

## Israel was NOT enslaved 400 or even 430 years in Egypt:

In Acts 9:6 it states, “But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, AND that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years.” Also, in Exodus 12:40 it tells us, “Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years.” However, Genesis 15:13 seems to agree with Acts 9:6 saying, “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.” Why do two of these verses refer to 400 years and another 430 years? Were they even enslaved either of these periods? Not at all.

In fact, in Exodus 6:16-18 we see that Levi's Son Kohath enters Egypt. Kohath is the father of Amram who has Moses. It states, “These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. . . . 18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. . . . Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years.” Even if each of these men died the year their son was born it would mean there was only 350 years from entering Egypt until Moses frees them, so it can't be even 400 years.

We see further in Galatians 3:16-17 that too “Abraham and his seed were the promises made. . . the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ.” In other words, these verses tell us that from the promise given to Abraham until the Law was given to Moses as Sinai was 430 years. This is a very important marker for understanding Biblical history. As we dissect this further we could summarize the following facts:

Abraham received the promise when he was 75 years old (Gen 12:3-7).

Abraham had Isaac 25 years later at 100 years old (Gen 21:5).

Isaac is 60 when Jacob is born (Gen 25:26).

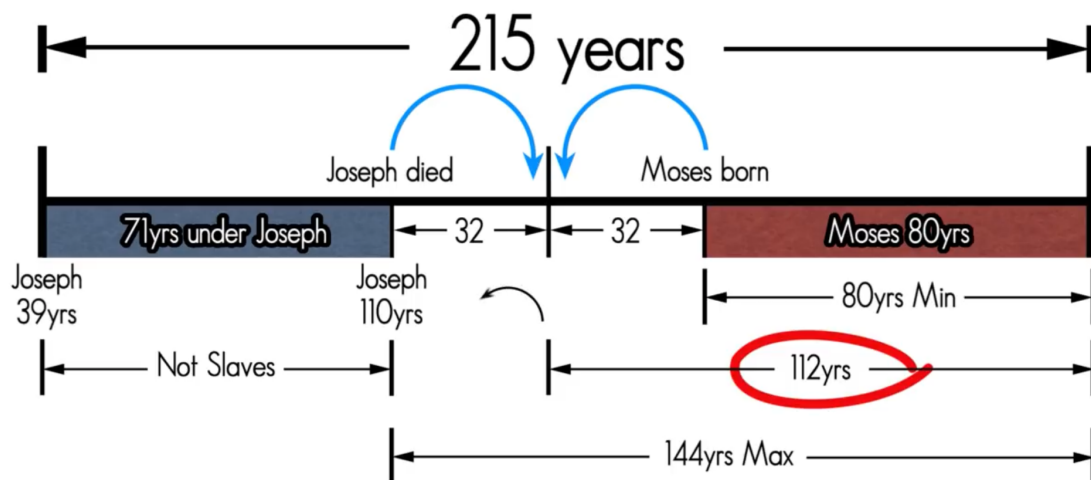
Jacob/Israel enters Egypt when Jacob is 130 (Gen 47:9).

**THAT'S ALREADY 215 YEARS FROM ABRAHAM TO ENTERING EGYPT, LEAVING ONLY 215 YEARS OF POSSIBLE SLAVERY FROM ENTERING EGYPT TO THE LAW BEING GIVEN! (430-215=215).**

So earlier in Exodus 6 we saw the worse case scenario was 350 years of time based on the ages given of Kohath through Moses. But now we see that there can only be 215 years from Kohath entering Egypt until the Law is given.

Knowing the Israelites were not enslaved when Jacob and Kohath first entered the land of Egypt because Joseph is still in power, we have further details to help us understand the timing. Joseph was 30 years old when he was freed from prison (Gen 45:6). There were 7 years of prosperity and 2 years of famine before Jacob enters Egypt, making Joseph 39 when Jacob comes to the land. Joseph dies at 110, meaning there was 71 years of time under Joseph when they are not enslaved. (110 years of Joseph's life minus the 39 years he was before Jacob enters the land equals 71 years). Therefore, of the 215 years from the possible time they were in Egypt, 71 of them are in peace and must be subtracted, leaving only a possible 144 years to be enslaved, (assuming they were enslaved the year Joseph dies, which is doubtful).

Now let's look at the tail end of the slavery. Moses was 80 when he freed them so backing up those 80 years from the time the law was given to his birth means the minimum they could have been enslaved was 80 years if they were put in bondage the year Moses was born, which is also doubtful. So sometime in the 64 years between Joseph's death and Moses being born is when they were made slaves. Assuming half-way in-between these dates **we see about 112 years is all the Israelites could have been enslaved.**



So why does the Scripture record 400 and 430 years? The answer is very simple, Genesis 12:40 should read "the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt AND CANAAN was 430 years, which would agree with Acts 7 and Genesis 15:13. The Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate and Josephus all record "and Canaan" in this verse but it has been left out of the Hebrew Masoretic text.

Understanding this, we see that if you add up the time from Abraham receiving the promise until they leave Egypt it was 430 years as recorded in Exodus. In Genesis 15:13, however, only 400 years are recorded because this is the time they were enslaved AND MISTREATED or persecuted. This is understood by the Bible recording that Ishmael persecuted Jacob when he was weaned, (Gen 21:9) which according to the Talmud was around 5 years old. Thus, the 400 years consists only of the 430 years in Canaan AND Egypt, MINUS the 30 years of Abraham where they were NOT mistreated. It isn't until Jacob is persecuted by Ishmael when Jacob was weaned that the 400 year clock begins. Thus, there is no contradiction between the 400 and 430 years quoted in the Scriptures. Both are correct! Why does this matter? Many critics have claimed the Bible is inaccurate, but this shows the remarkable reliability of the inspired Scriptures revealing that they are trustworthy and true. If the Bible is so careful and accurate about this, it can surely be trusted when it speaks of the fact that all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We all need Jesus, who alone can pay the penalty of our sins. Trust in Jesus, the Word of God that became Flesh.



Abraham's seed was enslaved and mistreated  
in a land not their own four hundred years.