



# BIBLE REFLECTIONS

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## This Newsletter

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with answers to certain biblical facts which have been misconstrued or misunderstood.

**Q: Who are our readers?**

A: Anyone interested in matters of faith.

**Q: What will our readers want to know?**

A: Timely, helpful, problem-solving information regarding the Bible.

Christian 'fake news' comes from inaccurate propositions we refer to as 'doctrines' and also in the form of songs and hymns which become integral to believers' subconscious minds. However, there are other subtle sources of 'fake news' for believers as in the following sample

**Fake News:** 'The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 400 years.' Here is a so-called biblical fact that has been indelibly imprinted into the minds of generations of churchgoers. The reality of history is far more complex and requires diligent investigation.

**Fact Check:** Biblical dating is notoriously difficult to decipher. Let's quickly examine the available data: (1) Gen 15:13,16 seems to imply that Abraham's descendants will be slaves in Egypt for 400 years (the Hebrew itself is less clear), which is seemingly corroborated by Acts 7:6, and also that they will be back in the promised land in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation. (2) Exod 12:40-41 asserts that the Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years. (3) Paul says that there were 430 years between the covenant with Abraham (Gen 13; 15) and the Sinai covenant (Exod 19). (4) 1 Kgs 6:1 claims that there were 480 years between Exodus and Solomon's 4<sup>th</sup> year, 966 BC (a fairly established date), when he began building the Temple. This would mean the Exodus occurred around 1446 BC. (5) Egyptian chronology provides these dates—the Hyksos Period (cf. Joseph story) lasted approximately from 1650-1550 BC. The 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Egypt's golden age, began in 1550 BC when Ahmose 1 overthrew the Hyksos. He would be the king who did not 'recognise' Joseph (Exod 1:1). Here is the sequence: (1) Joseph arrived in Egypt sometime after 1650 BC. He was 39 years old when he was reunited with his father (at 30 he became ruler in Egypt [Gen 4:45-46], followed by 7 years of plenty then 2 years of famine prior to the migration). Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years (Gen 47:28), while Joseph lived another 54 years after Jacob's death (Gen 50:22ff), all in all about 100 years before slavery began. (2) Moses would have been born around 1526 BC as he was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus (Exod 7:7). (3) The Exodus occurred around 1446 BC. This means the duration of the Egyptian slavery would be about 100 or so years. One more piece of significant data: God told Abraham that his descendants would return to the promised land in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation (Gen 15) and Joseph lived long enough to see children and grandchildren, 3 generations (Gen 50:22-23). That being the case, Moses would have been just 1 generation away from Joseph's grandchildren. While questions remain, Israel could not have been in Egypt for 400 years and they were not slaves for 400 years. (check out [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MO9X\\_TGGqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MO9X_TGGqo))

I am drawn to the following assertion of Paul, 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with my understanding.' (1 Cor 14.15 HCSB). I suggest this maxim should be our *modus operandi* when we contemplate theological and biblical truths. In a world filled with 'fake news', the Church should be the bearer of real good news not more 'fake news'.

