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# A Long Sojourn of Israel Away from the Promised Land

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## Abstract

A unified historical record uniting biblical and Egyptian chronology for the second millennium BC has yet to be written. Biblical scholars, historians, and archaeologists who believe that Israel developed into a nation while living in Egypt have not been able to agree on when they entered Egypt, nor on how long they stayed. However, the light of God's Word reveals a clear path out of this uncertainty if one can trust certain controversial passages from the Masoretic text. A resolution to the controversy of the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt is proposed since the Promised Land was given to Abraham and his progeny as their new homeland. Because the sojourn applied to Abraham's descendants while they lived in a land not their own, no part of Abraham's life in Canaan could belong to the sojourn. Therefore, the sojourn of Israel in Egypt lasted 430 years from when Jacob and the children of Israel entered Egypt until the Exodus.

**Keywords:** Exodus, sojourn, Promised land, Canaan, genealogy, Masoretic, Septuagint

## Introduction

How long was Israel's stay in Egypt as recorded in Genesis and Exodus? Some hold to a Long Sojourn (LS) scenario of 430 years (Keil and Delitzsch 1866) based on the translation from the Masoretic Text of Exodus 12:40, "Now the time that the sons of Israel had lived in Egypt was 430 years." Others believe a Short Sojourn (SS) scenario of 215 years (Carter 2021; Carter and Bates 2023; Carter and Sanders 2021) consistent with the Septuagint reading of this verse (Minge 2007; Petrovitch 2019) which puts the sojourn "in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan," requiring half of the 430 years to be assigned to the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob while they lived in the Promised Land. A straightforward resolution of this controversy depends on a clear definition of the location of the sojourn which can only be found in the text of Scripture. Egyptology and archaeology must be constrained from offering any opinion on the matter because any evidence they might provide is at best ancillary to the truth derived from the Bible. It will be argued here that the LS is correct because the Masoretic Text of Exodus 12:40 locates the sojourn in Egypt consistent with what God told Abram in the night vision described in Genesis 15:13–16. But the Septuagint contradicts itself by adding "and in the land of Canaan" to Exodus 12:40 because that differs from what God told Abram in the night vision while he was living in Canaan (Minge 2007). In the following defense of the LS scenario, it will be shown that the land of Canaan belonged to Abram and his descendants and that the sojourn was said by God to apply to his descendants as they lived in a land other than Canaan. No portion of the time Abraham lived in Canaan can be assigned to the sojourn (Ray 2007).

In the following discourse, these principles of interpretation will be applied: 1) Scripture will be used to interpret Scripture so that complex passages are resolved in the light of the Bible. 2) No part of Scripture will be set against another to promote uncertainty or to contradict what is clearly stated in the text. 3) The Scripture will be held to be perspicuous, written to give understanding rather than to hide the facts in impenetrable shade. 4) The sciences of Egyptology and archaeology will not be consulted since they must be understood in the light of Scripture. Allowing these disciplines to influence the interpretation of Scripture will only lead to confusion. With these principles in mind, an investigation of the record of what God told his servant Abraham may proceed.

## Israel's Sojourn was in a Foreign Land

Both the Masoretic and the Septuagint texts (Valsamis 2025) agree with the description God gave to Abram regarding the sojourn recorded in Genesis 15:13–16 (NASB):

> Then *God* said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete."

The first thing God told Abram was that slavery and oppression apply to his descendants (Russell 2024). It did not apply to Abram himself. He would live in peace in the Promised Land (Ray 2007).

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Abram, who was then living in the land of Canaan by the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 14:13), would not experience the sojourn outside the Promised Land, but his descendants would. Furthermore, God also told him that his descendants would return to the place where Abram was then living after the sojourn was completed, "they will return here." The sojourn did not take place in Canaan, and it did not take place during Abram's life. Therefore, events in Abram's life cannot signify the start of the sojourn and cannot be used to calculate the duration of Israel's stay in Egypt. The "sojourn clock" did not start ticking during Abraham's life.

Next, God told Abram that his descendants would be slaves in "a land that is not theirs." We must decide to what land the phrase "land that is not theirs" refers to since that will dictate which side of the controversy one must fall. If the "land that is not theirs" refers to both Canaan and Egypt, then one should accept some form of the SS as the proper understanding of how long they were in Egypt (that is, only half of that 430 years). But if the "land that is not theirs" refers only to Egypt, then the LS interpretation is proper. It is this question that determines the whole issue. Other passages in Genesis (discussed below) make it clear that the "land that is not theirs" refers only to Egypt and not to Canaan because the land of Canaan was given by God to Abram and his descendants (Nave 1905). What follows is an attempt to establish the fact that the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, was the new homeland of Abram and his descendants. It is necessary to begin by reviewing what God told Abram when he first arrived in Canaan.

Although Abram was called by God to leave his home in Mesopotamia, when he arrived in Canaan, God made it clear that the land of Canaan was to be the home of his descendants (Bechmann 2016). In Genesis 12:7, "The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.'" Abram didn't understand the significance of God's statement since he almost immediately left for Egypt due to a famine. In Egypt he was rebuked by Pharaoh for suggesting that Sarah was not his wife. Pharaoh expelled Abram who went back to Canaan. There is no evidence that Abram ever lived anywhere else but the land of Canaan after this Egyptian debacle (Cheung 2024).

After the departure of Abram's nephew Lot to live in the Jordan Valley, God reaffirmed that the land of Canaan was the new homeland for Abram and his descendants.

> And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever." (Genesis 13:14–15, NKJV)

According to this passage, the sojourn of the descendants of Abram in a land not their own could not take place in Canaan because God was giving them that land as their new homeland.

Abram seemed to need a lot of reassurance from God about the plan to make him into a great nation for he reminded God in Genesis 15 that he had no children. God replied that the land would be filled with his descendants which would come from his own body. Abram believed God who reassured him that he was living in his new homeland:

> And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." (Genesis 15:7).

Immediately after this Abram entered a blood covenant with God by sacrifice during which he fell into a deep sleep. Then he had the vision of the future sojourn of his descendants recorded in Genesis 15:13–16 noted above. In this vision, God described the situation of Abram's descendants in the "land that is not theirs." First, they would be "strangers" in that land. The Hebrew word translated "strangers" (NASB) or "sojourners" (ESV) in Genesis 15:13 is גֵּר, transliterated "ger" which means "*sojourner*, temporary dweller, new-comer (no inherited rights)" according to the BDB lexicon (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 1907). Furthermore, Abram would not experience the suffering this sojourn entailed but God told him, "You shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age." Abram's descendants, however, would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years in a different land, but "in the fourth generation" they would return to their homeland. The land to which his descendants would return after their sojourn was the land in which Abram was living. To what other land could God be referring when he said, "then they will return here?" There is no other possibility. If the sojourn was in a "land that is not theirs" and if, on returning from the sojourn, they returned to their own land where Abram was living, then no part of the sojourn occurred in Canaan. The entire sojourn would be in a land other than Canaan. According to Exodus 12:40 in the Masoretic text, the sojourn would last 430 years. But is that consistent with all God revealed to Abram in the night vision? It is by attempting to answer this question that proponents of the short sojourn find support for their argument.

In Genesis 15:13–16, we are confronted with several difficulties of interpretation. First, the length of time Abram's descendants would be "enslaved and oppressed" was said to be 400 years, but in Exodus 12:40, the duration of the sojourn is said to be 430 years. There is a 30-year discrepancy between these two passages. This difficulty can be resolved if we

allow that God was just giving Abram a rounded number describing the duration (Minge 2008; Petrovitch 2019).

Another possible interpretation is that the first 30 years of their life in Egypt were favorable, and the oppression followed and lasted for the remaining 400 years. According to the Genesis record, the children of Israel were not enslaved the whole time they were living in Egypt, but God had said, "they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years." They were enslaved, but it was not for the entire sojourn. They entered Egypt as guests by the invitation of Pharaoh when Joseph was the vizier and the hero who saved Egypt from starvation. They were not slaves until later. Here again, the difficulty is resolved by assuming that God was just telling Abram the basic outline of the future which would entail a period of slavery. The four hundred years were not meant to be an exact description of the duration of their suffering. It is reasonable to summarize this passage as saying that they would be about four hundred years away from their homeland during which they would suffer enslavement and oppression.

A further difficulty is the statement "in the fourth generation they will return here." The problem is that four generations do not span four hundred years by present-day reckoning. Today, a generation is around 25 years, so four generations are only 100 years. This is a problem since neither the SS, nor the LS can accommodate an Israelite stay in Egypt of just one hundred years. How should this problem be resolved?

The solution lies in understanding what the term "fourth generation" means. The Hebrew for "generation" is דּוֹר, transliterated "dowr" defined as "sing, cycle, lifetime, descent, generation, (all the people who have grown up in the period from the birth of a man until the birth of his first son)" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1994).

Since Abram fathered Isaac at 100 years of age, maybe to Abram a generation was 100 years, and רְבִיעִי דּוֹר, "fourth generation" would indicate a time period of about 400 years. By this understanding, the 400 years of suffering for Abram's descendants would end when they returned to the Promised Land after four generations of 100 years (Minge 2007). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed Canaan was their homeland.

A proper interpretation of Genesis 15:13–16 supports the LS scenario because God told Abram his descendants would be away from the Promised Land for about 400 years. The task is to add evidence from Genesis that the patriarchs believed Canaan to be their own land. If the land of Canaan was their own land, then the sojourn could not begin until they left Canaan for Egypt with Jacob as described in Genesis 46.

Before investigating what Jacob thought of leaving Canaan to live in Egypt, one needs to know if Jacob's fathers, Abraham and Isaac, believed that Canaan was their homeland. Events described in Genesis provide the answer.

When Abraham sent his servant back to Haran to find a wife for Isaac, the servant asked Abraham, "Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?" (Genesis 24:5). Note how Abraham replied:

> Then Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there…if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free of this oath of mine; only do not take my son back there." (Genesis 24:6–8)

Abraham was emphatic that Isaac should not leave the land, the land of Isaac's birth. It is reasonable to conclude that Abraham did not want his son to leave the land of Canaan because God had given that land to Abraham and his descendants. There is no record of Isaac ever leaving the land of Canaan, but, after Abraham had died, Isaac may have planned to leave to escape a famine. Then God stopped him from leaving (Genesis 26:1–4). God warned Isaac not to leave the Promised Land, and Isaac obeyed. Thus, God made it plain to Abraham and Isaac that Isaac was not to leave the Promised Land. The time had not yet come for Abraham's descendants to leave their new homeland for Egypt.

But there was no warning from God to Isaac's son Jacob when he fled from Esau and went back to Haran where he was abused by his uncle Laban. Jacob's suffering in Haran was from God who made him wealthy with livestock and a large family before sending him back to the Promised Land. After his long stay in Haran, Jacob did not want to leave his homeland again. Jacob realized that God's promise to bless the whole world through Abraham was tied to that very land in which he and his father Isaac were born. The Promised Land was his homeland, and the promises God made to his fathers, that they would be a great nation and that the whole world would be blessed through Abraham's seed, would be fulfilled in that land.

Jacob's reluctance to leave the Promised Land is seen when he was called by Joseph to bring his family to Egypt, "So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac" (Genesis 46:1). Jacob and his large family were traveling to Egypt to escape certain death in the famine. Yet Jacob stopped at the border and worshipped God with sacrifices. That night God spoke to Jacob,

> God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." Then He

> said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also assuredly bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes." (Genesis 46:2–4)

Jacob was afraid to set foot outside the Promised Land. He was afraid to go to a land that was not his own even though he was starving. Jacob knew that God had told his grandfather Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed in a land not their own. Therefore, Jacob was afraid to leave his homeland and bring his family to a land of enslavement and oppression. Here God reassures Jacob in a night vision reminiscent of the vision God gave to Abram, that this sojourn in Egypt was according to his sovereign plan and that God would bring them back when the sojourn was over.

The passages above show that the patriarchs saw Canaan as their homeland. This assessment is further supported by the fact that the mummies of both Jacob and Joseph were carried back to the Promised Land and entombed there. Given the clarity that these facts bring to the interpretation of Genesis 15:13–16, one must wonder why the SS scenario has had any credibility in the minds of so many scholars such as Josephus (Fritz 2016), Tertullian (Ray 2007), Matthew Henry (Henry 1710), and Calvin (Calvin 1559) among others. One possibility is that their interpretation is colored by assumptions made in attempting to discern who was the Pharaoh of Joseph's day and who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. But the topic of Egyptian chronology is banned by the principles of interpretation given above and will not be discussed further.

There are several other verses in the Bible that show that God gave Canaan to Jacob and his children as their new homeland. These are listed here not to strengthen the case made above, but to show that there was no controversy in the Bible on the matter. Consider these: Exodus 6:8, 33:1, Numbers 32:11, Deuteronomy 1:8, 30:20, Psalm 105:23, Ezekiel 28:25, 37:25. These verses are not addressed by those of the SS proponents. Rather, they turn to other verses when trying to make their case.

An examination of the Scriptures used by supporters of the SS to defend their interpretation will now be presented. However, remember that the actions and words of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, provide clear evidence that they viewed Canaan as their new God-given homeland.

### Defending a 430-year Sojourn of Israel in Egypt

To understand why so many hold to the SS, we will now look at several biblical arguments used to support the SS scenario. It will be seen that careful examination of these verses according to the principles listed above will leave no question that the LS is correct.

Supporters of the SS maintain that the Hebrew of Exodus 12:40 is not necessarily as clear as the LS supporters think. Carter and Bates (2023) speculate that the translators of the Septuagint were trying to clarify the Hebrew text which could be translated in two different ways in support of either the LS or the SS. The Septuagint translators appear to have held to the SS scenario, and they added "and the land of Canaan" for clarification. But in doing so these translators violated a principle of interpretation by setting one part of Scripture against another (Hommel 2001). As demonstrated above, Genesis 15:13–16 states that the descendants of Abram would sojourn in a land other than Canaan, whereas the Septuagint translation of Exodus 12:40 states that the sojourn would include Canaan. In the Septuagint, Exodus 12:40 contradicts Genesis 15:13 because Canaan was the Promised Land given by God to Abraham and his descendants. Clearly the Septuagint translators of Exodus 12:40 have erred.

At this point some claim that Canaan was not the home of Israel until they conquered the land after the Exodus. An analogy easily counters this objection. Suppose a man buys a home on a mortgage. Technically the bank owns the home, but it is nonetheless the man's home. If subsequently he has a son born there and in grade school the boy invites a friend over to his home to play, the friend would not say, "But that's not your home! The bank owns it." If making a financial statement, the friend would be correct. But on the human level, that home is the only home the boy has ever known. The same is true of Isaac and Jacob who were born in the Promised Land. As I have argued, Isaac and Jacob viewed the Promised Land as their home long before the post-Exodus Israelites conquered the land.

Carter and Bates (2023) also cite Exodus 6:4 in support of the SS, "I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners." This is the ESV translation. In the KJV, this sentence ends with, "the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers." Then Carter and Bates say, "Thus, the 'sojourn' clock starts before they get to Egypt (for example, in the time of Abraham)." Here there is an equivocation on the meaning of the word "sojourn." It is of course true that God sent Abram to a foreign land to sojourn. But we are discussing what God told Abram in Genesis 15 about his descendants living in a foreign land from which God would bring them back to the Promised Land after Abram rested with his fathers. These are not the same "sojourn" and most modern English translations avoid using the word "sojourn" in Exodus 6:4 preferring to use forms of

"pilgrimage" or "stranger." The Bible often describes life in this fallen world as a sojourn or pilgrimage. The book of Hebrews speaks of Abel, Noah, and Abraham, saying, "that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13) Yes, all who are like Abraham, the man of faith, are strangers and exiles in this world. Life in this fallen world for believers is a pilgrimage, a sojourn if you like, but this is referring to a different sojourn than we are discussing regarding Exodus 12:40.

Seeking scriptural support for the SS scenario, Carter and Bates (2023) next cite Paul's address to the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, recorded in Acts 13:16–19.

> Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—*all of which took* about 450 years.

The 450 years mentioned by Paul will not allow the LS scenario, they assert, because the clock begins ticking, they say, according to Paul's statement when God chose Abram and called him to leave Haran. But this is an arbitrary assumption. Was Paul emphasizing, "God…chose our fathers" or was he emphasizing, "God…made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt?" You could go either way with this interpretation, and the passage favors neither the SS nor the LS scenario. Besides, Paul made a summary comment about historical facts. He was not constructing a mathematically rigorous timeline of history. One should not use Paul's statement to argue that Exodus 12:40 can't mean that the children of Israel spent 430 years in Egypt. But let's set aside the above conclusion, that Paul was just making a summary comment, and follow the SS argument a bit further to see where it leads.

From the Acts 13 passage, Carter and Bates assume the duration of the sojourn must have included the time from when God called Abram since Paul said God "chose our fathers" and then he mentions the stay in Egypt, the Exodus with the wilderness wandering, and then the conquest, all taking "about 450 years." The sojourn seems to have included the times during which God "chose" the Patriarchs. Let's see how the numbers add up. Abram was 75 when he left Haran (Genesis 12:4). From other passages in Genesis, we know that Abram fathered Isaac 25 years later (Genesis 21:5), and Isaac fathered Jacob at age 60 (Genesis 25:26), and Jacob entered Egypt when he was 130 (Genesis 47:9). Adding these, one finds that 215 years elapsed between God's call of Abram and Jacob's entering Egypt. If the clock for the 430-year sojourn started ticking when Abram was called by God and left Haran, then there remain only another 215 years from when Israel entered Egypt until the Exodus. This is the basic form of the SS scenario. But, by this SS interpretation, Paul said 450 years spanned the events from God's call of Abram to the conquest. It is impossible, according to the SS interpretation, to begin the 430-year sojourn when Israel entered Egypt and then after the Exodus, add the 40 years of wilderness wandering without Paul's statement stranding the children of Israel in the desert 20 years after they escaped Egypt. Paul gave only 450 years, not 470 years for all this to happen. They wandered 40 years in the desert, not 20. So, they say, the LS scenario is impossible according to Paul's comment. But on the other hand, according to the SS scenario, if one allows the clock to start ticking when Isaac was born, then the SS scenario would go like this: Isaac was born 25 years after Abram left Haran, and with the birth of Isaac, the clock started ticking for the 430-year sojourn. Jacob was born when Isaac was 60, and Jacob entered Egypt at age 130. Adding 60 and 130 gives 190 years from the birth of Isaac to the beginning of Israel's stay in Egypt. Adding the 215 years of the SS stay in Egypt, plus 40 years of wandering, and 5 years for the conquest, you get 450 years just as Paul said. Here we have a nice, tidy, mathematically rigorous timeline for the SS scenario consistent with the SS interpretation of Paul's statement in Acts 13. The SS scenario would be the winner of the debate.

An equally tidy mathematically rigorous timeline can also be constructed according to the LS scenario. Suppose Paul, using an LS scenario, was thinking of the Israelites being enslaved and mistreated beginning some 30 years after they entered Egypt? Then it would be 400 years of slavery, plus 40 years of wandering, plus 10 years of conquest to make 450 years. By these computations, the LS is consistent with Paul's comment if he was describing an exact timeline. The simplest explanation is that he was speaking extemporaneously and so he just gave an approximate number. But even if Paul was describing an exact timeline, both the SS and LS camps can fit the 450 years into their scenario by setting an appropriate starting point. Paul's statement in Acts 13 does not favor either the SS or the LS.

Those who hold to the SS scenario recruit another of Paul's statements to support their interpretation in Galatians 3:16–17.

> 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. What I am saying is this: the Law, which

> came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

Using this statement in further support of their scenario, the SS proponents claim that the 430 years began with God's call of Abram and ended with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. This contention is easily countered by simply saying that this promise from God was repeated to Isaac and Jacob, the last statement of it by God being the year Jacob entered Egypt (Genesis 46:3–4). Thus, 430 years after God's last ratification of the covenant to Jacob, the Exodus occurred. In summary, the statements by Paul referring to the sojourn in Acts 13 and Galatians 3 do not clearly favor either the SS or the LS. But the LS interpretation of Paul's statements comports with a straightforward reading of Exodus 12:40 consistent with the principle of perspicuity.

### Overturning Genealogical Arguments for the Short Sojourn

Finally, objections to the LS scenario may be based on genealogies constructed from the names of prominent men listed in Exodus 6 (Carter and Bates 2023). The passage begins with, "These are the heads of their fathers' households" (verse 14) and concludes with, "These are the families of the Levites according to their generations" (verse 19). Between these two "bookends" is a list of names from which Carter and Bates construct a genealogy spanning a 215-year stay of Israel in Egypt to support the SS scenario. The names include the children and grandchildren of Jacob's sons Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. For example, verse 18 lists the sons of Kohath, grandsons of Levi, as "Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel." The fact that these men were heads of households does not mean this list can be used to make a complete genealogy spanning the Egyptian stay.

Consider Exodus 6:20 which goes on to say, "Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses." If one is trying to construct a genealogy spanning the SS stay of Israel in Egypt, the assumption is made that the Amram of verse 20 is the same man as the Amram of verse 18. But this is not necessarily the case. Names of prominent men were often reused among their descendants in Old Testament times. For example, the name Zechariah is used for more than 29 different men in the Old Testament. Also, two other men named Amram are found in the Old Testament in 1 Chronicles 1:41 (only in KJV) and Ezra 10:34. One must not assume that the Amram of Exodus 6:20 is the same man as the Amram of Exodus 6:18 especially in light of the census result given in Numbers 3:27–28 as follows,

> Of Kohath *was* the family of the Amramites and the family of the Izharites and the family of the Hebronites and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites. In the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *there were* 8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary.

By the time of the Exodus, the number of males descending from Kohath through his four sons was 8,600. If we assume there were an equal number of female descendants, then the four sons of Kohath had fathered 17,200 children during the stay of the children of Israel in Egypt. Seventeen thousand, two hundred children had descended from Kohath through the lineages of his four sons by the time of the Exodus. If these children are divided evenly among the lineages of Kohath's four sons, then the Amramites numbered 4,300, and among them were Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. If Moses's father, named Amram is the same man as Amram, son of Kohath, the head of the Amramites, then Moses, Aaron, and Miriam had 4,297 siblings by the same parents. This would make their parents the most fertile couple in history and Jochebed a mother of astounding vigor. In modern history, the record of the most children born to a single woman belongs to the wife of Feodor Vassilyev, a peasant from Russia in the eighteenth century. She birthed 69 children in 27 pregnancies, which included 16 pairs of twins, 7 sets of triplets, and 4 sets of quadruplets (Clay 1989). As fertile as Mrs. Vassilyev was, Jochebed, if she were the wife of Kohath's son Amram, would have exceeded the fertility of Mrs. Vassilyev by 6,100%. This seems to be impossible by natural generation.

Those who hold to the SS could say that while three of Kohath's sons fathered nearly 17,200 children, his son Amram only fathered Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and their children. This unbalanced family tree may be possible, but it seems unlikely. A more reasonable solution is that two different men named Amram are mentioned in Exodus 6 and Jochebed, a daughter of Kohath, must be a descendant a few generations removed. It is a mistake to use the names of prominent men found in Exodus 6 to construct a genealogy extending through the time of Israel's stay in Egypt and then to use that genealogy to overturn the duration of Israel's stay defined by the clear statements in Genesis 15 and Exodus 12. This would be setting one part of Scripture against another.

Before concluding this defense, a comment from Carter in his response (2021) to Petrovich (2019) should be addressed. Regarding Petrovich's criticism of the use of genealogies to support the SS, Carter wrote, "The biblical data are clear; there is no hint in the text that the people listed in our table are not parent-child relationships, so the burden of proof is now on the shoulders of the Long Sojourn supporters to show why there necessarily are missing generations." I have attempted above to show that

the list of prominent names in Exodus 6 is not meant to be an exact genealogy spanning the stay of Israel in Egypt. Also, it is unlikely that Exodus 6:18 and 6:20 are referring to the same man whose name is Amram because that would suggest Moses had 4300 siblings or 17,000 cousins descending from his grandfather according to the census of Numbers 3. If two different men are named Amram then there are missing generations in Exodus 6 because the generations between Kohath's son Amram and Moses's father, another man named Amram, are not listed.

## Conclusion

God gave the Land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, and it became their homeland. Since God said the sojourn would apply to Abraham's descendants living in a foreign land, no part of Israel's life in Canaan can be included in the sojourn. Therefore, the location of Israel's sojourn was Egypt and its duration is 430 years as stated in Exodus 12:40 in the Masoretic text. Attempts to construct a 215-year sojourn of Israel in Egypt using the Septuagint translation of Exodus 12:40, statements of Paul, and genealogies made from the names in Exodus 6 are not persuasive since they set one part of Scripture against another. Future attempts to reconcile biblical and Egyptian chronology should hold to the Long Sojourn scenario. And may Our Lord be glorified as we try to understand all things in the light of His Word.

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