

How Long Were the Israelites in Egypt?

Four Texts:

Genesis 15:13

(13) Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years."

Exodus 12:40-41

(40) The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years.

(41) At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Acts 7:6

(6) And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years.

Galatians 3:16-17

(16) Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

(17) This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

So, Was it 400? Or 430? Or Something Else?

Patriarch: Age	Event	Text	Years from Gen 12 Promise	Years to Exodus
Abraham: 75	God makes His first promise to Abraham, who leaves Haran; Abraham goes to Egypt to escape famine	Gen 12	0	430
Abraham: 75-85	God tells Abraham that his descendants "will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years"	Gen 15:13 Acts 7:6	0-10	430-420
Abraham: 85	Abraham has lived in Canaan for 10 years and takes Hagar (Sarah's servant); Hagar conceives Ishmael	Gen 16:3-4	10	420
Abraham: 86	Ishmael is born	Gen 16:15-16	11	419
Abraham: 100 Ishmael: 14	Isaac is born	Gen 21:1-5	25	405
Abraham: 105 Ishmael: 19 Isaac: 5	Isaac is weaned; Ishmael mocks/persecutes Isaac	Gen 21:8-9 Gal 4:29	30	400
Abraham: 140 Isaac: 40	Isaac marries Rebekah	Gen 24 Gen 25:20	65	365
Abraham: 160 Isaac: 60	Esau and Jacob are born	Gen 25:26	85	345
Abraham: 175 Isaac: 75 Jacob: 15	Abraham dies	Gen 25:7	100	330

Isaac: 151 Jacob: 91	Joseph is born (derived from later information)	*****	176	254
Isaac: 168 Jacob: 108 Joseph: 17	Joseph is sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt	Gen 37	193	237
Isaac: 180 Jacob: 120 Joseph: 29	Isaac dies	Gen 35:28-29	205	237
Jacob: 121 Joseph: 30	Joseph is made Vice President of Egypt	Gen 41:46	206	224
Jacob: 130 Joseph: 39	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers two years into the 7-year famine; Jacob meets Pharaoh	Gen 45:4-5 Gen 47:9	215	215
Jacob: 147 Joseph: 56	Jacob dies	Gen 47:28 – 49:33	232	198
Joseph: 110	Joseph dies	Gen 50:26	286	144
*****	Only 64 years pass from the time Joseph dies to when Moses is born (derived from later information; Moses is Levi's great grandson)	Ex 6:16-20	*****	*****
Moses: 3 mths	Moses is placed in a basket and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter; Moses is nursed by his mother at Pharaoh's daughter's request	Ex 2	350	80
Moses: 80	Moses and Aaron confront Pharaoh and ultimately lead the Israelites out of Egypt	Ex 12:40-41 Gal 3:16-17	430	0

So, What's the Point?

- The “affliction” of Abraham’s offspring – predicted in Gen 15:13 – lasted 400 years beginning when Ishmael (the child of the flesh) mocks/persecutes Isaac (the offspring of promise).
- The 430 years that the people of Israel lived in Egypt began when Abraham went to Egypt, right after he was called by God to leave Haran (Gen 12).
- Stephen – in Acts 7 – bears witness to the 400-year affliction and enslavement of Abraham’s offspring, which (again) began when Isaac was mocked by Ishmael.
- The Apostle Paul bears witness to the Mosaic Law (Ex 20) coming 430 years after God made his original promise to Abraham in Gen 12.
- The number of consecutive years that Israel (i.e., Jacob and his sons) are in Egypt prior to the Exodus is 215.