Thought Tools

Face the Future Fearlessly

April 1, 2010 17th day of Nisan, 5770 Volume III Issue #13

Forward to a Friend

Sam was an unhappy truck driver. He called my radio show from the cab of his 18-wheeler while hauling twenty tons of airplane parts across the Sierra Nevada. Some family history had recently emerged suggesting that Sam was at risk of Huntington’s disease. He was devastated.

I spoke to him off the air for a few minutes during a commercial break. He later emailed me saying how helpful he had found our conversation. That made me decide to tell you what I told him.

Frequently, important data is conveyed to us in the Tanach by attention-grabbing incongruities. They are there to involve us in the process of decoding information that God embedded there.

Look at this one:

And the sojourn of the Children of Israel which they dwelled in Egypt was 430 years. (Exodus 12:40)

The very next verse repeats the number:

And it was at the end of 430 years … the armies of the Lord exited from the land of Egypt. Exodus (12:41)

There is only one problem. The Children of Israel were not in Egypt for 430 years. Not even close. They were actually there for no more than 210 years.

Let’s do a little “Bible Arithmetic.”

After 40 years in the desert, Moses died at the age of 120. (Deuteronomy 34:7)

He led the Israelites out of Egypt when he was 80 years-old. (Exodus 7:7)

His father was Amram, and his grandfather was Kehat, who came to Egypt with his grandfather, Jacob. (Genesis 46:11)

So how old was Kehat when his son Amram was born? By this point, people were no longer living Methusaleh-type life spans. So, at most, Kehat might have
been about 60 years old when Amram was born.

Now how old would Amram have been when his son Moses was born? Probably roughly the same. So if we add Kehat’s 60 years to Amram’s 60 years to Moses’ 80 years in Egypt, the time that elapsed from Jacob and his family arriving until the Exodus is only about 200 years.

In fact, ancient Jewish wisdom records that Israel’s total time in Egypt was 210 years.

But wait! God promised Abraham that his descendants would serve in an “alien land” for 400 years. (Genesis 15:13)

Okay, here comes the last piece of arithmetic for today:

Jacob arrived in Egypt when he was 130 years old. (Genesis 47:9) Isaac, his father, was 60 years-old when Jacob was born. (Genesis 25:26)

Thus from Isaac’s birth until Jacob and his family arrived in Egypt was 190 years. So now we have the chronology.

God spoke to Abraham and told him of the future Egyptian slavery. 30 years later, Isaac was born. 190 years after that, Jacob took his family down to Egypt to fulfill the prophecy. 210 years after that God took Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus.

\[190 + 210 = 400\] (Hence the prophecy in Genesis 15)

From that prophecy until the Exodus was 430 years.

Which leaves us with this problem: Why does Exodus chapter 12 tell us that Israel suffered in Egypt for 430 years?

Hearing that something bad might happen to us in the future can plunge us into despair right now. Hearing that his beloved great-grandchildren were to endure a painful period of slavery in the future, immediately made Abraham sad. For this reason, the entire period of suffering is described as 430 years because that is how long it was since Abraham knew what was to befall his children.

My audio CD program Let Me Go describes how to utilize Exodus strategies to escape our own Egypt. We can all be tormented and constrained by our pasts and presents, which is to say—our own Egypt.

However, fear of the future can torment us just as painfully—even to the point of complete paralysis. Focus on what you need to accomplish today. Tomorrow’s fears may materialize or maybe they won’t. Either way, you will be better off if you don’t allow fear of the future to paralyze you today. Do today’s work today regardless of how worried you are about tomorrow.

My life-changing book, Thou Shall Prosper, has been available at a terrific price. Very soon we shall reluctantly have to raise its price slightly. Please bring this invaluable tool into your arsenal now and fearlessly face the future.

---

**Susan’s Musings**

This week’s musing - *Lifetime Learning*

To post comments and feedback, or to print, go to [www.susanlapin.com](http://www.susanlapin.com). You
After he had served multiple military tours overseas and was back in civilian life, a friend explained to me that one is never an ex-Marine. You may not be on active service, but you are still a Marine. I hope he and his comrades won’t find this offensive, but I feel somewhat the same way about being a homeschooling mom.

Although I have no children left in my homeschool, a large part of my identity was forged by those years, and I have no desire to leave it behind....

To read the rest of Susan's Musings click [here](mailto:susan@rabbidaniellapin.com).

To see Rabbi Daniel Lapin’s television show, click on the blue button

TCT Television Network