

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 271

Exodus 12, Part 1

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Episode Summary

This episode of the podcast begins our discussion of the circumstances of the exodus event. There are many difficulties and issues that have distracted scholars over the years. Exodus 12:37 and Exodus 12:40 are two that we will discuss in this episode. The first confronts us with the problem of large numbers of people in the Exodus narratives. The second takes us into the duration of the sojourn (bondage) of Israel in Egypt, an item made controversial by its apparent disagreement with several other biblical passages.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 271: Exodus 12, Part 1. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing? I know you had wisdom tooth surgery this week. How'd it go?

MH: Yeah, I had oral surgery on Monday. It was just... What a blast. This was my second wisdom tooth out, so I kind of knew the drill.

TS: So did you have all four...?

MH: No, just the one. And I didn't have any pain in it. The reason that they wanted to take it out was that it was creating a food trap next to the molar, so they said, "Look, if you don't take this out, then your molar will get a big cavity or an infection. So just take it out." So I said, "Okay." Like I said, I've done it once before. It didn't take too long, but it's two or three days of popping whatever they give you for painkiller, which puts you to sleep half the time.

TS: Are you going to make it through the show?

MH: Oh, yeah. Yeah. [TS laughs] I ditched the pain medication two days ago and just went to ibuprofen, and that doesn't put me to sleep.

TS: Yeah, I still had all four of my wisdom teeth. They grew in fine; I had no issues. So that's a rarity. But then I had to get one pulled because it got abscessed (or whatever it is), and I had the choice between a cap and pulling it, so I just pulled it. But I've got three of the four with no issues, so I guess that means I have a big mouth or something. I'm not sure.

MH: [laughs] Two gone; two to go. [laughs]

TS: I don't know what this means, but when they x-ray your teeth, since I have my wisdom teeth in, they have to put that little lead plate (or whatever it is) to shield your mouth, and they have to shove it so far back in my mouth that I was gagging last time. And the nurse... Do you know what she says? She said, "That's what you get for still having your wisdom teeth." I go, "Really?!" She was joking with me. But that's the response I get?! You're not sorry? No, "that's what you get for having your wisdom teeth." Like, "Wow, thanks."

MH: It's nice that they're looking out for you there, Trey. [laughs]

TS: Yeah, that's nice of them, isn't it? [laughs] Alright, Mike, well, we're still in Exodus 12. We covered it last week with chapter 11, but we're going to do two parts of Exodus 12, so what's that about?

MH: Yep. Boy, you know... Once you get out of... Exodus 12, 13, and 14 (and you could really almost loop 15 into this)... [sigh] Listeners have probably noticed that in these chapters... Part of the chapter will be the last plague, and then the Passover, and then we get this little segue into the people leaving Egypt. Then we come back in chapter 13 to this rite of the firstborn thing, or the offering of the firstborn. Then we go back to the exodus, and then we get the pillar and the cloud. Then we actually get to the crossing. And the crossing we have to pick up back in chapter 12, because that's where it began. The information is just not laid out in one place. It's scattered through these three or four chapters. So that's one issue.

The other issue is, there are just a lot of rabbit trails—problems—that you hit here. We're going to hit two of them today. But lucky for us, we get to go back into the quagmire of chronology now. And as if that wasn't bad enough, once we actually get to the crossing of the Red Sea, then we have questions like, "Well, the Hebrew actually says *yam suf*, the "reed sea." Is that the Red Sea or is it something different? Does it matter? Is this a literal concept or is it something to do with chaos thinking, both on Egypt's side and the Israelite side? What's the route of the exodus? And that actually depends on where the Israelites turned at different points and in what direction. And of course, nobody knows. So you get into all these issues.

So what I decided to do was today we're going to call this Part 1 of Exodus 12, because we're not going to get out of Exodus 12 proper. There are lots of other

passages we're going to look at, but that's where we're going to camp. We're going to cover two issues. One is the issue of large numbers in the Old Testament. And the other is going to be the duration of the sojourn (the period of bondage in Egypt). So the second one there is a chronological issue. But we're going to spend enough time on those that we can't actually get into the date of the exodus. So that's the next time. So Part 2 is going to be just, how do the early date defenders defend that position, and how do the late date defenders defend that position? So we'll spend the whole episode on the dating problem.

And then we'll finally hit the crossing of the Red Sea. We'll loop in the pillar of cloud thing. The information is scattered in several of these chapters. And we'll probably hit Exodus 15 in there, too, because that's the Song of Moses, which is about the crossing. I still don't know what to do with the beginning of chapter 13, because that's this offering of the firstborn, which is just sort of thrown in there, or at least that's the way it looks. So eventually, in a few weeks, we'll get to the Red Sea. [laughs] And then once we're there, we'll have to tackle the whole problem of the itinerary. And of course, that is going to factor into "Where is Sinai?" So we're back to Sinai again. So Sinai and chronology and dating... These things are controversies because there's no clear self-evident answer to any of these questions. But again, our job here is just to make listeners aware of that and get down into the nuts and bolts and see what the items are that scholars discuss. Then we'll just go from there.

TS: Sounds good to me.

MH: So that was a long answer to your short question. [laughs]

TS: That's okay.

MH: I'm a little vexed by "What do I do when and where and why and how?" and all that kind of stuff. But we're just... This episode is pretty clear-cut, because we're going to be in essentially two verses in chapter 12. So with that much said, here we go back into chapter 12. I'm going to read verses 33-41, which in the ESV and lots of other Bibles, the header is "The Exodus." Well, it's sort of the exodus, but it's actually the beginning of the exodus, and the exodus is going to get picked up later, which I just explained is part of the problem. But these verses say (this is Exodus 12:33-41):

³³The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. [MH: Which is a great line. I guess so!] For they said, "We shall all be dead." [MH: "Get rid of them or we're all going to die!"] ³⁴So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. ³⁵The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for

clothing. ³⁶ And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. 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.

So we'll stop there, because then the rest of chapter 12 goes into the Passover, which we've already talked about. It's just this back-and-forth content in these chapters. So what I want to focus on here are two issues. I've already mentioned them: the large numbers problem and the issue of how long was the sojourn in Egypt, which is related to the overall chronological discussion. So let's take them in order. The first issue really derives from verse 37, and I'll read it again:

³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.

And of course, besides the flocks, too, and the herds. So this huge number, and these kinds of numbers are going to show up elsewhere, like when they take a census. There are actually two censuses before... In the book of Numbers, you have both of these. They're about to go into the land, and they fail, and then they re-number the people after the 40 years of wandering. So you get these large numbers that pop up in the exodus and the wilderness wandering narratives. And this is a famous (and I would say, a very real) problem. Now Carpenter, in his commentary, just mentions this. He says:

10:00

The number of persons involved is huge, so huge in fact that it has tried the genius of exegetes for centuries as to how to interpret the figure of 600,000 men on foot, apart from children, women, and other men of various age groups.

So there's even other men—the ones that are too old to be among what you would think of as those who could walk this kind of distance. And that's not to mention the animals, too. Carpenter continues and he says:

Various attempts have been made to deal with the figures. The number 600,000 may be of theological importance, if it is not textually corrupt. The issue must be seen as an interpretive one, not one of belief or unbelief in God's ability to rescue a certain number of people. God's actions and words created the universe, a project of unfathomable proportions; that act indicates that he has power over all of creation. The theological perspective and literary purpose of the text are the key to understanding the writer, as well as any attempt to understand how large numbers functioned in the literature of the New Kingdom of Egypt or even in the ancient Near Eastern world in general...

We are dealing with certain historical facts; the facts are necessary, but the religious and theological significance they bear is most important. Are the numbers to be taken literally? Are they to be read symbolically, but in some sense of the term in which the reality of the world of the author is the controlling referent? Or are they the perfect fulfillment in theological terms of God's promise to Abraham concerning his descendants? What reality is being referred to, since biblical "reality" encompasses history, and the divine sphere, and the covenantal world of Israel? The metanarrative of Israel's God intersects with the cultural world of Israel at this time to convey both historical and metahistorical truth.

Now that's kind of academese in the way that that's put. What I'm going to do at this point... I'm going to read something I wrote for the FaithLife Study Bible about the large numbers problem, and then I'm going to go to an article by a guy I know. In fact, this guy was my first Hebrew teacher at Dallas. He actually did his dissertation on the large numbers problem. So I'm going to be referencing both of these things. But let's just jump in here. This is a bit more readable, and I think a bit more illustrative of the fact that this is a very real problem. This is not a contrived problem or some sort of dumb argument from skeptics. This is a real problem. So in the FaithLife Study Bible, I wrote this. This is one of those excurses parts of the study Bible.

In the census following the exodus from Egypt (Num 1:46), the number of Israelite males older than 20 years of age is 603,550; at the second census (Num 26:51), there are 601,730. [MH: Those are just the men 20 years of age and older.] These figures imply that the total population of the fledgling nation of Israel was somewhere between 2 and 3 million. While these figures are difficult to reconcile with the geography of Canaan and the archaeological record, several solutions are possible.

At least, this is what people have tried to do. The issue with the geography of Canaan and the archeological record are things like this. I'll just telegraph this point. There are certain roads that the Israelites could have taken, like to cross the desert in different places. And initially, they're between towns. They go from this point, and they turn, and that point, and they turn again, and so on and so

15:00

forth. Geographically, in many of these places there just isn't room (literally, there isn't room—spatial area) for this many people to turn more than three to four people abreast. If you have two to three million people, it would take weeks or months just to get past a single signpost point. It's like the Three Stooges. The three of them try to get through the same doorway at the same time and they clog the doorway. That's what you're dealing with in certain points of the geography along this route that we're given in the Torah (Exodus, Numbers, and other places). They literally would have to, "Okay, no more than three or four across here." Then you have the animals, too. It would take weeks or months just for the whole lot of them to cross a single line, where the first person crossed and then a month later the last of them get to that point. There literally isn't enough time in the exodus itinerary for that kind of thing to happen, by the Bible's own record of things. So it's a real problem.

Archeologically, once they get into the land, if you're dealing with this many people, then logically, you would need a certain number of cities or towns or villages where they live. It would be tens of thousands of them. But you don't have that. You might have a few hundred. You don't have anywhere close in terms of settled towns from the archeological record that can accommodate these numbers. So this is a real problem. It's not a contrived problem. Now to illustrate this, I also wrote this:

The Problem Illustrated

Several passages present challenges to the large figures of the book of Numbers [MH: and of course, here we have it in Exodus 12 as well]. Deuteronomy 7:1–7 presents Israel as the least numerous nation in Canaan at the time of the conquest—[MH: it actually lists seven other nations were larger]. This means that if the figures in Numbers are to be taken literally that the total population of these eight nations [MH: collectively] would have had to range from 16 to 24 million people, roughly the 2010 population of Florida or Texas, respectively. The size of Canaan, however, is closer to that of New Jersey than either of these states.

So take the whole population of Texas and stick it in New Jersey and assume that every square foot of it is livable, and you can see the problem. There's just not enough room. And you need water, so you can't just have every square foot occupied. You have cattle. Where are they going to...? Are you riding them the whole time? It's a comedy. It's ridiculous to imagine this at these numbers. There literally isn't the square footage—the square mileage—in this place that we call Canaan to have eight nations, the smallest of which is roughly three million. There's just something going on here.

Further considerations help put the problem into perspective. The Israelites left Egypt with "about six hundred thousand [men] on foot, besides dependents"

(Exod 12:37). God did not provide the Israelites with manna until roughly 45 days later (Exod 16:1), meaning that 2–3 million people required a different food source for 45 days. If a family of five sacrificed one lamb (or some other animal) each day to feed themselves [MH: because they don't have farms, folks—this is a migrant community], the Israelites would have to slaughter 120,000 lambs each day, meaning the Israelites would have had to leave Egypt with 5.4 million animals. Even if they ate meat only one-third of the time (for 15 days), they still would have had to slaughter 40,000 animals per day and leave Egypt with 1.8 million animals.

I mean, can you imagine the poop? It's just logistically untenable. Let's just be honest. It just doesn't work.

The manna also compounds the issue. According to Exodus 16:13–21, there was enough manna on the ground to feed each Israelite every day.

That's a really amazing trick, because basically, the ground is covered with people. It's like standing room only.

The Israelites gathered an average of one omer (roughly two quarts) of manna each day (Exod 16:16–17). This implies that 1–1.5 million gallons of manna appeared on the ground every day.

Finally, the Old Testament itself hints that the 2–3 million number is unlikely. In Numbers 33:49 it is noted that the Israelites “camped by the Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth up to Abel Shittim, on the desert-plateau of Moab.” Since Beth-jeshimoth and Abel-shittim were approximately seven miles from each other, the area of the Israelite encampment would have been about 49 square miles.

20:00

Did you hear that? 49 square miles. You have to fit 2-3 million people plus the animals in 49 square miles.

By comparison, New York City (8.1 million population in 2010) covers 305 square miles. Taking the number 2–3 million at face value therefore requires that the Israelite camp had a slightly greater population density than New York City—without any multi-level living accommodations.

They're not building skyscrapers, folks. They're not even building two-floor houses. They're in tents. They're all on the ground. This is a real problem. The numbers are just crazy. Now my friend, Dave Fouts... We have a link to this article posted on the episode website because this article is available free online. The article is entitled [“A Defense of the Hyperbolic Interpretation of Large Numbers in the Old Testament.”](#) It's from the *Journal of Evangelical Society*, 40:3 (1997). It's about a ten-page article. So I'm going to draw from this article, but the

article itself is drawn from Dave's dissertation. This is what he did his dissertation on at Dallas Seminary. And in the dissertation and the article, he provides some other telling (and I think a bit humorous) examples, where taking the large numbers literally in the Old Testament just doesn't work, by the Bible's own record. Now here are some of what he illustrates this with:

The number of Levites and of Israelite firstborn. [MH: This is the kind of stuff you'd never think of, unless you were noodling this problem.] Numbers 3 records several large numbers that cause problems if taken at face value. Concerning the number of Levites three group totals are given, the sum of which is 22,000 (Num 3:39). The sum as given is incorrect; it should be 22,300. The number of all Israelite firstborn is given as 22,273 (3:43), with 273 being the excess above the number of the Levites (3:46). G. B. Gray has pointed out that this would yield at least 25 sons per family, given a population of between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 persons.

So if you're going to take the two and three million at face value, that means every family had 25 boys (not to mention the girls).

The figures do indeed appear to be difficult if taken at face value.

Here's another example:

The number of the Ephraimites in Judges 12. Judges 12:6 states that for mispronouncing "Shibboleth" 42,000 Ephraimites were slain at the river Jordan, a number that exceeds the census total for that tribe in either Numbers 1 (40,500) or Numbers 26 (32,500). Even allowing for an increase of the Ephraimite warrior population after the conquest does not alleviate the problem of the enormity of the number of those slain.

So you really can't kill more than actually exist, is the problem. The number is obviously artificial, for some reason.

The wall at Aphek. 1 Kings 20:30 asserts that after Israel had killed 100,000 Syrian foot soldiers at a nearby battle, 27,000 more fled into the city of Aphek where a wall fell on them, apparently killing them as well. One would think that this wall or its remains would be somewhat comparable to the Great Wall of China to be so calamitous in its collapse and that it would have been at least partially unearthed by now.

In other words, this wall (to kill 27,000 people) has to be really long. And the question then arises, "Aphek has been excavated; where's this wall that's a mile (or a few miles) long?" Fouts compares it to the Great Wall of China to make the

point. It's got to be a really long wall to kill this many people. It just sounds kind of absurd, if you take the numbers at face value.

If there is some other significance to the large numbers, however, the size of the wall may not matter.

25:00 This is where he's going to into his solution, but before we get there, I want to go back to what I wrote in the FaithLife Study Bible and give you a bit of an overview here before I head back into Fouts. So in the Study Bible, I wrote:

Since taking the numbers of the census figures at face value yields these issues [MH: and others—I'm just being selective here], several solutions have been proposed.

So in Proposed Solutions, this is the way I sketched it out:

According to the most frequently cited proposal, the Hebrew word for "thousand" (*eleph*) may also mean "tribe" or "clan" (Num 10:4; Judg 6:5; 1 Sam 10:19). If so, the numbers may simply refer to military units, which corresponds to the aim of the censuses to determine the number of males eligible for Israel's army. The chapters in Numbers that record the censuses, then, use *eleph* as both a number and a term for a military unit. However, the only examples where *eleph* might plausibly refer to something other than a number have nothing to do with counting. [MH: If you actually look them up, this is the problem you run into.] Moreover, in other passages that do involve counting (e.g., Exod 18:21; 1 Sam 8:12; 2 Sam 18:1), the term does not have any other meaning than mathematical tabulation [MH: in other words, a thousand].

Another proposal claims that the author of Numbers deliberately exaggerated the numbers [MH: and of course, this would be the author of Exodus as well, doing the same thing] associated with the exodus and the wilderness wanderings; in other words, they represent literary hyperbole. Comparisons with other ancient Semitic texts of similar genres [MH: like military annals] validate this suggestion. Ancient Sumerian, Akkadian, and Assyrian literature, particularly royal inscripational and historical annals, deliberately employed hyperbole regarding large numbers. The annals aimed to glorify the god of the king by exaggerating the king's victories. In fact, the biblical accounts of the exodus and conquest bear striking similarities to contemporary annals in many ways. Given this [MH: if we assume that the numbers here are deliberately exaggerated—they're hyperbole], the hyperbolic use of numbers in the Old Testament anchors the biblical text to the writing conventions of the time—an argument that favors their authenticity as truly ancient documents. The writer of these accounts thus could have used a

known literary device to draw attention to the might of Yahweh—the King of all kings, earthly or divine—in delivering His people, Israel.

Now this is where Fouts goes. This is Fouts' view, and his article defends the hyperbolic use of numbers in the Old Testament. And what he writes... I'll just cite a few things from him. He says, in Section V, "Use Of Large Numbers In Other Ancient Near Eastern Contexts":

Quite often, large numbers were employed in a hyperbolic fashion in the historiographic literatures of Sumer, Akkad and Assyria, particularly in the royal inscriptional and annalistic genres. The hyperbolic numbers occur in military contexts expressing the number of troops engaged in battle, number of enemies slain or captured, amount of spoil taken, and amount of corvée labor employed. It is evident from my study that no other culture used numbers in excess of 100,000 with the same frequency as does the OT. Where numbers in excess of 100,000 do occur they are found exclusively in military contexts.

Or something to do with... Like in Exodus... Basically what he's saying is the numbers are large there and the numbers are going to be large in the census because it has to do with, not ultimately fleeing Egypt, but the fact that the Promised Land needs to be conquered. That's why we get these large numbers in there. He's saying even the flight from Egypt... Those people are ultimately going to be the people (or are intended to be the people) who are going to conquer the land, so you still have this conquest—this militaristic—sort of flavor going on in the bigger picture. What Fouts does is go to Akkadian examples (Sargon I, Rimush of Akkad, Shalmaneser I, Tukulti-Ninurta I, and so on and so forth). He has a number of these. And he writes this:

30:00

The language of this epic literature is of course hyperbolic. One notes the terms "without number" and "beyond counting" in synonymous parallelism to the specific [number] 3,000,000. This may support the hypothesis of my dissertation that at times the large numbers in other genres are also to be understood as literary hyperbole.

Two of his main points are:

Scripture is similar to other ancient historiography in that it may use large numbers hyperbolically in military contexts.

and

Scripture is similar to other ancient historiography in that the ostensible purpose of this usage is to demonstrate the relative magnitude of a given leader or king:

Yahweh is greater than David, who is greater than Solomon, who is greater than Rehoboam, who is greater than others.

This is why the numbers change and get smaller and so on and so forth. His conclusion is this:

One must wonder what implications the results of this study could have on OT scholarship, particularly in the area of conquest models. As has been noted earlier, the large numbers have often been a stumbling block for accepting the Biblical accounts as legitimate records of history. If the numbers are simply reflective of a rhetorical device common in ancient Near Eastern literature, however, one may no longer question the integrity of the record by use of this argument.

In other words, he's saying, "If the hyperbolic view is correct, then critics cannot use the large numbers to say that the accounts are unhistorical. Because the writers would be using exactly the same conventions as the writers of military annals of Sumer and Akkad and Babylon and Assyria, that everybody accepts as historical. If the biblical writers are doing the same thing, then the numbers shouldn't matter. They're not disqualifiers for authenticity or historicity. That's Fouts' big point here.

The large numbers are often simply figures of speech employed to magnify King Yahweh, King David, or others in a theologically-based historiographical narrative.

For us, we look at that, and what Fouts just said is a really good point. I think he's really on to something here—that it is illegitimate to use the problem of the numbers to say that these accounts in the Torah cannot be historical. That is bogus, because this other material that no one questions reflects real events. They do exactly the same thing, and everybody knows that this is a literary convention for this other ancient Near Eastern material. So why then exclude the Bible from that same rhetorical or literary technique? If you're going to be consistent and say that it's a product of its own time, then this is no longer an argument against biblical historicity. It's actually an argument in favor of it.

But for us, I would tell people if you're just breaking into this series, go back to the first episode we did on Exodus, when we talked about history and historicity and how we think about history. For us, we're not expecting that, since this isn't the way we do military chronicle. For *us*, it feels like exaggeration takes away from historicity. But what Fouts is arguing is, no, it actually confirms it, because it puts the Old Testament into the same category as this other stuff that people don't question. And if you're going to pick on the Old Testament, then you're inconsistent. Then you have some sort of religious axe to grind or some worldview axe to grind. To me, that makes very good sense (what he's arguing here for). But for the sake of our audience, for us, we just don't think of history

this way. We're not expecting that. Because if we were to write a history of any big war today or any big event, we're combing the records to get the exact body count, because that's just the way we do things. They didn't. Nobody in the ancient Near East did.

35:00

So for the original biblical world, literate readers in that world *were* expecting this. They knew exactly what was going on with these inflated numbers. It was a familiar way of history-writing for *them*. They would not have felt deceived, since the point wasn't mathematical accuracy but ultimately glorification of the king or the military leader or the deity behind those guys. A precise count wasn't even in the picture for either the writers or their original readers. Everybody knows what's going on. Everybody knows the rules of the game. They know the rhetorical rules of the genre. Literate readers know what the writers are doing. It conforms perfectly to their expectations. But it doesn't conform to ours at all.

So we have a decision to make. Are we going to let the Bible be what it is, or are we going to wish it were something that it isn't and was never intended to be? Do we bend *it* to *our* will—our expectation? And I think this is another area, where (I've said it before and I'll say it again) when you do that (when you make the Bible conform to *your* expectations—the way *you* would do things), you make it vulnerable. You make it an easy target. If you let it be what it *is* and try to understand it the way that the writers were thinking and the way that the readers were thinking about what they received from the writers, there's a coherence to it. There are reasons why these things are the way they are. They're thinking one set of ideas. They're not thinking of the other set of ideas that we might be thinking. We're different. We're different from them. They're not us.

So what this means for us is when we read Old Testament accounts, we can't presume to have a real body count, as it were, like if we went back with a calculator and spreadsheet and put boots on the ground and counted everybody, that it would come out literally the same. Or if we could time travel and everybody was armed with Excel spreadsheets or something. So we can't know that. But we can know that Israel had great victories and God had fulfilled his promise to multiply Abraham's descendants like the stars of the heavens (which is another hyperbole—just taking the numerical approach). And I realize we had David Burnett on here before and what the stars of heaven... That's not only a numerical metaphor. It's also a qualitative metaphor. But I don't want to drift off into other episodes of the podcast. But if you're just thinking numerically, that's a hyperbole ("like the stars in the heaven"). And everybody knows that. Everybody knows it's not supposed to be an exact, precise number. Everybody knows that. In the ancient world, these inflated numbers were sort of like these sorts of expressions. They were intentional. They had a goal to accomplish, and that was the glorification of the king or the military leader or their god(s), and everybody knew that, so nobody was surprised. Everybody knew what they had on their hands.

The second issue derives from verse 40. Here we get to go muck around in the chronological stuff again. So let me read verses 40-41. After we get this description of the mixed multitude and the numbers and the animals, we read this:

⁴⁰The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. ⁴¹At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Verse 40 deals with the length of the sojourn in Egypt—the length of Israel being in Egypt. It appears to be in conflict with other verses, and therefore creates problems for Israelite chronology. Here are the other verses. In Galatians 3:17 (in the New Testament), Paul says:

¹⁷This 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 you say, “430 years afterwards. After what?” Well, if we actually go to Galatians 3, what precedes verse 17, we read this:

¹⁶Now 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.

This is what I mean—the law that came 430 years afterwards. The 430 years there are really sort of looping Abraham in—when Abraham received the promises. That isn’t what Exodus 12 says. Exodus 12 says the time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. So where is Paul getting this 430 years? Why is he including Abraham? It doesn’t align.

Another example. It appears in conflict with Genesis 15:13-16. So let’s go there.

¹³Then 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 [MH: not 430]. ¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they [MH: your offspring] shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

40:00

So it seems to equate the 400 with four generations (so a generation of 100 years). But that's not 430. Then you have Acts 7:6. This is part of Stephen's speech:

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.

So that seems to be drawing on Genesis 15:13-16. There's another one, Acts 13:20, but we'll get to that in a moment. That's a bit different. So what we have here is Exodus 12:40-41 in the Masoretic text (traditional text) saying that the people of Israel lived in Egypt for 430 years. So what do we do with the extra 30 years that seems to be in conflict with Genesis 15, which of course lies behind Acts 7? When we really think about it, we also have a problem with Galatians 3:16-17, because Paul loops Abraham in as well. So we have numbers (400 and 430) that have slightly different contexts. And of course, the numbers themselves are different. So what's going on here? What do we do with that?

Well, there are a couple of ways to approach this. You might think, first of all (one approach), wouldn't it be nice if, instead of Exodus 12:40 saying, "The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years," it said, "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel during which they dwelt in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan was 430 years." Wouldn't that be nice? That would loop Abraham and his time in Canaan into the 430 years, and that would seem to agree with Paul. Wouldn't it be nice if the text just said that? Well, guess what? It does—in the Septuagint! [laughs] What I just read to you was Rolf's edition of the Septuagint. That's what it says. Now other manuscripts of the Septuagint actually have 435, but at least we have a Septuagint tradition that has 430 and loops Abraham into the picture.

So you could say that Paul was evidently using a Septuagint that was basically what I just read about "They dwelt in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan [that phrase is added] 430 years." So Paul in Galatians 3:16-17 and Exodus 12:40 would actually agree, in this scenario. Paul is essentially paraphrasing the content of the Septuagint, which loops the patriarchs into the number of Exodus 12:40. Well, that would be nice, but we still have to deal with "What about the 400 number in other passages (Genesis 15:13-16 and Acts 7:6)? Can we reconcile this 430, and Abraham's in the loop here, so that takes care of the 430 (at least it seems to)? And then what about the 400?" Well, go back to the Genesis passage, and listen to it closely. Here's how you would reconcile these things. Verse 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.”

Now do you see what I did there? I could say, well, in Genesis 15:13, God is talking to Abraham and he doesn't loop Abraham into the number of the sojourning. He tells Abraham, "Look, your offspring—your descendants—will be sojourners in the land for 400 years." So it's not you. So that kind of opens the door for a time in Egypt less than 430 that we could say, "Well, maybe 400." We could postulate that the 400 years in Genesis 15:13-16 refers to the actual bondage (the bad time in Egypt) or 430 would be a time that we could say Jacob and his descendants lived in Egypt, and it wasn't bad at all. After all, there was an interval between the time Jacob and his family get there and the time in Exodus 1 where things start to go bad. Well, there are problems here, too, because not only... If we're depending on the Septuagint and we're looking back at Paul, Paul is still obviously thinking of Abraham in some way here, and we can't get Abraham within 30 years of the lifetime of Jacob, so we still have that problem. And Exodus 1 seems to suggest that the enslavement suggestion came toward the tail end of Israel's time in Egypt (or it could be read that way). It doesn't have to be read that way.

45:00

Maybe a better way to take it is, "The period of affliction, maybe it did last 400 years." Because as we read Exodus 1, it says "There arose a Pharaoh that didn't know Joseph." That's shortly after Jacob dies. And things just go sour progressively. It starts out one way, and then it ends with slavery and killing the Israelite boys. It just gets worse. So maybe it does stretch out 400 years. Maybe we're okay. But again, we're getting closer to a reconciliation, but we're still not quite there because we have the Abraham-thinking in Paul's head. Maybe Paul is (this is possible, because the New Testament writers do this) thinking of both passages (both Genesis 15 and Exodus 12) and just summarizing (paraphrasing) and putting them both together. That's why he thinks of Abraham... The time when the covenant was launched and the 400 years of bondage there, and he's also thinking of Exodus 12 (the 430). Maybe that's Jacob's early good time. He was still in Egypt, but it wasn't in bondage, and they were only afflicted 400 years... You could see how these things could get mixed, not in a wrong way. But you can see how Paul could be thinking of all these passages and just short-handing it in Galatians 3 to present a summary in the space of two verses. You can get there. You can deal with the 400/430 that way. Now Sarna, in his Exodus commentary, notes the rabbinic material puts an interesting twist on this. He says (the first part is already familiar to us, but I'll read it anyway):

This historical summation does not exactly accord with the four hundred years of Egyptian oppression predicted in Genesis 15:13. The Mekhilta [MH: a compilation of essentially Jewish legal theory—halakhic midrash on the book of Exodus] resolves the discrepancy by attributing the thirty-year difference to the interval

between God's covenant with Abraham and the birth of Isaac [MH: so it brings Isaac into the picture], although the text speaks clearly enough only of the Egyptian episode. [MH: It doesn't really say anything about Isaac.] The inclusion of the sojourn in Canaan in the computation is explicit in the texts of the Samaritan recension [MH: the Samaritan Pentateuch] and Septuagint translation [MH: which we already read].

That isn't really helpful because it tells us what we already know. Here's the interesting part. Here's the interesting twist that Sarna triangulates for. He notes that maybe the numbers aren't to be taken at face value, but they are what they are because of a literary preference for mathematical symmetry. Now catch this:

Ibn Ezra [MH: a famous rabbinic teacher] begins the [430-year] reckoning with the departure of Abraham from Haran for Canaan. And, in fact, exactly two hundred and fifteen years elapsed between that event and Jacob's migration to Egypt, yielding the same time span for the stay of the Israelites in Egypt.

So you have 215 years on one side and 215 years on the other and of course, you put them together and that equals 430.

This kind of symmetry follows a [symmetrical] pattern well established in the patriarchal narratives and elsewhere in the Book of Genesis. Thus, Abraham lived seventy-five years in the home of his father and seventy-five years in the lifetime of his son Isaac. He was one hundred years of age at the birth of Isaac, and he lived one hundred years in Canaan. Jacob lived seventeen years with Joseph in Canaan and a like period with him in Egypt. Ten generations separated Noah from Adam, and another ten generations, Abraham from Noah. In the light of these facts it may be that the neatly balanced periods of time are intended to be rhetorical rather than literal; that is, they underline the biblical ideal of history as the fulfillment of God's deliberate design. In the world view of the Bible, history cannot be merely a series of disconnected and haphazard incidents.

So basically Sarna is saying, "Maybe we ought to think about the numbers being what they are because the writer wants to tie two sections of God's work on earth through the patriarchs (or through his people Israel or through Adam to Noah)...

50:00

That the numbers are what they are to specifically connect two equal halves in terms of the numerical number given to each half. Maybe that's intentional. Maybe they're supposed to be brought together. Maybe the number given to them... People are supposed to discern that if you cut the number in half; then you look for both halves somewhere else in the chronological comments (like the age years given for people or between events) just so that you're supposed to connect the two sets, and it's not about a literal chronology or historical chronology in terms of time on earth. Maybe that's not the point. Maybe the point is to bring two things together because they're equal halves."

Now that's fascinating. My judgment would be that that's really worth thinking about. I don't know that that's the case here with the number 430, but it's actually pretty interesting. So if you like that idea, the solution therefore to Exodus 12:40 would be simple for you (or you might think). The solution might be easy enough. Well, we have 430 years. That's an artificial number in terms of literal chronology, but it connects these two things. That number is chosen for symmetry. That seems to work because we have other symmetrical patterns that seem to emerge when we're looking for this kind of thing in Scripture.

But if you're going to go that route... If you take that approach, it does call into general question the literalness of the numbers. In other words, could other numbers associated with the exodus and Israelite history be artificial for the same symmetrical, literary, rhetorical, theological purposes? We have this in the New Testament very obviously in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew (the three sets of 14). There's a deliberate reason why it's structured that way. It skips generations, if you compare that genealogy back to the Old Testament material. There's a symmetry created there in the three sets, and there's also a gematria thing that emerges from the way the numbers are arranged and all that stuff. It points to David. But I don't want to get into that in this episode. But there are things like this that happen. So you look at that, and you think, "Okay, maybe 430 is $215 + 215$, and we don't really know if we should attach real time to that or not." But if you do... If you decide, "I want to have my cake and eat it, too. I kind of like that explanation, but I still want the 430 and the 215s to mean something. I'm going to keep them for historical markers—chronology in real time." If you do that, then you must embrace the late date of the exodus. And Gleason Archer, who was not a late-dater, saw this very clearly. He writes in his book, *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*:

As to the length of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, the clear statement of the Hebrew text of Ex. 12:40 is that it totaled 430 years from the migration of Jacob's family until the Exodus itself. But since the LXX here reads that the 430 years included the sojourn of Abraham and his descendants in Canaan as well as Egypt, some have preferred this variant to the reading of the Masoretic Text [MH: some like the Septuagint better]. This would result in a [SPECIFICALLY] Egyptian sojourn of about 215 years

So if you're going to take the second half of the 215 as literal, chronological history, and you have a sojourn of 215 years, and if you plug that into real time, guess what? Archer writes:

...and would bring Joseph's career squarely into the Hyksos period (precisely what late date advocates...)

Joseph was part of the Hyksos period. With the late date, the date of the exodus was in the 13th century BC (the 1200s somewhere). So Archer realizes this. He's

going to argue against the Septuagint reading. He's going to argue against adopting the 430 and all this stuff, because Archer is committed to the early date in his introduction. Now Hoffmeier, who is a late-dater, says this:

Paul allots 430 years between the Abrahamic and Sinaitic Covenants, or the time between Abraham and the exodus, indicating that he followed lxx [Septuagint] chronology (cf. Gal. 3:17).

He has a footnote here:

According to MT chronology, 645 years separate the two [MH: between the Abrahamic and the Sinai covenants]. Exodus 12:40 has a different reading in the lxx than does the MT. The lxx envisions two periods of 215 years totaling 430—215 years spent by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Canaan prior to the family's move to Egypt and 215 years in Egypt prior to the exodus.

55:00 So it's quite a variance between the two textual traditions. And what Hoffmeier does with this is he says, "Look, Paul used the Septuagint, so I'm good with that." [laughs] And of course, Hoffmeier is a late-dater anyway. But to be fair to him, it seems like he really genuinely does consider this fairly compelling, that Paul has this specific chronology in his head. And if you're going to adopt that chronology as real-time chronological history, then Joseph is a Hyksos and you can only have the exodus in the 13th century.

Now in the next episode, we're going to talk about how the early date and the late date defend each other and respond to each other. But I'm just telling you right now, the problem emerges right here. And it really did back in Exodus 1, when we talked about Ramses and the names, and Pithom and Ramses, and all that stuff. So we're going to deal with that again and hopefully put some closure to it, at least in terms of the coverage, next week.

So if you adopt a late date exodus, you're done now. You're good with the Septuagint. You know how you're going to handle Exodus 12:40, how you're going to read that verse in relation to Genesis 15. You're good with what Paul does. You're good. But what if you don't like the late date? Well, that means you have to stay with the Masoretic text, and the Masoretic Text says we've got 430 years (that's the number given in Exodus 12:40 and Galatians 3:16-17) and then we have a 400-year number (in Genesis 15:13-16 and Acts 7:6). So your strategy would be this. You would say, "Okay, the Exodus 12:40 reference has the Israelites for 430 years 'living in Egypt.'" So that can only be understood as the time when Jacob gets there, through the bondage, and then the exodus happens. So you have 430 years. You have to go with that. Then Genesis 15, you would say, "That refers to 400 years of affliction." You could say, "Maybe the extra 30 years in Exodus 12:40 refers to the time when Jacob is there. He's with Joseph and they're not living under affliction. They're not in bondage. It's a

normal relationship. And from the point that they start to go sour, all the way to the exodus, well that's 400 years." So that's how you would have to read this. So we've already covered some of that ground earlier. So this is how you would have to handle things. Now the only outlier here is what do I do with Abraham? Because Galatians 3:16-17 seems to suggest that Abraham is lurking in Paul's head when he's referencing 430 years. And I've already told you what you'd have to do here. But just to summarize it again, you'd have to say, "Look, the reason why Paul mentions these things (Abraham in verse 16, the beginning of the Abrahamic covenant, and then he goes into the 430 years) is because Paul has both passages (Genesis 15 and Exodus 12) in his head, and he's just summarizing things in Galatians 3:16-17. That's essentially what you have to do. You have to assume that Paul's paraphrase of the text is not designed to loop Abraham into the 430 years. It's incidental to the 430 years. So take your pick. If you like that view and you stick with the Masoretic Text, then you could still argue for the early date of the exodus. If you want to say, "I don't think that's what Paul was thinking. I think Paul was looping this stuff together, blah blah blah, and I'm going to go with the Septuagint. That means Joseph is in the Hyksos period. And we have to have a late date exodus." Well, good for you. Both of these things are possible. I'm giving you both trajectories on how you would have to deal with the data.

Now there are a couple of outliers here. (Isn't that wonderful?) One outlier is Acts 13:20. It's not really a big one. Neither of these are lethal to anything. But they might occur to somebody listening in the audience. Acts 13:20 says this. And I'm actually going to read verses 16-20. This is when Paul is in trouble again, like he usually is. He wants to speak to the crowd.

¹⁶ So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

"Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸ And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. ²⁰ All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

1:00:00

So the 450 years here for Paul means this. It's the time from... Let me just ask what it means. The 450 years. Look at the phrases Paul uses. That God "chose our fathers." Now does that include Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or is it a generic reference to "the Israelites who have gone before us?" Then he has the phrase "their stay in the land of Egypt." That's a clear reference to the sojourn in Egypt—period of affliction. Then he references 40 years of wandering. Then he references the conquest. He says, "All that's about 450 years." Now with respect to our earlier verses that have the numbers 400 and 430 in them, if you took the

400 for the affliction, let's just say the first phrase, "chose our fathers," and then as Paul says that, he links it to "their stay in the land of Egypt." Let's just interpret that as saying, "Well, Paul's talking about when the Israelites went into Egypt." "Our fathers" would be Jacob and his 12 sons (Israel). So if you're going to do it that way, you're going to move Abraham out of the picture. Then you would just add the numbers this way. If you're using the 400 as the number for affliction, $400+40+7$ is 447. That's about 450 years. If you're using the 430, you'd come up with a total of 477, and you'd have to say, "That's about 450 years." A little bit more, but it's not a big deal. Both views would say that the number 450 is an approximation. That's how you would do this. So either side, there are your trajectories. Pick the one you like.

Second outlier. And this issue isn't directly related to the duration of the bondage and our topic, but it is a cautionary tale. Here's why I put it in here. It's a cautionary tale about using the concepts of generations and genealogies to do biblical chronology. I know everybody says, "Yeah, you just look at the genealogies, and then just add the numbers up. There you go. The world was created in 4004 BC." Okay, that's nonsensical. And this is a textbook illustration of why. So this is a good cautionary tale. As such, it is worthwhile to get into this—how a literal face-value reading of years and genealogies may not help at all. If you go to Exodus 6:16-20... Again, we've covered Exodus 6 before. This is where you get intrusive genealogy about the Levites. After God has made a concession to Moses as far as bringing Aaron into the picture, you get this weird genealogy just sort of plopped in here that we talked about before. Now catch this. This is from Kaiser's book on *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*. He actually has this as one of his entries. He writes, on his treatment of this passage:

The list of four generations in this text presents no problems on its face until one reads in Exodus 12:40 that the time period is 430 years. Such genealogical lists in the Old Testament have been a source of special delight and enormous difficulty.

I'm going to stop there. Let me read verses 16-20, and you'll get why this matters for the 430. Here's what we read. We're right at the beginning point now of the sojourn, or the time of Israel in Egypt—430 years.

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ 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.

So we've got four generations written about here. You have Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. You could say Gershon, Kohath, and Merari plus Amram. Maybe that's the fourth generation. Whatever. You've clearly gone from the time the Israelites get into Egypt to the time of Moses and Aaron. And you have these four generations. Now let's go back here because Kaiser sees a problem. [laughs] He says:

1:05:00

The difficulty, however, is that all too many interpreters have been tempted to assume that these genealogies are complete lists of names and figures and that we can therefore add up all the ages and obtain absolute dates for a number of prepatriarchal events for which we otherwise would have no data. Unfortunately the assumption is faulty. These are not complete genealogical records, and it was not the writers' intention to provide this material for readers who might wish to add up numbers. Usually what the text is reluctant to do, we must be reluctant to do as well.

So we must ask, Is there evidence that these genealogies were through the omission of less important names? In particular, can we determine whether there were only four generations [MH: here's the key question] from Levi to Moses during the 430 years of bondage in Egypt? Were Amram and Jochebed Aaron and Moses' immediate parents? If not, why does the text say Jochebed "bore him [Amram] Aaron and Moses?" (Ex 6:20). On the other hand, why does Exodus 2:1 remain noncommittal about the names of Moses' parents—"Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son [Moses]"?

Here's the problem.

A parallel genealogy for the same period of time—from the days just before Jacob went to Egypt until his descendants came out 430 years later—is preserved in the line of Joshua, a younger contemporary of Moses, given in 1 Chronicles 7:23–27.; there are eleven generations listed between Jacob and Joshua.

Yeah. 1 Chronicles is good for something, folks, and here it is. In that line, there are 11 generations listed between Jacob and Joshua. So what Kaiser is saying is, the genealogy that we read in Exodus 6 has to be abbreviated and condensed. It has to be select. It's not going to be reliable to just add up years to get time intervals and event intervals. You have 11 generations and four generations. It's dramatically different. It's not like just one extra (okay, maybe they had an extra kid when she was a little bit younger). No, it's 11 generations between Jacob and Joshua.

The logical conclusion is that Moses' genealogy is condensed. It is inconceivable that there should be eleven links between Jacob and Joshua and only four or five between Jacob and Moses.

But if more proof is needed, we have it. An altogether overwhelming set of data can be seen in Numbers 3:19, 27–28. If no abridgment is understood in the four generations of Moses' ancestry, what results is this unbelievable set of numbers: the grandfather of Moses had, during Moses' lifetime, 8,600 male descendants (forget, for the moment, the females!), 2,750 of whom were between the ages of thirty and fifty (Num 4:36)! Now, all of us know that those were times of large families, but is it possible to make sense of what has been reported in these texts—unless there is considerable condensing and compression of the record to get at just the key characters?

Another piece of evidence is to be found in the fact that Levi's son Kohath was born before Jacob and his twelve sons went down to Egypt (Gen 46:11), where the emerging nation of Israel lived for 430 years (Ex 12:40). Now if Moses was 80 years old at the exodus (Ex 7:7), he must have been born 350 years after Kohath, who, as a consequence, could not have been his grandfather. In fact, Kohath is said to have lived a total of 133 years, and his son Amram lived 137 years. These two numbers do not add up to the 350...

Okay? He goes on to point out how, if you don't understand that the four generations of Exodus 6 are selective and you take those names in those four generations and you go into the book of Numbers where these people are found, and they're having kids, and other kids that aren't mentioned here, and there are other generations, it becomes a numerical set of absurdities.

You say, "What's the point, Mike?" The point is that I brought this into the discussion in part to set up next week. So we're going to end here. The issue is, doing biblical chronology and arriving at dates for events is not as simple as looking in the Bible for numbers and just getting out a calculator and adding them all up. Let's be honest. Few people care about the book of Numbers and the genealogical lists of 1 Chronicles, but there is stuff in there that will mess your chronological approach up big-time. It will turn it into a house of cards. Because that's what it is.

1:10:00 So I offer this as a cautionary tale leading up to our discussion of the dates (the big two—the early date and late date) because some of that's going to involve how we understand generations, and do we take numbers literally or not? So in this episode, we have instances of numerical symmetry that potentially makes the numbers somewhat artificial. In other words, they are what they are because the writer wants to unite two sets of things together intentionally for the reader. And we also have a cautionary tale about assuming certain things about

genealogical lists when you get into chronology. It is not that simple. It will get you into trouble. It will lead you to false conclusions. So with that said, we've just dipped our toe into the issues here. So next time, we're going to build on this and get into the chronology—early and late date. How are they defended, and how does each side respond to each other?

TS: Mike, did you mention which side you come down on all of this?

MH: You know, my honest answer is, I just don't know. There are really things that tug me in both directions. <sigh> Boy, it's really difficult. I'll just give you an example. One of the things that makes the late date unattractive to me are the disconnects with Joseph and the Hyksos period. They really are disconnected. So I don't quite know... There are always way to deal with that, but there are just things that stick out. But on the other hand, the late date does have a number of things that really make sense. Like in this episode, it could allow you to just go with the Septuagint. You don't have to, but you could. There's a whole bigger issue of when they actually get into the conquest, does the description of the geography of the land... What does that look like? Does it look like what we know from archeology? I'm not talking about the conquest of, like, Jericho. I'm talking about the general settlement patterns. Does it look more like the 13th century or the 14th century? And you could make a good argument that the boundaries and the cities and all that stuff really look a lot like the 13th century, based on Tel Amarna texts. Because Egypt used to be in control of this whole region, and there are actually a lot of records for towns and villages and stuff like that. But is that just evidence of it being written later? Or updated? Are they editorial updates? Who knows? I just don't know. I don't really know where to land. On one level, I don't really care. It's almost at eschatology-level for me. But since it's mostly Old Testament, I'm a little bit more interested than eschatology. [laughs] It's almost there.

TS: It's okay not to know. It's alright.

MH: I don't think anything hinges on one date or the other. But when we go through next week, people are going to say, "Ah, that's really persuasive. You got me there." That's going to happen on both sides, and that's okay. Like I said, there are things about each view that tug me and make me want to side with that particular view. But then something else comes along and it's like, "Oh man, that just sounds better at this point than the other one." So I don't know.

TS: I want to hear where people land—where they come down—after next week's episode. So be sure to hashtag #NakedBible on social media and let us know. I want to hear the conversation that people are having...

MH: Yeah, it would be interesting.

TS: It would be interesting. So use the #NakedBible out there on social media, and let us know where you come down on things after next week's episode. Let's see if we can't get the internet talking about all of this. [laughter] Do a little experiment for us.

MH: At least a small set of Bible nerds talking about this.

TS: Hey, better than zero. Alright, Mike, well, we look forward to Part 2 next week, and with that, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.