. Witness Lee states²

The third purpose of the [Recovery Version] notes is to help us to solve the common and hard problems in the New Testament. In nearly every book of the New Testament there are some questions which are hard to answer and some problems and points which are hard to understand. The notes in the Recovery Version are also an attempt to solve the hard problems in the Bible to help the readers get through them....For each of these problems I have given you a proper interpretation to help you to understand them properly. This means to remove all the obstacles...in your Bible study.

Does the *Recovery Version* study Bible (RcV.) succeed in resolving Scripture's common and hard problems? This article begins an evaluation of LSM's *Recovery Version* as a "comprehensive³ study Bible" in terms of this avowed goal. A plethora of study Bibles are available for serious students of Scripture. A survey of this genre suggests evaluation criteria ought to include:

- Identifying Bible difficulties—does the RcV. ignore some common Bible difficulties?
- A clear statement of the problem—what exactly is the Bible difficulty?
- Elucidation of alternative answers—what solutions have been offered by Bible scholars?
- Evaluation of different solutions—the merits and shortcomings of various proposals

A thorough evaluation of the RcV. Study Bible is beyond our present scope. Instead we examine a long-standing Bible difficulty—the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. How many years did the children of Israel spend in the land of Egypt, from Jacob's entry to Moses' exodus?

The Duration of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt

What was the duration of Israel's stay in Egypt? This is a straight-forward question readers expect a study Bible to answer. After all Israel's escape from Egyptian tyranny is a central event in the Old Testament. The exodus also furnishes an important type, foreshadowing Christ's salvation. The historical account in Exodus offers a direct answer this query—"Now the time of the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred thirty years. And at the end of four hundred thirty years, on that very day, all the armies of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:40-41, RcV.) The obvious deduction is that Israel's sojourn in Egypt lasted four hundred thirty years. This figure differs from the 400-year exile foretold to Abraham when "God spoke in this way that his seed would be a sojourner in a foreign land, and they would enslave them and mistreat them four hundred years." (Acts 7:6 RcV., quoting Gen. 15:13.) This 30-year difference warrants explanation. Moreover, due to other apparent discrepancies of greater magnitude,⁴ "the exact length of the Israelites' 'sojourn' has been in the past, and remains today, a matter of some controversy."

The major difficulty is the apostle Paul's reference to four hundred thirty years. Referring to God's covenant with Abraham, Paul says, "A covenant previously ratified by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul so as to make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3:17, RcV.). Here is the problem. Paul says the interval from God's covenant with Abraham to the Mosaic Law enacted at Sinai (after the exodus) was four hundred thirty years. Clearly God's covenant with Abraham preceded Jacob's descent into Egypt by several generations—a considerable period. This means Paul's word implies Israel's sojourn in Egypt was significantly less than four hundred thirty years. In fact, using Paul's parameters (Gal. 3:17) and Genesis' timeline for the patriarchs, Israel's Egyptian sojourn is reduced by fifty percent—to 215 years.⁵ Here then is a Bible conundrum—Moses' word in Exodus specifies a sojourn of four hundred thirty years; Paul's word in Galatians implies Israel's Egyptian sojourn was only half as long. How does LSM's *Recovery Version* study Bible resolve this difficulty? A related problem concerns the number of generations and Israel's population growth. Exodus' genealogies suggest only four generations separate Moses from Jacob's son, Levi (Exo. 6:16-20). However, Israel's population soared from 70 (Gen. 46:27) to 600,000 fighting men (Exo. 38:26; Num. 1:46), implying a total population of about one million. How did Israel attain such huge numbers over just a few generations? Does LSM's *Recovery Version* also address this⁶ "well-worn problem"? If so, how do they answer it?

The Duration of Israel's Dwelling in Egypt—Two Views

There are two major viewpoints regarding the duration of Israel's stay in Egypt.

[1] THE "LONG SOJOURN"

The first view holds that the Israelites actually lived in Egypt for 430 years, as Exodus 12 suggests, beginning with Jacob's descent into Egypt and ending with Moses' exodus. This view has been adopted by⁷ Archer (1994), Keil & Delitzsch (1974), Kitchen (1966), and Unger (1954), plus others.

[2] THE "SHORT SOJOURN"

The second view applies Paul's word in Galatians and dates the 430 years (Exo. 12:40-41; Gal. 3:17) from Abraham's arrival in Canaan to Moses' exodus. David Rohl summarizes this view, saying,⁸ "Various passages in the book of Genesis have led scholars to determine that the period from Abraham's descent to Jacob's arrival in the Land of Goshen was two hundred and fifteen years and so *the Sojourn in Egypt* (from Jacob's arrival to the Exodus) lasted around the same length of time—in other words, *circa two hundred and fifteen years.*" Anstey (1913),⁹ Mauro (1922), Cooper (1939), Thiele (1963), and *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (1967) favor this view of a short, 215-year, Egyptian sojourn. This debate is ancient. Among the¹⁰ "Church Fathers," Tertullian (ca. 160—ca. 220 AD) supported the short sojourn, whereas Hippolytus (ca. 170—ca. 236 AD) favored the long one.

LSM's Solution—a Short Sojourn in Egypt

In its introduction to Exodus, LSM's RcV. indicates the¹¹ "time period covered [is] from approximately 1706 B.C. when Jacob came to Egypt, until one year after the exodus from Egypt in 1490 B.C." This dates the exodus in 1491 B.C. and implies Israel's Egyptian sojourn was short, lasting 215 years. The *Recovery Version* also has two brief notes on the duration of Israel's Egyptian sojourn. They assert that the figure of four hundred thirty years in Galatians and Exodus should be¹²

"Counted from the time God gave Abraham the promise in Genesis 12 to the time He gave the law through Moses in Exodus 20. This period was considered by God as the time of the children of Israel's dwelling in Egypt (Exodus 12:40-41). The four hundred years mentioned in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 is counted from the time Ishmael mocked Isaac in Genesis 21 to the time the children of Israel came out of the Egyptian tyranny in Exodus 12. This is the period during which Abraham's descendants suffered persecution from the Gentiles."

Measured against the claim that LSM's *Recovery Version* is a "comprehensive study Bible" which can "solve the hard problems in the Bible," this is inadequate. [1] It neglects to identify this as a Bible difficulty. [2] It fails to specify the precise nature of the problem. [3] It presents Witness Lee's interpretation as the only possible solution. [4] It doesn't offer alternative solutions to the problem; it ignores the other view outlined above and [5] it omits any evaluation of the merits of LSM's explanation against competing solutions. Let's look more closely at this particular Bible difficulty.

The Four Hundred Thirty Years

LSM's proposal is curious. The RcV. adopts the "short sojourn" view that the 430-year interval starts with God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 12. Elsewhere W. Lee says,¹³ "This four hundred thirty years began with Genesis 12:1-6, from about the year 1921 B.C. From the day that Abraham was called." He dates the exodus¹⁴ "about 1491 B.C."—430 years later. Yet Gal. 3:17 defines the 430-year period beginning with "the covenant...ratified by God." This occurred (as W. Lee points out¹⁵) in Genesis chapter 15, not in chapter 12 when God uttered His promise. Moreover, the note alleges the years of sojourn by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, prior to Jacob's arrival in Egypt, were "considered by God as the time of the children of Israel's dwelling in Egypt." Yet, why did God consider the patriarchs' living in Canaan as "*dwelling in Egypt*"? Further, the subject of Exodus 12:40 is "the children of Israel," Jacob's descendents, yet the RcV. note includes Jacob's ancestors—Abraham and Isaac. No rationale is offered for these dogmatic assertions. Professor Riggs argues¹⁶ that Exodus 12 "distinctly says 'the time that the children of Israel dwelt,' and that cannot be made to include Abraham and Isaac." The net result is LSM's *Recovery Version* equates Israel's 430-year sojourn in Exodus 12 with the 430-year interval spoken by Paul (Gal. 3:17) by shortening the actual Egyptian sojourn by fifty percent.

The *Life-study of Exodus* makes similar assertions. Exodus 12:40-41 says, "Now the time of the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred thirty years. At the end of 430 years, on the very day...[they] went out from the land of Egypt." The *Exodus Life-study* says,¹⁷

These four hundred thirty years began in Genesis 12 when God made the promise to Abraham that He would give the good land to Abraham's seed. From that day until the night of the exodus was exactly four hundred thirty years. Thus, the exodus marked the termination of this period of time. For all these years the people God had chosen and to whom He had promised the good land had *not* been dwelling in the land of promise.

Instead, they had been sojourning in a Gentile land represented by Egypt.

This is a peculiar exposition. Notwithstanding the obvious reading of Exodus twelve, the *Life-study* adjusts its meaning to fit Paul's word in Galatians. Recall that (in LSM's view) the 430-year interval includes two centuries of the patriarchs' dwelling in Canaan, prior to Jacob's arrival in Egypt.

Apparently Israel's 430-year Egyptian sojourn was part "virtual" and part actual; the virtual sojourn in Egypt, includes Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's years in Canaan. After Jacob's descent into Egypt, Israel's actual Egyptian sojourn began. In aggregate they total 430 years. Hebrews 11:9 tells us that "By faith [Abraham] dwelt...in the land of promise." Yet the *Life-study* says¹⁸ "For all these years the people God had chosen...*had not been dwelling in the land of promise,*" rather they "had been *sojourning in a Gentile land represented by Egypt.*" Elsewhere W. Lee says,¹⁹ "While Abraham was in Canaan, it was a strange land to him, and it remained a strange land to God's called ones until the day they entered into it as the good land." This is not a convincing explanation why Canaan, the land of promise, should be "represented by Egypt." This reinterpretation contradicts Scripture's straight-forward meaning. Evidently Exodus' clear word is being forced to fit the mold of Galatians.

The Four Hundred Years

Consider now the "four hundred years" in Genesis 15 and Acts 7:6. God told Abraham, "Know assuredly that your seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and they will serve them; and they will afflict them four hundred years. But I will judge that nation, whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with great possessions." (Genesis 15:13-14, RCV.) No doubt this four hundred year period relates to Israel's stay in Egypt. Concerning this W. Lee says,²⁰

The four hundred years mentioned in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 is counted from the time Ishmael mocked Isaac in Genesis 21 to the time the children of Israel came out of the Egyptian tyranny in Exodus 12. This is the period during which Abraham's descendants suffered persecution from the Gentiles."

Again W. Lee's interpretation differs from the obvious deduction of a 400-year stay in Egypt. Egypt was surely "that nation" whom Abraham's seed served and suffered affliction. That nation was also judged by God. A straight-forward reading of Genesis 15 and Acts 7 points to a 400-year Egyptian sojourn. Yet the RCV. note takes as the starting point, not Israel's arrival in Egypt, but "the time Ishmael mocked Isaac," that is, the day Isaac was weaned. Certainly there is nothing in Genesis 15, or the whole Old Testament, which dictates this starting point; rather this meaning is imposed on the text to produce the desired result. This event—Ishmael's mocking Isaac—precedes Jacob's arrival in Egypt by almost 200 years. Nevertheless, W. Lee combines most of Isaac's and Jacob's lifetimes, together with Israel's Egyptian sojourn to produce the 400-year total. Both eras are said to be "the period...Abraham's descendants suffered persecution from the Gentiles." Yet, there's nothing in the Hebrew Old Testament text which implies the 400-years of Gentile persecution began *before* Israel entered Egypt. Ishmael's mocking Isaac was intra-family, not inter-national.²¹ W. Lee's interpretation results from forcing these scriptures (Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6) to conform to Paul's word in Gal. 3:17.

Reconciliation between the two figures—430 and 400 years—is achieved by selecting different start dates. The 430 years is said to begin with Abraham's arrival in Canaan at age 75 (Gen. 12:4). The 400 years is said to start with Ishmael's mocking Isaac. Concerning the 30-year gap, W. Lee says²² "From the day that Abraham was called in Genesis 12 to the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael was *exactly thirty years*...The persecution of the seed began thirty years after Abraham was called in Genesis 12 and continued for four hundred years." These are inflated claims. Genesis tells us Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. 21:5), after he lived in Canaan for 25 years. Thereafter Isaac was weaned and mocked by Ishmael (Gen. 21:8-10). However, on this occasion, no ages are given in Scripture. *If Isaac was five-years old*, the total interval would be thirty years (25+5 years). However this is merely a convenient assumption²³ which makes the math work. Neither Scripture nor history provides sufficient basis for W. Lee's bold assertion that "From the day that Abraham was called...to the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael was *exactly* thirty years."

FALSE CLAIMS—“History proves...Abraham's seed did suffered affliction...400 years beginning...1891 BC...until 1491 BC.”—Witness Lee

The *Life-study of Genesis* also makes emphatic statements regarding the same period. It says,²⁴
“History proves that Abraham's seed did suffer affliction for a period of four hundred years beginning with Ishmael's persecution of Isaac (Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29) about 1891 B.C. until the exodus out of Egypt about 1491 B.C. (Exo. 3:7-8; Acts 7:6). Ishmael's mocking of Isaac was the start of the affliction of Abraham's seed that was to continue for four hundred years ...From Ishmael's persecution of Isaac, the promised seed, until the exodus out of Egypt was four hundred years.”

W. Lee's assertion “History proves...” implies the existence of explicit historical records, apart from Scripture, verifying that “Abraham's seed did suffer affliction for 400 years beginning with Ishmael's persecution of Isaac about 1891 B.C. until the exodus out of Egypt about 1491 B.C.” However, no such independent historical verification exists! Evangelical scholars of the Ancient Middle East concede,²⁵ “Everyone agrees that no explicit extra-biblical attestation is given to the patriarchs or the events in the biblical text.” As Morris states²⁶ “The Biblical data are the only reliable data for the Patriarchal periods, as archeological finds are notoriously sparse and vague.” *History does not* prove the 400 years of Israel's affliction (Gen.15:13-14; Acts 7:6) correspond to the 400-year interval 1891-1491 B.C.; this is merely W. Lee's assertion. This outcome results from circular reasoning.²⁷ The specific dates [1891 & 1491 B.C.] give a false sense of historical veracity. These *Life-study* dates match perfectly those in Archbishop James Ussher's *Annals of the World*, published in 1650.²⁸ Based on this match, W. Lee asserts that “history proves” this is correct! However, Ussher's dates don't come from independent extra-biblical historical sources. They were generated from Scripture using identical assumptions, including a 215-year sojourn; this makes the exact correspondence inevitable!

The Case for a Long Sojourn in Egypt—430 Years

Recent studies by Professors Hoehner and Riggs conclude²⁹ “an Egyptian bondage of 215 years is highly improbable and unlikely.” The alternative view takes the length of Israel's actual stay in Egypt as 430 years, from Jacob's entrance into Egypt to the exodus. Proponents of this view include Archer, Keil and Delitzsch, Lenski, and Kitchen. A number of contemporary scholars also argue that³⁰ “the 430 years should be taken at face value for the Israelite sojourn in Egypt.” A major advantage of this view is that it interprets Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 12:40-41 and Acts 7:6 in their normal sense. It does not require transposing the patriarch's sojourn in Canaan (the land of promise) into a *virtual* dwelling in Egypt in order to make the figures compute. Exodus 12 is interpreted in its literal sense as stating an historical fact—the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt for 430 years from Jacob's arrival to Moses' exodus.

Here we pause briefly to consider differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts of Exodus chapter 12:40-41 in the Old Testament.

Hebrew and Greek Versions of Exodus

Exodus was originally written in Hebrew. In the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, the Hebrew text is authoritative. Based on the Hebrew, the R_CV. renders the key verse as “Now the time of the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years.” (Exo.12:40 R_CV.) However, some Greek Old Testament translations—the “Septuagint” (250 to 150 BC)—differ significantly, saying “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel, which they dwelt in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan,³¹ was 430 years.” (Variation from Hebrew emphasized.) Also the Samaritan Scriptures say, “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel and their fathers, which they dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years.” While the Hebrew text is consistent with a “long sojourn” of 430 years, these Greek and the Samaritan³² texts support the “short sojourn.” Which version is more authentic? Bible scholars prefer the Hebrew text since it is the original; it implies a 430-year “long sojourn” in Egypt. Variations³³ between the Greek and the Samaritan suggest their texts have been altered. Hence LSM's R_CV. text adopts the Hebrew text implying the entire 430 years consist of Israel's sojourn in Egypt (not including the Patriarchs' sojourn in Canaan). The textual evidence from Exodus 12 supports a “long sojourn” of 430 years. Ironically LSM's introduction to Exodus contradicts³⁴ one of the key historical facts it contains!

400 OR 430 Years?

God prophesied to Abraham beforehand that his seed would sojourn in a foreign land, be oppressed and enslaved four hundred years (Gen. 15:13). Stephen quotes this prophecy (Acts 7:6). Some expositors adopting the "long Egyptian sojourn view" take the 400-year figure as a rounded number in prophetic style—430 rounded to 400.³⁵ There are precedents for this; elsewhere the Bible uses round numbers. In Acts the period of the Judges until Samuel is described as "about 450-years" (Acts 13:20). The duration of David's kingship is rounded to 40 years (2 Sam. 5:4, 5). Job's wealth is also described in round figures—7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels etc. (Job 1:3). W. Nee claimed³⁶ "the Israelites 'dwelt' in Egypt for 430 years. However, during the first 30 years they lived in peace. During those 430 years, they were only *afflicted* for 400 years." This can't be substantiated from Scripture.

But perhaps it is not necessary to fully reconcile the 400-year prophecy to Abraham and the 430-year outcome recorded in Exodus. The one is a prophecy, the other is the fulfillment. Old Testament history demonstrates that these may diverge. The prophet Jonah foretold the destruction of Nineveh (Jonah 3:4). But Nineveh was not destroyed; it was spared because the people repented and God had mercy (Jonah 3:10). The fulfillment differed from the prophecy. God's prophets foretold a 70 year Babylonian exile (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). However, history³⁷ suggests the exile lasted fifty to sixty years. In the case of Israel's Egyptian exile, some might propose Israel's actual sojourn was extended beyond the 400-year period prophesied to Abraham (Gen. 15:13) because Israel rejected Moses as their deliverer (Acts 7:25, 35) and/or Moses was not yet fully prepared and perfected.

Generations & Population Growth

A second Bible difficulty impacts whether Israel's sojourn in Egypt was long or short. This problem revolves around the number of generations and the growth of Israel's population while in Egypt. The genealogy of Moses lists only four generations—Levi, Kohath, Amram and Moses (Exo. 6:16-20). Another four-generation genealogy of Moses appears in Numbers 26:57-62. If only three generations separate participants in the exodus from the members of Jacob's family who entered Egypt, this suggests a short sojourn. Harold Hoehner states³⁸ "To fit four generations into a 215-year period is much more reasonable than a 430-year span."

On the other hand population growth during Israel's sojourn was dramatic. Jacob's family numbered 70-75 when they entered Egypt (Acts 7:14; Gen. 46:27; Exo. 1:5). At the exodus, the fighting men numbered 600,000 (Num. 1:46) suggesting Israel's total population exceeded one million. If there are only four generations, covering 200 years, the implied population growth rate is enormous. For example, the tribe of Levi grew from four males (Gen. 46:11) to 22,000 (Num. 3:39). Concerning Moses' extended family, Num. 3:27 says Kohath's family group numbered 8,600 males. This implies Moses' grandfather, Kohath, produced 8,600 male descendants by the Exodus. Since Kohath had four sons, about a fourth (2150 out of 8,600) would be "Amramites," descendants of Moses' father. But this implies Moses and Aaron had an incredible number of brothers, cousins and nephews. It is difficult to reconcile the short time and few generations (four) with the population numbers in the Pentateuch. Neither LSM's *Recovery Version*, nor the *Life-studies* address this issue.

Short sojourn proponents emphasize the few generations in Pentateuch genealogies—four in Moses' case. Conversely those supporting a long sojourn suggest there are omissions, due to excluding less important people/generations. Parallel genealogies of Judah (1 Chron. 2:1-20) and Ephraim (Num. 26:35-36; 1 Chron. 7:20-27) indicate seven and eight generations, respectively. Regarding this issue, Paul Ray concludes³⁹ "genealogical data...on the two sons of Joseph, reveal six, seven, and eight generations for the same time period, evidencing that there are some missing generations in the genealogy of Moses." He argues that "the genealogical data favor, instead, a longer time period." The most significant counter-example is 1 Chronicles 7:20 with nine or ten generations from Joseph to Joshua. Keil and Delitzsch comment⁴⁰ "This last genealogy shows most clearly the impossibility...that the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt lasted only 215 years; for ten generations, reckoned at 40 years each, harmonize very well with 430 years, but certainly not with 215."

Omissions in the Genealogies of Christ and Moses?

The possibility of omitted generations in Moses' genealogy ought to be taken seriously, at least by adherents to W. Lee's teaching. He posits⁴¹ that four generations are omitted from Christ's genealogy in Matthew's gospel. Matthew says there were 42 generations from Abraham to Christ, whereas W. Lee asserts that,⁴² "according to history, there were actually forty-five generations." Obviously allowing for omissions in Exodus' genealogies is consistent with a longer sojourn in Egypt and an extended sojourn makes Israel's population explosion less fantastic and more attainable. As Professor Riggs notes⁴³ "The increase of the Hebrew population from 70 to approximately one million is more plausible with nine or ten generations in 430 years than with three or four generations in 215 years." On entering Egypt, Jacob's family numbered only 70-75 (Acts 7:14; Gen. 46:27; Exo. 1:5) Gleason Archer argues⁴⁴ if the sojourn lasted 430 years, encompassing 10 generations, with couples having children at age 40, population growth of the required magnitude would result from an average of three surviving sons and three daughters to each couple during the first six generations, and an average of two surviving sons and two daughters in the last four generations. Under this scenario, by the 10th generation (400 years) there would be over 600,000 men of military age (Num. 1:45-46; 2:32). Attaining that figure within a short Egyptian sojourn of 215 years (only four generations) requires a dramatically higher birth rate.⁴⁵

Reconciling Paul with Moses

The major difficulty with the long sojourn is Paul's statement in Galatians 3:17 that the interval from Abraham's covenant to Moses' Law was 430 years. How can Paul's statement be reconciled with Moses' word that Israel's sojourn in Egypt lasted 430 years? First we note that the figure of 430 years is incidental to Paul's point in Galatians. Paul's thrust is that the Mosaic Law enacted at Sinai does not annul God's *earlier* covenant with Abraham. Whether the time interval is 215, 430, or 645 years is peripheral to Paul's argument. In contrast the figure of 430 years is central to Moses' statement concerning the historical record. Moses states that Israel's exodus from Egypt occurred 430-years, exactly to-the-day, after their entry into Egypt (Exo. 12:40-41). Moreover, the prophecy to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-14, quoted in Acts 7:6) of a 400-year sojourn lends support to a literal interpretation of Exodus 12. These three Scriptures ought to be weighed against Paul's one aside.⁴⁶

Some suggest that Paul quoted the Greek Old Testament rather than the Hebrew. However scholars have concluded⁴⁷ this cannot be established with any certainty. Moreover, we know that, as a Pharisee, Paul was fully conversant with both the Hebrew language (Acts 21:40) and Scriptures.

One proposed solution views Paul as considering broad periods of time⁴⁸—the age of Promise (the Patriarchs,) Israel's era in Egypt, the age of the Law after Mount Sinai, etc. From this perspective, Paul is painting Old Testament history with broad brush strokes, not in intricate detail. Professor Riggs argues⁴⁹ the problem of Galatians 3:17 "is answered by the suggestion Paul is referring to periods or ages, i.e., 430 years elapsed between [the period of the confirmation](#) of the Abrahamic covenant and the beginning of [the period](#) of the law." Similarly Keefe argues⁵⁰ "that the whole patriarchal period is viewed by Paul...as the time of promise, since the promises, we are frequently told in the Old Testament, were to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." God's covenant with Abraham was re-confirmed repeatedly to Isaac and Jacob. The last affirmation was just before Jacob went down into Egypt; the Lord encouraged Jacob and promised to make Israel a great nation while in Egypt (Gen. 46:2-4). Four hundred thirty years elapsed between this final confirmation of Abraham's covenant and Moses' covenant at Mount Sinai. This is the interval from the end of one era (the Age of Promise) to the beginning of another (the Age of Law). The intervening period corresponds to the duration of Israel's Egyptian sojourn—four hundred thirty years. Taken from the perspective of "broad brush strokes" Paul's enigmatic statement (Gal. 3:17) is reconciled with Moses' historical account. Perhaps this reconciliation cannot withstand microscopic evaluation; but then, probably the apostle Paul never intended his incidental comment in Galatians to be examined that closely.

LSM appropriated Ussher's Chronology

We have alluded to the *Recovery Version's* dating of Old Testament events involving the Patriarchs. Some important milestones given in LSM's publications, include⁵¹

1921 BC Abraham called by God, entered Canaan (Gen. 12)
1891 BC Isaac weaned, Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29)
1706 BC Jacob arrived in Egypt (Gen. 46:5-7)
1635 BC Death of Joseph (Gen. 50:22-26)
1491 BC The exodus out of Egypt (Exo. 12:40-41)

The dates reflect W. Lee's views regarding Israel's Egyptian sojourn—430 years separate Abraham's call and the exodus; 400 years intervene between Ishmael's persecution of Isaac and Moses' exodus. LSM cites no source for its chronology; it is attributed to no one. It is presented as the product of W. Lee's or LSM's own research. A comparison with Archbishop James Ussher's *Annals of the World* (1650), shows an exact match. This is also true of dates which LSM's RcV. assigns to Israel's kings.⁵² Clearly LSM has copied Ussher's chronology, yet without attribution. Isn't this is plagiarism?⁵³

Conclusion

LSM's *Recovery Version* (RcV) has been promoted as⁵⁴ "One of the most comprehensive study Bibles available today." We asked whether this study Bible resolves Scripture's common and hard problems. Our evaluation is not comprehensive; we focused on one long-standing Bible difficulty—the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt—as a case study. The *Recovery Version* fails to identify this as a significant Bible difficulty. Moreover, it doesn't specify the precise problem—the apparent contradiction between the words of Paul and Moses. Rather than outlining alternative solutions, W. Lee's interpretation—that Israel's Egyptian sojourn was short (only 215-years)—is presented as the only possible solution. Neither does the *Recovery Version* address related problems—the number of generations and Israel's population explosion. LSM's *Recovery Version* appropriates Archbishop Ussher's chronology of the Old Testament (1650) including his dating of a 215-year Egyptian sojourn (1706 BC to 1491 BC). Contrary to W. Lee's claims, Ussher's chronology does not provide independent historical proof.

The *Recovery Version* ignores the alternative view that Israel's Egyptian sojourn lasted 430-years, based on a literal interpretation of Moses' historical account in the Hebrew text of Exodus 12. Given the *Recovery Version's* one-sided presentation, it obviously offers no evaluation of competing views.⁵⁵ A similar dogmatism characterizes LSM's approach to other Bible difficulties. In attempting to reconcile Scripture's creation account (Gen. 1-2) with Science's timeline, only one approach—the "Gap Theory"—is presented.⁵⁶ Other views, e.g. the Creationists' "young earth" and "Long creation days" are ignored.⁵⁷ Concerning the rapture, only the partial rapture of "overcomers" is presented.⁵⁸

A single case study cannot produce definitive conclusions. Nevertheless, our results are suggestive. If further analysis verifies our findings, we would conclude the following: In order to live up to its billing as a "comprehensive study Bible," LSM's *Recovery Version* would be expected to identify difficulties in Scripture then offer a balanced presentation of alternative solutions with their merits and shortcomings. However, currently LSM's RcV. notes are far from "comprehensive;" they typically present only one view—W. Lee's own interpretation. As a presentation of Witness Lee's theology, LSM's *Recovery Version* is without peer; but, as a "comprehensive study Bible," it is sadly deficient.

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NOTES:

Thanks are extended to those who commented on earlier drafts of this piece. As usual the author accepts full responsibility for the contents. The views expressed here are the author's and should *not* be attributed to any believers, elders, co-workers or churches with whom he is associated.

1. Quote from Bibles for America (BfA) website 2008. BfA is an LSM-affiliate directed by some of the "blended brothers." LSM is also directed by the "blended brothers." BfA's mission is the free distribution of LSM's lead product, the *Recovery Version*. LSM's senior editor, Ron Kangas, touts the benefits of the RcV. footnotes--"The

footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible are all-inclusive. The truth, the life, the light, the revelation, and the vision in these notes are inherited. These notes are not the work of one or two individuals. Every positive element of vision in the Scriptures is included in the up-to-date all-inheriting vision of the age. Thus there is no reason to go back." [RK, *The Ministry*, vol. 9, No. 8, Sept. 2005, p. 17, emphasis added] The New Testament RcV. has "Over 9,000 extensive footnotes"—according to the Bibles for Australia website. The RcV. footnotes for the Old Testament were selected by LSM's editorial section from W. Lee's OT *Life-studies* which consist of 865 messages published in printed volumes which encompass 7,787 pages.

2. Witness Lee, *The Way to Carry Out the Vision, Elders' Training Book 3*, pp. 91-92 The four purposes of the *Life-studies* are [1] to present the truths contained in the New Testament, [2] to minister the life supply, [3] to solve the common and hard problems found in the New Testament, and [4] to open up every book of the New Testament by giving a thorough interpretation of it. The quote in the text elaborates on purpose [3]

3. The adjective "comprehensive" is defined as inclusive, "including much; comprising many things; having a wide scope or a full view." [Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1995]

4. Alden Bass, Bert Thompson, and Kyle Butt, *How Long Was the Israelites' Egyptian Bondage?* www.apologeticspress.org/articles/610 A similar statement is made by Harold W. Hoehner, who observed: "When one looks at the various passages of Scripture concerning the length of Israel's bondage in Egypt, one immediately discovers that there are apparent disagreements in the biblical record" [Harold W. Hoehner, *The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage*, BIBLIOTHECA SACRA vol. 125 (1969) p. 306].

5. The 50% figure is typically arrived at through the following calculation (presented by Harold W. Hoehner) "The adherents of this view take the 430 years mentioned in Galatians 3:17 as beginning with the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) and ending with the Exodus. The 400 years has reference to the period from the weaning of Isaac and the casting out of Ishmael (Gen. 21:10.) until the Exodus. Therefore, one would have a 215-year sojourn in the land of Canaan and another period of 215 years in Egypt, hence making a total of 430 years for the sojourn. It may be outlined as follows:

The call of Abraham who was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4)	0
Isaac born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. 21:5)	25
Isaac was weaned, Ishmael was cast out when Isaac was 5	5
(this begins the 400-year period)	
Jacob and Esau born when Isaac was 60 (Gen. 25.26)	55
Jacob 130 years old when he went to Egypt (Gen. 47:9, 28)	<u>130</u>
	Sub total 215
Remaining 215 years were in Egypt	<u>215</u>
	Grand Total 430

Harold W. Hoehner, *The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage*, BIBLIOTHECA SACRA vol. 125 (1969): pp. 306-16

6. Ronald B. Allen says "A well-worn problem...has to do with the growth from 70 persons to more than two million in just four centuries." Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers in The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelien, ed., vol. 2, Genesis to Numbers, p. 687 Note that this difficulty is compounded by several orders of magnitude if Israel's sojourn was 215-years rather than 430-years.

7. Archer, Gleason (1982), *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan). Archer, Gleason L. (1994), *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, IL: Moody). Keil, C.F. and F. Delitzsch (1974 reprint), *Commentary on the Old Testament—The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans). Kitchen, Kenneth A. (1966), *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale). Unger, Merrill (1954), *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan). For simplicity, in the present context, we don't distinguish between those who argue for a 400-year sojourn, rather than 430-years [e.g. Harold W. Hoehner, (*The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage*) who states "the 400 years would be that period of time when the nation Israel was in Egypt, that is, from the time when Jacob and his family entered Egypt (Gen. 46) until the Exodus." p.116] For our present purposes we classify both views under a "Long Sojourn."

8. David Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*, (New York: Crown), 1995, p. 331, parenthesis original. Emphasis added.

9. Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, vol. I, pp. 116-18; Philip Mauro, *The Chronology of the Bible*, pp. 37-40; David L. Cooper, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, pp. 129-134; Edwin R. Thiele, "Chronology, Old Testament," *The Zondervan pictorial Bible Dictionary*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, pp. 166-67; E. Schuyler English, et al (eds.), *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 86 note 2.

10. These references from PAUL J. RAY, JR., "THE DURATION OF THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 231-248. Exact citations can be found here.

11. *Holy Bible, Recovery Version* [Old & New Testaments, with notes, 2003] Exodus, p. 129. The "Time of Writing" of Exodus is indicated as "Approximately 1490 B.C. in the second year after the exodus..." The "death of Joseph (Gen. 50:26) is given as "approximately 1635 B.C." [RcV. Introduction to Genesis, "Time period covered"] According to Genesis, Joseph died in Egypt aged 110 years (Gen. 50:22, 26) approx. 70 years after his father's family came to Egypt and 80-years after Joseph stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46; 50:22, 26)] Hence, this dating of Joseph's death also implies Jacob's family arrived in Egypt about 1705/6 B.C.

12. W. Lee, Galatians 3: 17, Rcv., note 3. The other note begins: "God's promise to Abraham was given first. The law came 430 years later..." [W. Lee, Galatians 3: 17, Rcv., notes 2] The Rcv. note on Exodus 12: 40 refers the reader to these Galatians notes.
13. W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45
14. W. Lee dates "the exodus out of Egypt about 1491 B.C." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45] The Rcv. introduction to Exodus gives the end-point of "time period" covered by Exodus as "one year after the exodus from Egypt in 1490 BC," thereby dating the exodus at 1491 BC. We return to LSM's chronology later in this article.
15. Elsewhere W. Lee says, "In Genesis 12:3 the promise was only a promise, for it was still in need of fulfillment. In this chapter we are not told when, how, or where the promise would be fulfilled. Then in Genesis 15 the promise became a ratified covenant, and in Genesis 17 this covenant was confirmed by the sign of circumcision." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Galatians*, Message 18, emphasis added] Note that Galatians says, "A covenant previously ratified by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul so as to make the promise of none effect." (Gal. 3: 17, Rcv.) The end-point of the 430-year interval, according to Galatians, is God's ratified covenant, *not* God's initial promise to Abraham.
16. Jack, R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal vol. 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35, p 26.
17. W. Lee, *Life-study of Exodus* Message #26, emphasis added
18. Hebrews 11:9 says "By faith he [Abraham] dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign land, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise." The verse says that Abraham "dwelt as a foreigner...as in a foreign land," nevertheless according to scripture, Abraham "dwelt in the land of promise."
19. W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45
20. W. Lee, Gal. 3: 17, Rcv., note 3
21. The context of Gen. 15: 13-14 is clearly inter-national (not merely inter-personal or intra-family—like Ishmael mocking Isaac or Esau seeking revenge upon Jacob). Abraham was told your "seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and they will serve them; and they will afflict them four hundred years. But I will judge that nation, whom they will serve." Paul J. Ray comments "It has been pointed out by those favoring the short chronology for the Egyptian sojourn (i.e., 215 years, with the previous 215 years in Canaan) that Isaac was "persecuted" by Ishmael, that Jacob fled from Esau, and that Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers. However, [these events or situations were intra-family quarrels and hardly qualify for the expression "they will oppress them."](#) That expression requires an entirely different entity as the oppressor (cf. the inverted parallelism of vs. 13). The Egyptians are the only ones who would appear truly to qualify for this role. A further indication that the oppression must relate to the Egyptian sojourn emerges from the fact of God's promise to Abraham in vs. 15 that Abraham would not be involved in these tragedies, but would die in peace. Abraham lived for a century after the events described in Gen 15, Jacob and Esau being 15 years old when he died (Gen 25: 7, 26). Oppression to the patriarch's descendants would have been oppression to the patriarch himself; and thus, whether oppression had come from his own family or from outsiders [Abraham would have had a difficult time dying in peace if](#), indeed, as the short chronology necessitates, [there was already oppression to the patriarch's descendants during his own lifetime.](#) " [Paul J. Ray, Jr., "THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 235-6, emphasis added]
22. W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45, emphasis added
23. Harold W. Hoehner says, "To say that Isaac was weaned and Ishmael was cast out when Isaac was five years old is mere guesswork. There is no statement in Scripture stating that Isaac became heir at five years of age. This is deduced from the need of an extra five years after Isaac was born so as to make a total of thirty from the time of Abraham's call to Isaac's being weaned which would account for the 430 and 400-year periods." [Harold W. Hoehner, *The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage*, BIBLIOTHECA SACRA vol. 125 (1969): pp. 309-310, emphasis added]
24. W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45, emphasis added
25. Ian W. Provan, T. Longman, *A Biblical History of Israel* (2003) p. 113
26. John Morris, Ph.D. *Can the Ussher Chronology be Trusted?*
27. This circular reasoning proceeds as follows: *Assuming* a "short Egyptian sojourn," 215 years is added to Jacob's age on arrival in Egypt (130 years, Gen. 47: 9) and Isaac's lifetime from being weaned to Jacob's birth (when Isaac was 60, Gen. 25: 26). *Assuming Isaac was weaned at age 5* produces the desired result—400 years! Adding 400 to the 1491 B.C. date of the Exodus, gives 1891 B.C.
28. Ussher's chronology appeared for generations in marginal notes to King James Version (KJV) and the *Scofield Reference Bible*. (see the reference in the previous note)
29. Harold W. Hoehner, *The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage*, BIBLIOTHECA SACRA vol. 125 (1969) p. 312 makes a virtually identical statement, "In conclusion, from a study of the lines of evidence, [an Egyptian bondage of 215 years was highly improbable and unlikely.](#)" [Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35. p. 26 emphasis added] Along similar lines Paul J. Ray

concludes that "The historical and archaeological evidence also seems to have closer correlation with the biblical data if the 430 years are taken to be the length of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt alone." [Paul J. Ray, Jr., "THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 231-248, p. 246] After reviewing the literature, Gelu Pacurar says "By analyzing the arguments for a 215 year sojourn and their responses and by observing the normal interpretation of the second view of a 430 year sojourn, [the second option \[i.e. a 430 year sojourn\] should be preferred.](#)" [Gelu Pacurar, *The Setting of the Joseph Narrative: A Study in Historical Background*, Dallas Theological Seminary Master of Theology Thesis August 2007, p. 43]

30. Paul J. Ray, Jr., "THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 231-248, p. 247

31. From P. Williams, *Some remarks preliminary to a biblical chronology* First published: Journal of Creation (TJ) vol. 12(1):pp. 98–106, April 1998 <http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v12/i1/chronology.asp> The English translation is by the author, who also says, "Codex A of the [Greek] Septuagint has here the addition 'they and their fathers'. Codex B has '435 years' in the writing of its original scribe, but this has later been deleted. Again the division of Greek witnesses suggests their unreliability."

32. The difference between the Hebrew text, on the one hand, and (some) Greek texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch, on the other, may directly reflect differing views—long vs. sort sojourn. Paul J. Ray points this out, saying, "From possibly as early as the [Septuagint] LXX (ca. 250-150 B.C.), there has been a tradition that the 430 years in Exod 12:40 (or apparently rounded to the 400 years of Gen 15:13) represent only 215 actual years of Israelite sojourn in Egypt, with the other 215 years representing the sojourn in Canaan. The Hebrew MT of both of the above verses, however, appears to indicate that the total years constituted the full period of time of the sojourn in Egypt prior to the Exodus." Paul J. Ray, Jr. *THE DURATION OF THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT*, Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, 231-248

33. Williams says, "First, the variation in word order between the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch suggests that it is they, not the Masoretic Text that have been tampering with the text. What is common to them both is the Masoretic Text, and therefore according to Waltke's theorem that where the Masoretic Text agrees with one of the others then the Masoretic Text is to be preferred, we may suppose that both the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch are wrong." Peter Williams, "*Some remarks preliminary to a biblical chronology*" First published in TJ vol. 12(no. 1):pp. 98–106 April 1998] Jack Riggs says "The clause 'and in the land of Canaan' of the Septuagint, and the clause "and of their fathers in the land of Canaan" of the Samaritan Pentateuch are not supported by any other manuscript evidence." [Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35. p. 20 emphasis added]

34. The introduction to Exodus in LSM's *Recovery Version* indicates the "Time Period Covered" is "from approximately 1706 B.C. when Jacob came to Egypt, until one year after the exodus from Egypt in 1490 B.C." This dates the exodus in 1491 B.C. and implies Israel's Egyptian sojourn was short, lasting 215 years (1706 minus 1491). [*Holy Bible, Recovery Version* [Old & New Testaments, with notes, 2003] Exodus, p. 129.] The key verse is Exodus 12:40-41 which says:—"Now the time of the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the armies of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:40-41, Rcv.)

35. The ESV study Bible, in a note on Gen, 15:13-16, says, "400 years is probably to be understood as a round figure. This anticipates the length of the Israelites' oppression by the Egyptians before the exodus from Egypt...This promise, given by the Lord,...was fulfilled 600 to 800 years later at the time of the exodus." [ESV] Kitchen adopts this view of 400 being a rounded figure and also the difference between prophecy and fulfillment. He says, "Abraham was warned that his descendants should dwell in an alien land for 400 years (Gn. 15:13). (There is no reason why the figure '400 years' should not refer to the whole of verse 13: *i.e.*, to the sojourn as a whole, *culminating* in enslavement and oppression, rather than be forced unnecessarily to mean that the Hebrews were to be slaves for four centuries against the evidence of Genesis 41 to 50.) In due course, it is recorded that the Israelites left Egypt on the 430th anniversary of their ancestor's entry into Egypt. [The 400 years is a round figure in prospect, while the 430 years is more precise in retrospect; there is no contradiction in this.](#)" [K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1966, p. 54, emphasis added]

36. Watchman Nee, "Question & Answer Box (6)" *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 1081. The Q & A (in their entirety) read: "Question: How do you explain the "four hundred years" in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6, and the "four hundred thirty years" in Exodus 12:40? (Lee, Chefoo). Answer: The Israelites "dwelt" in Egypt for four hundred thirty years (Exo. 12:40). However, during the first thirty years, they lived in peace. During those four hundred thirty years, they were only afflicted four hundred years. These two portions are in perfect harmony."

37. This tentative statement is based upon a cursory investigation. Wikipedia says "The Babylonian Captivity occurred between 597 BCE and 538 BCE when large numbers of Jews were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the Chaldeans, and held in Babylon. They were only released because Babylon was conquered by Cyrus who allowed the Jews to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple." Britannia.com defines the "Babylonian Captivity" as "the forced detention of Jews in Babylonia following the latter's conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598/7 and 587/6 BC. The exile formally ended in 538 BC, when the Persian

conqueror of Babylonia, Cyrus the Great, gave the Jews permission to return to Palestine." Notice the dates imply a 50- to 60-year Babylonian exile; less than the 70—years prophesied. [Ray, p. 246] The ESV study Bible assigns the dates 586 to 538 BC [i.e. 48 years] to "Judah's exile in Babylon." The ESV then comments, "From the dates above, it appears as though the exile lasted only 50 years (586-538/537 BC) which seems to contradict Jeremiah's prophecy about the return from exile after 70 years. However, the round number '70' can be calculated by one of two methods: (a) from the 1st deportation to the 1st return yields 68 years; or (b) from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple to the rebuilding of the temple yields 70 years." [ESV study Bible p. 385] Concerning the Babylonian captivity, W. Lee writes, "In 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, led a great army to destroy the holy city, Jerusalem, and the holy temple, and he brought all the children of Israel as captives to Babylon. However, because Nebuchadnezzar was too cruel toward the children of Israel, seventy years after Israel's captivity, God raised up the empire of Medo-Persia. From the book of Isaiah we can see that Cyrus, the king of Persia, was God's beloved, and he even became a type of Christ. In 539 B.C. Cyrus defeated Babylon and, under God's inspiration, released the children of Israel that they might go back to rebuild the temple. This is recorded in the book of Ezra." [W. Lee, *Up-to-Date Presentation of the God-Ordained Way and the Signs Concerning the Coming of Christ*, chp. 7, emphasis added] Even so, notice that W. Lee dates the start of the captivity earlier than other sources. Nevertheless, his dates 606 BC & 539 BC imply the actual captivity lasted 67 years (less than the 70-year prophecy).

38. Harold W. Hoehner, *The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage* BIBLIOTHECA SACRA vol. 125 (1969) p. 309. The prophecy God gave to Abraham also mentions four generations. ¹³"Then the LORD said to him [Abraham], 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here..." (Gen. 15:13-16) Some expositors argue that in this case, the "four generations" correspond to the "four hundred years" (v. 13), since, at that point in time, Abraham had recently begotten Isaac at the age of 100.

39. Paul J. Ray, Jr., "THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN IN EGYPT" Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1986, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 231-248, p. 246

40. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,) 1959, vol. II, p. 30

41. see Matt. 1:8, 11 and Rcv. notes

42. Matt. 1:17 Rcv., note 1

43. Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal vol. 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35, p. 30 The figure of one million is suggested by the fact there were 600,000 fighting men at the exodus (Exo. 12:37; Num. 1:45-46).

44. Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., vol. 1, p. 212.

45. The required "dramatic population growth rate" would appear to be higher than might be envisioned at first. The Exodus narrative (Exo. 1:6-8, 12) appears to place Israel's population explosion between Joseph's death (Exo. 1:6) and Moses' birth (Exo. 2:1-2). Joseph lived for 70-years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt; Moses was born 80-years before the exodus. The time interval between these two events (Joseph's death & Moses' birth) is 280 years if Israel's Egyptian sojourn lasted 430 years. But it shrinks by 75% to **only 65 years** if Israel's sojourn was 215 years.

46. Using one aside by Paul (Gal. 3:17) to "trump" these other Scriptures (Gen. 15:13-14; Acts 7:6; Exo. 12:40-41) is a misplaced application of the principle that the New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant. D. J. A. Clines notes the tendency "observable within the Brethren movement (as also in other evangelical circles) to delimit a *de facto* 'canon within the canon'. This hermeneutical principle...not only victimizes the Old Testament, but also within the New Testament tends to give priority to Pauline theology..." [D.J.A. Clines, "Biblical Hermeneutics in Theory and Practice," *Christian Brethren Review* vols. 31, 32 (1982) p. 69] No doubt the New Testament principle of grace (enunciated by Paul) has replaced the Old Testament principle of Law (enunciated by Moses). In this sense Paul "trumps" Moses. Yet, in terms of historical facts, Moses was a participant in the exodus event; he saw it "up-close and personal." In contrast, to Paul, Israel's Egyptian sojourn and the exodus were distant historical events. This suggests that (in terms of historical facts concerning these events) Moses' witness ought to "trump" Paul.

47. The ESV study Bible suggests that in Gal. 3:17 Paul quoted the Greek Old Testament ["Septuagint"] see ESV note on Gal. 3:17. [It then considers the possibility outlined in the next paragraph (of the main text).] On the issue of Paul's possible use of the Greek OT, Professor Riggs says, "Support could be rendered to the 215 year view *if* it could be determined that Paul used the Septuagint [Greek OT]. In discussing this point, Ridderbos concludes that it is impossible to determine Paul's chronological source...*It is therefore impossible for us to determine whether and in what sense Paul takes his figure from one or another of these data.* Such being the case, *the final interpretation of Galatians 3:17 can not be based on the Septuagint.* This relieves one from the necessity of supporting a 215 year Egyptian sojourn at this point, or from facing the definite problem of Paul's use of an inaccurate source." [Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN*

- EGYPT Grace Theological Journal vol. 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35, p. 24, emphasis added] On this issue P. Williams, in considering "The New Testament and The Septuagint chronology" asks, "Does the New Testament use the Septuagint Chronology in Galatians 3:17?" He says, "It is all too frequently asserted that the New Testament uses the chronology of the Septuagint Exodus 12:40 in Galatians 3:17." Williams concludes that "the idea of a 215-year sojourn in Egypt preceded by 215 years in the land of Canaan finds no justification in the Septuagint. Though it is an ancient view that Paul used the Septuagint in Galatians 3:17, the Septuagint does not say what people assert it says." [P. Williams "Some remarks preliminary to a biblical chronology" First published: *Journal of Creation* vol. 12(1): pp. 98–106 (April 1998) <http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v12/i1/chronology.asp>
48. Stanley D. Toussaint, "Galatians". (Unpublished Class Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965), p. 72, cited by Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal vol. 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35, p. 31
49. Jack R. Riggs, *THE LENGTH OF ISRAEL'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT* Grace Theological Journal vol. 12.1 (Winter, 1971) pp. 18-35, p. 32
50. Keefe, E., *The Duration of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt*, M.Th. Thesis, Grand Rapids Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980, cited in P. Williams, *Some remarks preliminary to a biblical chronology* First published *TJ* vol. 12(1):pp. 98–106, April 1998. See also Campbell cited in Michael L. Hoover, *The Length Of Israel's Sojourn In Egypt*, (1988) Dallas Theological Seminary Thesis, p. 10 Martin Labar states the case thus, "One possibility is that one of the 'promises' Paul included was the promise to Jacob, in Gen. 46:2–5, where God spoke to Jacob at Beersheba, on the way to Egypt to join Joseph, and promised him that his descendants would return to Canaan as a mighty nation. If so, the Exodus could, indeed, have been 430 years after this promise, which was right before the entry into Egypt. That seems no more contrived than some of the arguments for a shorter captivity. I believe that Scripture teaches that 430 years elapsed between the time when Jacob and his family went to Egypt, and the escape from that country, and, therefore, that there is at least one gap in the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6." [Martin Labar, *On Gaps in Genealogies* PSCF Letters, 2004, <http://www.asa3.org/aSA/PSCF/2004/PSCF12-04Hill.pdf>
51. These dates are found in the introductions to Genesis & Exodus in LSM's *Holy Bible* Rcv. and in W. Lee's *Life-study of Genesis*, Message 45,
52. Concerning the Kings of Israel (& Persia): The Rcv assigns 1056 BC for the death of King Saul [Rcv. 1 Chron. Intro.] This corresponds to 1055 BC Ussher #405. The Rcv. assigns the date 1015 BC for the Death of King David and the start of the Reign of Solomon [Rcv 1 Kings Intro.; 1 Chron. Intro.] This corresponds to the date 1015 BC given by Ussher #459. The Rcv assigns the date 897 BC for the reign of Ahaziah, son of Ahab, king of Israel [Rcv 1 Kings Intro] This matches 897 BC by Ussher #520. Rcv gives 896 BC for the Reign of Jehoram, son of Ahab [Rcv 1 Kings Intro] Again this is identical to the date of 896 BC by Ussher #521. The Rcv gives 539 BC as the 1st year Cyrus King of Persia [Rcv. 1 Chron. Intro.] the same as the 539 BC date assigned by Ussher #933.
53. Neither LSM's *Recovery Version*, nor W. Lee's *Life-studies* attribute the assigned dates in their chronology to Ussher or any secondary source (e.g. *The Scofield Reference Bible*). This constitutes plagiarism. "Plagiarism is the practice, whether intentional or not, of using someone else's words or ideas and presenting them as your own." [from *The Student's Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism*, Department of Sociology, Western Washington University] **It is an act of fraud or literary theft, perpetrated by presenting others' ideas or words as one's own without crediting the source.** Statements, like "we stand on the shoulders of others" are inadequate. "Using someone else's exact words without using quotes and attribution is plagiarism. Paraphrasing someone else's words without... attribution is [also] plagiarism," says Hartford Professor Burt. [*"PLAGIARISM AND SCHOLARSHIP Based On A Review Of Scholarly And Popular Literature"* by Elizabeth V. Burt, Associate Professor of Communication, Notes for Library Symposium "*Plagiarism—Whose Words Are They*" at the University of Hartford, CN September 28, 2004, p. 3] Changing the original wording doesn't prevent plagiarism. Writers are warned, "If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized." [From www.Plagiarism.org] Plagiarism differs from copyright infringement. The latter involves the unauthorized use of material protected by copyright. The former is concerned with false claims of authorship. Hence works no longer covered by copyright can still be plagiarized if they are reproduced (perhaps with modifications) *without attributing the original source*. An obvious solution is quoting primary sources *verbatim*, with reference citations. Plagiarism by students, professors, or researchers is considered academic dishonesty and fraud. Offenders are subject to censure. In other fields (e.g., journalism), plagiarism is considered a breach of professional ethics. [for more on this topic, see my *LSM's PLAGIARISM—An Initial Inquiry*]
54. Quote from Bibles for America (BfA) website 2008. BfA is an LSM-affiliate directed by some of the "blended brothers." LSM is also directed by the "blended brothers."
55. We leave to the discerning reader the task of evaluating these alternative views outlined in the text above.
56. See for example the Rcv. notes on Gen 1:2
57. The "Long days of creation" view is presented (for example) by Dr. Hugh Ross, *Creation & Time*.
58. See, for example, Rcv. notes on Rev. 12:5-6, and cross-references.