

# Answer to Dr. Leslie McFall's Critique of 'The Time of the End'

## Part 2 – The 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

By Tim Warner | June 2014

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Several of Dr. McFall's arguments depend on his own unique interpretations of Scripture that go against virtually all other conservative Christian chronologists' handling of the same passages. Sound exegesis of Scripture is an indispensable prerequisite to developing any kind of chronology from the Bible. This is particularly true in handling the 430 years mentioned by Paul in Galatians 3. Dr. McFall's interpretation is as follows:

*"TM (sic) is not alone in failing to pay close attention to the wording of Galatians 3:17 which reads: 'And this I say, [that] the covenant, that was confirmed (προκεκευρωμενην) before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.'*

*"A fundamental error common to virtually all modern chronologies is to assume that there were just 430 years between Abraham and Moses. What they have overlooked is that the text talks about the Abrahamic Covenant being 'confirmed' (not made or cut) 430 years before the Law was given to Moses in 1446 BC. ...*

*"What the vast majority of chronologists and commentators failed to notice is that Paul was well aware of his nation's history, and of Psalm 105:9-10, no doubt, and he took great care to note the exact time when God confirmed the Covenant with Jacob (not 'made' or 'cut' [with Abram] or 'ratified with an oath' [to Isaac])."*

Dr. McFall has made a fundamental error of his own by not paying close attention to the preposition "εις." The KJV translation that he quoted above mistranslates the key preposition "εις" as "in" when it should be "to."<sup>1</sup> The English Majority Text Version renders this verse correctly as follows: *"And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul the covenant previously **confirmed to Christ by God**, so that it make the promise of no effect."* The confirming of the covenant was to Christ, not to Jacob as Dr. McFall asserts.

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<sup>1</sup> The preposition "εις" indicates progress to a point reached. It is the strongest way of saying "unto" in Greek. The point reached is the object of the preposition (Christ). Thus, the covenant was confirmed to Christ. He was the recipient of confirming the covenant.

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

In the previous verse, Paul established that “Christ” was the “Seed” mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant when God said that He would give the Land as a permanent possession to both Abraham and to his ‘Seed.’ The clause that Paul quoted, “and to your seed” is verbatim from the LXX.<sup>2</sup> The preposition “εις” in verse 17 makes “Christ” the indirect object of the verb “confirmed.” Jesus was the one to whom the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed, not Jacob. Therefore, there is no connection in Paul’s statement to Psalm 105 as Dr. McFall claims. Furthermore, the Greek word used in Psalm 105 LXX, “ιστημι,” concerning Jacob, is not the same Greek word that Paul used.

In order to correctly place the starting point of the 430 years in our chronology, we need to establish when the Abrahamic Covenant was **confirmed to Christ**. This requires going back to where God first appeared to Abraham, calling him to separate himself from his own kindred in Ur and become a sojourner in the Promised Land.<sup>3</sup>

*Gen. 12:1-3*

*1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “**Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house**, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”*

This is the passage that Paul quoted in Galatians 3 when he first brought up the subject of the Abrahamic Covenant.

*Gal. 3:7-8*

*7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached **the gospel** to Abraham beforehand, saying, “**In you all the nations shall be blessed.**”*

Notice the critical point that Paul made concerned the mission of Christ to the gentiles. The “Gospel” was preached to Abraham when he was told, “*In you all the nations shall be blessed.*” The nations would receive this “blessing” by being “in you” (Abraham). In the last verses of Galatians 3, Paul made it clear that those who are baptized into Christ become “Abraham’s seed.” This is because we are joined to Christ who is literally “Abraham’s Seed” – the very “Seed” to whom the promise was made.<sup>4</sup> When God first promised to Abraham that one of his ‘Seed’ would bring about Abraham’s blessing to

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<sup>2</sup> Gen. 13:15 & Gen. 17:8

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 11:8-10

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 3:16

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

all the nations of the earth, He was also confirming to that 'Seed' (Christ) the Abrahamic Covenant.

*Gal. 3:19*

*19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, **till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;***

Having already established that the 'Seed' mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant was Christ, in this verse Paul referred to Jesus as "the Seed." The words "to whom" therefore have as their antecedent "the Seed" who is Christ. In other words, the promise and its validation (confirmation) was made to Jesus Christ, who was to become Abraham's 'Seed' via the incarnation.

Who was the one who actually appeared to Abraham? It was clearly the Son.

*John 8:56-58*

*56 Your father **Abraham rejoiced to see My day,<sup>5</sup> and he saw it and was glad.**"*

*57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"*

*58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*

The Father sent the Son to Abram to establish a covenant. His first appearance to him was when he was still living in Ur. This is when the Son of God "*preached the Gospel to Abraham.*" This was also when the covenant was confirmed to the Son Himself – when He interacted directly with Abraham. And this was when Abraham was told to leave his family and homeland. Therefore, since Paul placed the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai 430 years later, we must reckon that period as beginning from the time recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 until the exodus. Dr. McFall's chronology for the slavery of Israel in Egypt is almost double what it should be.

Concerning the meaning of the Greek word translated "confirmed," the Septuagint shows that "confirming" a covenant occurs at the moment it is official. When Abraham made a covenant of purchase for the field and cave in which to bury Sarah, the same Greek word<sup>6</sup> is used of his making that agreement initially in Gen. 23:20 LXX, "*καὶ ἐκυρώθη ὁ ἀγρός.*" The term does not refer to a subsequent action sometime after a covenant was first made. It refers to a covenant that is valid or official, which means it cannot be broken or altered. There might be negotiations that precede the confirming of

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<sup>5</sup> "My day" is the day that the covenant was confirmed to the Son of God.

<sup>6</sup> The word used in Gal. 3:17 is the same except it has the participle "pro" (before) prefixed to it.

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

a covenant, but the covenant is only in force, valid, and unchangeable when it is confirmed.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, to say that the Abrahamic Covenant was not “confirmed” until God repeated it to Abraham’s grandson is essentially saying that it was not valid or unchangeable until Jacob. It was valid and unchangeable from the moment the words recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 rolled off of the lips of the Son of God in Abraham’s hearing.

Every subsequent repeating of the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was also a reaffirming of the covenant. These actions did not in themselves make it valid or sure, but were just as valid and official as the first “confirming.” This is proven by the fact that when God reaffirmed the covenant to Isaac, He said that he would fulfill His covenant “because Abraham obeyed My voice.”<sup>8</sup> What Abraham had done could not be undone. Thus, the covenant was already unchangeable before this, as Paul explained in Hebrews. “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, ***confirmed it by an oath*** ....”<sup>9</sup> If Dr. McFall wants to insist that “confirmed” in Gal. 3:17 refers to Jacob (on the ground that “confirm” must be subsequent to making a covenant), then he ought to link it to when God “*confirmed it by an oath*” to Abraham himself. God did this when Abraham proved his faith by attempting to sacrifice Isaac.<sup>10</sup> Paul said that this oath confirmed the covenant to Abraham, long before Jacob was born.

The mistake Dr. McFall makes is assuming that the word “confirm” refers to something that must be subsequent to the beginning of a legal contract. That is a false assumption on his part. Paul stated plainly that the initial promise and the oath God swore were “*two unchangeable things in which it was impossible for God to lie.*” Therefore, the covenant was sure and unchangeable from the instant the Son of God spoke the promise to Abraham before he left Ur. Paul himself explained that being “confirmed” is the point at which a covenant cannot be altered. “*Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.*”<sup>11</sup> In this verse Paul used exactly the same word that he used in the verse in question.<sup>12</sup> Since a covenant is

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<sup>7</sup> Gal. 3:15

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 26:1-4

<sup>9</sup> Heb. 6:13-18

<sup>10</sup> Gen. 22:15:19

<sup>11</sup> Gal. 3:15

<sup>12</sup> It is the same word without the prefix “before.”

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

“confirmed” when it becomes unchangeable, and since that occurred before the oath in Genesis 22, Paul has pointed to the exact point when the 430 years began.

Dr. McFall has mistaken a poetic use of three synonyms (made, swore, and confirmed) in relation to the Abrahamic Covenant as a definite chronological marker, and then assumed that Paul had this verse in view in Galatians 3.

Dr. McFall also failed to mention that Paul’s 430 years in Gal. 3:17 is simply a reference to the Septuagint version of Exodus 12:40. *“And the dwelling of the sons of Israel, which they dwelt in the land of Egypt, **and in the land of Canaan, they and their fathers** -- four hundred thirty years.”*<sup>13</sup> Paul frequently relied on the LXX for his quotations. The LXX has the 430 years covering the dwelling of both the patriarchs and their offspring, in both Canaan and in Egypt, as totaling 430 years. This was the source for Paul’s statement in Gal. 3:17, with which it agrees completely. The clause, *“they and their fathers,”* includes Abraham’s entire sojourn – dwelling on property that he did not own.

Dr. McFall could respond that the Masoretic Text reading only includes the descendants of Abraham dwelling in Egypt. *“Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.”* However, the Hebrew text does not say they were in Egypt for 430 years as Dr. McFall mistakenly thinks. It simply says that the “sojourn” of the children of Israel, who lived in Egypt, was 430 years. The “sojourn” is not necessarily confined to the time they were in Egypt. A “sojourn” is dwelling on a land that is not yours. Dr. McFall has already argued that the Hebrew way of thinking recognizes that the offspring of the patriarchs were within their loins before they were born, a point that I also made in my book when discussing this passage. Thus, Abraham’s “sojourn” in lands that he did not own was also the “sojourn” of the children of Israel within his loins and the loins of Isaac and Jacob. When Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as a pilgrim, so also did his “seed” in his loins. Even though those in slavery in Egypt later were no longer in Abraham’s loins, they were still “Abraham’s seed.” Thus, their “sojourn” was partly in Abraham’s loins, partly in Isaac’s loins, partly in Jacob’s loins, and partly as living sons.

Consequently, even if Paul did not rely on the LXX reading but was instead referring to the reading in the Masoretic Text, knowing the principle of carrying his descendants as ‘seed’ (which he explained in Hebrews 7), he would deduce the same thing as what the LXX says explicitly from this passage. My interpretation of Gal. 3:17 agrees with both the LXX and the Masoretic Text if understood from a Hebraic way of thinking. It also offers the perfect explanation for why the LXX adds “they and their fathers” and

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<sup>13</sup> LXX, Apostolic Bible Polyglot

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

“Canaan” to the Hebrew reading. It explains the true Hebraic meaning for the Greek mind unfamiliar with this concept. Dr. McFall’s interpretation insists on the Masoretic Text reading to the exclusion of the LXX reading and denies the very principle for which he elsewhere argues. Moses’ statement in Exodus 12:40 defined the parameters of the “sojourn” of Abraham’s seed (in foreign lands), which began the moment Abraham heard and obeyed God’s command to “*get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house.*”<sup>14</sup> At that moment Abraham and his entire ‘seed’ in his loins became “sojourners” and “pilgrims.” This continued for 430 years until the greatest “liberty” event in Israel’s history, the exodus. This is what Paul had in view in Galatians 3.

Abraham’s age when Christ first appeared to him was 70. This is established by first dating the 400 years of Genesis 15:13. That passage says that Abraham’s ‘seed’ would be persecuted for 400 years during their sojourn. This persecution started the moment Isaac was born, beginning with Hagar and Ishmael. The persecution was so severe, that Abraham had to send Hagar and Ishmael away. There is therefore a 30 year difference during which Abraham’s ‘seed’ was not persecuted, while still in Abraham’s loins. We know that Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran after his father died,<sup>15</sup> and Isaac was born when Abraham was 100. This accounts for 25 years of the 30-year difference, when Abraham’s ‘seed’ sojourned with him but was not persecuted. The difference of 5 years is the time they “sojourned” in Haran prior to Terah’s death.

God also told Abraham that his ‘seed’ would be “enslaved” but delivered in the fourth generation.<sup>16</sup> Levi was one of the sons of Jacob who went down to Egypt. His son was Kohath; his son was Amram; his son was Moses.<sup>17</sup> Yet, if the slavery in Egypt was 400 years, as Dr. McFall insists, then the average age of each of these fathers when their sons were born would be in excess of 100 years, since Moses was 80 at the time of the exodus.<sup>18</sup> Yet, all of these men died at around the age of 130.<sup>19</sup> My chronology has Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses covering a period of about 200 years. This allows for each father to produce offspring while in his prime, about his early 40’s.

Thus, we have all three periods ending at the same point in time – the exodus.

- The “slavery” of Abraham’s seed was 4 generations from relocating to Egypt.
- The “persecution” of Abraham’s seed was 400 years from Isaac’s birth.
- The “sojourning” of Abraham’s seed was 430 years from his leaving Ur.

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<sup>14</sup> Gen. 12:1

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 12:4 & Acts 7:4

<sup>16</sup> Gen 15:14-16

<sup>17</sup> 2 Chron. 6:1-3

<sup>18</sup> Ex. 7:7

<sup>19</sup> Ex. 6:16-20

## Galatians 3 and the 430 Years from Abraham to the Exodus

Add the 430 years to Abraham's age of 70, we have an even 500 years between Abraham's birth and the exodus, with Isaac's birth exactly 100 years after Abraham's birth, which was in the year 2000 from creation.<sup>20</sup> These are all Jubilee years based on a 50-year Jubilee cycle counting from creation.

- Adam to Abraham = 2000 yrs.
- Abraham to Isaac = 100 yrs. (70+30)
- Isaac to the exodus = 400 yrs.

The exodus occurred in the year 2500 AM, which is the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee from creation (50x50=2500), a Jubilee of Jubilees, the greatest "Liberty"<sup>21</sup> event in Israel's history. The only other "Liberty" event that comes anywhere close is the decree of Cyrus ending the 70-year Babylonian exile in the 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year from creation.

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<sup>20</sup> See chapter 11 of *The Time of the End* for these calculations and tables.

<sup>21</sup> The whole point of the Jubilee year was to proclaim "liberty" throughout all the land (Lev. 25:10).