

# THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE PARTS

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Each individual [Egyptian] who afflicted the Israelites, had he desired not to do so, was possessed of complete freedom of will to desist from that evil. For [the Holy One, Blessed be He,] did not decree upon any specific person [to be an instrument of evil]; He only prophesied in general that [Abraham's] distant offspring would be subjugated in a land not theirs (Gen. 15:13-16). Man simply lacks the capacity to comprehend how the Holy One, Blessed be He, can know how the future will unfold. – Maimonides.<sup>1</sup>

In Genesis 15:13-16, the passages on The Covenant Between the Parts, God tells Abraham, who is then in Canaan:

*'Know well that your descendents shall be sojourners in a land not theirs and they shall be enslaved and oppressed, 400 years. But I will execute judgment upon the nation that they shall serve, and in the end they shall go forth with great wealth . . . and a fourth generation will return here.'*

This prophecy, like many others, is difficult to decipher. Commentators, ancient and modern, generally understand it to mean that during some future period that will last 400 years, Abraham's descendents will endure an episode of sojourn, enslavement, and oppression, at least some of it outside of Canaan, and at the end will return there. Traditional commentators tend to reckon this period from the birth of Isaac, Abraham's heir (17:21, 21:12), to the generation of Moses and the Exodus.

The most common rabbinic exegesis counts 60 years from the birth of Isaac to the birth of his son Jacob, then 130 until Jacob's descent into Egypt, for a total of 190 calendar years (25:26, 47:9). This leaves 210 years for the Israelite sojourn, enslavement, and oppression in Egypt.<sup>2</sup> However, the count of 400 years from Isaac to Moses encompasses not four but six generations: Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehat, Amram, and Moses. Moreover, the 400 years of

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this count end with the Exodus, whereas the Israelites did not actually return to Canaan until 40 years thereafter. Indeed, Moses himself, and virtually all his generation, perished in the wilderness and never did "return" to Canaan.

Some commentators have attempted to resolve these conundrums by removing Isaac, Jacob, and/or Levi from the count of generations because they did not live a significant percentage of their lives in Egypt. (Nevertheless, many of them continue to count the calendar years of Isaac and Jacob towards the 400 years of sojourn, enslavement, and oppression.) Other solutions have also been proffered, but none produces a precise conjunction between the end of 400 years of sojourn, enslavement, and oppression and the return of a fourth generation to Canaan. Many modern scholars have simply given up on a literal solution and treat the number 400 as a rounded, symbolic and/or typological estimate.<sup>3</sup> Source-critical solutions leave the problems in place, attributing them ultimately to a clumsy redactor.

There are other problems in relating the Covenant Between the Parts to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt and their return to Canaan 40 years later:

- Why did the Israelites of Joseph's time not return to Canaan after the end of the famine which had driven them to Egypt (46:5 ff.)?
- Why did Joseph believe that the Israelites could not bury him in Canaan until after their eventual return to that land (50:24)?
- Why does the Bible record the pharaoh's ostensibly trivial query about Jacob's age when he arrived in Egypt (47:7-10)?
- Why did the Israelites not anticipate the fulfillment of the Covenant Between the Parts when Moses told them that God had heard their cries of oppression and would deliver them from bondage (Ex. 2:23 ff.)?
- How can the years since the Covenant Between the Parts be calculated to match its fulfillment with the return of the Israelites to Canaan?

For the answers to these questions, this article will present an original, comprehensive, and consistent hypothesis. It draws on a plain-sense reading of the text against a background of information from other ancient Near Eastern sources that consists, in large part, of the following generally accepted data:

- After a century-long Hyksos/Canaanite occupation of the Nile Delta region of Lower (Northern) Egypt (ca. 1648-1550 BCE), a revitalized dynasty of pharaohs from Upper (Southern) Egypt succeeded in uprooting the Hyksos

and then exercised varying degrees of hegemony over Canaan for a period of some 400 years (roughly from the late 1500s to the early 1100s).<sup>4</sup> The Patriarchal Age and the Exodus appear to be set towards the opposite extremes this period.

- Most regimes of the ancient Near East kept detailed records.<sup>5</sup> Virtually all Egyptian records for this period from the Delta, where the Israelites dwelt, have been lost, perhaps forever.<sup>6</sup> Yet those that are extant elsewhere contain a great range of material, from the mundane to the monumental, from slave lists to brickmakers' quotas, to immigration/escape reports, to the exploits of kings and commoners alike. There is also other material from non-official sources.
- Most of these regimes had espionage networks: Informers, spies, counterspies, decoys, false information, and propaganda.<sup>7</sup> Many – and certainly the Egyptians – kept close surveillance over aliens, especially during unsettled times.
- Ancient Near Eastern king lists, such as the Sumerian King List and the Egyptian Royal Canon of Turin papyrus, often resorted to the use of generation-years – not calendar years – in counting regnal years. That is, they counted the overlapping years of partially concurrent regional kings as if the years of the second king were fully strung out after those of the first.<sup>8</sup>

Using this generally accepted ancient Near Eastern background data as context for the biblical narrative, and with a plain-sense reading of the text, I propose the following thesis on the events surrounding the fulfillment of the Covenant Between the Parts. At the outset, however, a caveat: The methodology employed here is necessarily inductive and inferential. Since there is currently no direct, undisputed physical evidence for the presence of Israelites in Egypt or for the Exodus, the narrative can be elucidated historically only by drawing reasonable inferences from the text against a background of reliable circumstantial, contextual evidence. If the contextual evidence and the inferences converge to explain textual anomalies comprehensively, coherently, consistently, and efficiently, then the resulting thesis must be deemed plausible, even robust.<sup>9</sup> Such is the case, too, with the Documentary Hypothesis, with Cassuto's theory of epic traditions, and with some narrative art treatments. They are all, in whole or in part, inductive and inferential by nature. For all intents and purposes, until concrete, detailed, and specific evi-

dence is unearthed, this kind of contextual, inductive, and inferential analysis is all that we have to work with now.

The thesis runs as follows:

When Jacob brought his family down into Egypt, he was accompanied by a large body of retainers [*ish uveyto*] (Ex. 1:1), which included an armed force.<sup>10</sup> The pharaoh of the time quickly realized that Joseph, his own vice-roy, was in fact not some unpedigreed Hebrew slave-lad (Gen. 41:12), but rather a scion of one of the feisty tribes he was attempting to subdue in Canaan and whose local emigrés he was wont to repress.

Now, treating the pharaoh realistically, as an historical king (see below) with an established bureaucracy and a vital foreign policy, one can judiciously posit that he would have sought to learn as much as possible about these new Israelite guests who suddenly threatened his status quo. So he ordered his operatives and advisors to collect and analyze for his review all the information at their disposal, including archival information, concerning the Israelites – their background, beliefs, intentions, and prior contacts with Egypt. And, of course, he duly discovered that Jacob's clan had come from Mesopotamia at the behest of their God, who had, no less, promised them the entire expanse of Canaan – the very province the pharaoh was straining to control.

More alarmingly, he also discovered that the Israelites had a timetable for their conquest, conveyed to them by their God in a vision: After 400 years of sojourn, during which time they would be enslaved and oppressed in *a land not theirs* **a fourth generation** (not "**the fourth generation**" as the Hebrew is usually mistranslated)<sup>11</sup> of their progenitor's descendents would return with great wealth to wrest control of Canaan, and their oppressors would be sorely judged.

In addition, a search of the immigration registers disclosed that during a previous famine Joseph's great-grandfather Abraham had sojourned in Egypt, where he endured the abduction of his wife by the pharaoh of the time. But attended by what appeared to be a special Divine providence, she was presently restored to him unmolested, and he returned whole to Canaan a very wealthy man (12:10-13:2). All of this eerily foreshadowed, in miniature, the predictions of the Covenant Between the Parts for Abraham's offspring. Indeed, afterwards, Abraham and his allies succeeded in repelling an invasion

of Canaan by a league of four eastern kings (Ch. 14). Notably, too, it was after this triumph that God entered into the Covenant Between the Parts with Abraham.

Perhaps the pharaoh's greatest consternation came when he learned that Joseph, his own master dream-interpreter and viceroy, had also been visited by dreams – two explicit dreams of lordship. In the first, 11 sheaves of grain representing his 11 brothers bowed down to his own sheaf. (This could have an echo in pharaoh's own dream of ears of grain.) The second dream duplicated the first in the 11 stars representing his brothers bowing to him, and added the sun representing Jacob, and the moon, representing Joseph's (step)mother, also bowing to him (37:5-11; cf. 41:5-7).

Now, any other pharaoh might have dismissed these visions and dreams as fantastical delusions of grandeur conjured by a still smallish, provincial clan. But this pharaoh "knew" Joseph – his "spirit of God" (41:38) and his special way with dreams – all too well. He grasped all too clearly that Egypt was perfectly qualified to be the "land not theirs," and that, in practical political terms, Abraham's vision and Joseph's dreams taken together projected no less than an end to Egyptian hegemony over Canaan. Even more ominously, if true, they represented a direct, Divine challenge to his pharaonic mandate as the incarnate son of Re the sun-god to be the cosmic agent of Egypt's security, welfare, and tranquility [*maat*] and its sovereign bulwark against chaos and collapse. Thus, he "knew" that he must urgently and accurately determine when those 400 years of the Covenant between the Parts were scheduled to elapse, when the God of the Israelites threatened to "execute judgment" upon him and his people, and "a fourth generation" of Israelites would arise to wrest Canaan away from him.

As the pharaoh, his dream-interpreters, and his advisors, sifted through and reviewed all the assembled intelligence data, they proceeded to reckon (like some commentators!) somewhat as follows: If a fourth generation returns to Canaan, conquers it, and settles there, it would be more accurately defined as a generation of return and conquest rather than a generation of sojourn. Therefore, the 400 years of sojourn, enslavement, and oppression would have to refer exclusively to the three prior generations.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the pharaoh needed to know the precise ages of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the first three generations of Abraham's descendents, and as soon as Jacob was ushered into

his presence, he immediately and bluntly asked Jacob his age. From Jacob's woeful response, which included an age-related reference to his ancestors, it is likely the pharaoh also learned Isaac's age (47:7-10). (The text here does not recount Isaac's age because it had already been given [35:28]. The pharaoh already knew Joseph's age [41:46, 53-54; 45:11].)

With this information, the pharaoh was able to calculate when the fulfillment of the Covenant Between the Parts could be expected to come to pass. Using the familiar method of counting up all the years of each generation, the 180 years of Isaac, the 130 years of Jacob, and the 39 years of Joseph, yielded the sum of 349 generation-years, leaving only another 51 generation-years until the prophesied 400 years of the Covenant would be fulfilled. It was assumed that Joseph's two dreams of dominance pointed to two equal time periods;<sup>13</sup> one in which he would rule over his brethren in the presence of his father and another in which he would rule alone after the passing of his father. It was then calculated that if Jacob and Joseph were to live on simultaneously for another 17 years, that would count as 34 generation-years, and if Joseph thereafter lived on for another 17 years, that would fill up the remaining 51 generation-years and the total count of generation-years would come to 400.<sup>14</sup> In calendar years, this would come out to exactly 34 years (17 for Jacob and Joseph together plus 17 more for Joseph alone). Confidence in this calculation was augmented by the coincidence that the 17 years that Joseph was destined to hold exclusive rule over his brethren would equal, measure for measure, the 17 years during which they had lorded over him in his youth before plotting to dispose of him (37:1 ff.).

By this reckoning, the pharaoh was able precisely to predict that the Israelites could be expected to commence the conquest of Canaan after another 34 calendar years. He then had to find a way of preventing that from happening. In trying to come up with a plan, he and his advisors realized that the linchpin of the whole process was the oppression. Should the pharaoh oppress the Israelites (perhaps, indeed, as he may have been tempted to do after the famine, when Joseph would no longer be quite so useful to him), he would surely trigger the judgment and redemption. But should he not impose an oppression, then the judgment of his people and the redemption of the Israelites pursuant to the Covenant – and their subsequent conquest of Canaan – would not take place.

So the pharaoh and his advisors carefully crafted a carrot-and-stick policy. The Israelites would be treated very well. They would be given all the best that Egypt had to offer, in the hope they would grow attached to their perquisites, assimilate with the Egyptians, and forget the promise of Canaan. However, if they decided to leave, they would be prevented from doing so, lest they return to Canaan and there strive to perfect their claim to the land and then have to be suppressed by force.

Indeed, all of this duly came to pass. Jacob died exactly 17 years later (47:28), precisely as the pharaoh had calculated. The Israelites continued to thrive during their house arrest in Egypt and made no determined effort to leave (Ezek. 20:6-9). As planned, the next 17 years also passed uneventfully. When Joseph later died, his children, pursuant to the pharaoh's policy, were not able to leave even briefly to bury their father in the family's ancestral tomb in Hebron. Before his demise, Joseph adjured them to carry his bones back to Canaan when an ultimate redemption would assuredly enable them to do so (50:22-26).

The pharaoh, so it seemed, had parried God's plan. The 400-year sojourn had led not to a fourth generation's return to the land but rather to its comfortable confinement in exile. Indeed, the entire fourth generation perished in Egypt. The Covenant Between the Parts appeared to have lapsed. God's promise of return was discredited and all but ignored by their descendents (Ex. 1:1-7).

Then, a new pharaoh ascended the throne *who did not know Joseph* and his dreams, who did not experience the deliverance Joseph had wrought for Egypt, who did not see why the Israelites should continue to receive special bounties. He fretted that they daily grew more powerful. They would have to be repressed, lest one day they decide to return to their roots, bolt, and join up with other independence-minded elements in their native Canaan. This pharaoh was not constrained by an apprehension that the God of the Israelites had forewarned that just such a measure of oppression would trigger their redemption. In his paranoia, he initiated it (1:8-22).

Moses was born, and the oppression deepened. The people cried out from the abyss in despair, and God harkened to their cry. He "remembered" His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He appeared to Moses and commissioned him to be His emissary to lead the Israelites out of exile. He res-

tated His pledge to bring the Israelites back to Canaan with great wealth (2:1-25; 3:1-22).

Moses, however, was reluctant. He knew the people would be skeptical (4:1). The period forecast by the Covenant Between the Parts had come and gone. There was no current congruence between a fourth generation and 400 years, no unambiguous alternate reckoning that could assure the people that the time of redemption was indeed at hand.<sup>15</sup> But God "heard" the people's cry of desperation. He "saw" them in their anguish, and He "knew" their pain and hopelessness (2:23-25, 3:7, 6:4-5). He resolved now to intervene *sui sponte*, regardless of the prophetic timetable. The circumstances demanded it. His justice and His mercy demanded it.

Moses accepted the offer he could not refuse. He became God's prophetic emissary. He orchestrated the Ten Plagues and the Exodus. He led the people to Mount Sinai, where they beheld the Divine epiphany, received the Law, and built the Tabernacle. In the second year after the Exodus, the people, in orderly formation, marched from Sinai to Kadesh. They were poised to enter the Promised Land (Ex. 4:18-Num. 12:16).

Then, tragedy. Moses, with God's consent, dispatched a reconnaissance party to Canaan in advance of the Israelite invasion. They returned after 40 days with chilling news of powerful natives and impregnable cities. They demoralized the people – who promptly lost faith in God's providence and proposed to about face and return to Egypt rather than die in the desert. For their fecklessness, God realized for them their fears. He condemned them to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness on the perimeter of the Promised Land until they perished. It will be left for their children, the next generation, to take up the challenge of the conquest (Num. 13:1-14:45).

And so, in a most unexpected and astonishing manner, God's prophecy in the Covenant Between the Parts is suddenly and precisely fulfilled.<sup>16</sup> By the end of the 40 years of wandering, Moses, his elder brother Aaron, and his elder sister Miriam, will all have died in the desert (Miriam, Num. 20:1; Aaron, 20:22-29; Moses, Deut. 34:1-12). They were the third generation of Levites to sojourn in Egypt. The next generation, a fourth generation, will enter the land – just as foretold in the Covenant Between the Parts.

Levi, Aaron's grandfather, was the first Levitical generation. He died in Egypt at age 137 (Ex. 6:16). Aaron, the eldest male of his generation, was a

third Levitical generation to have sojourned in Egypt. He died at age 123 (Ex.7:7, Num. 20:22-29). The sum of the years of these first and third Levitical generations is 260. The second Levitical generation was not, as might have been expected, Aaron's father. It was his mother.

Aaron was a son of Amram, who was a son of Kehat, who was a son of Levi (Ex 6:16-20). Levi, however, also had a daughter, Yocheved (Ex. 6:20; Num. 26:59) who was thus a second generation Levite. Now, Yocheved daughter of Levi married Amram grandson of Levi, who was thus her nephew, and who was of the third generation (Ex. 6:20). Yocheved, being of the second generation, took genealogical precedence over her husband Amram. She was the most direct link between her father Levi, who came down into Egypt, and her son Aaron, who finally went back up towards Canaan.<sup>17</sup> The next generation – a fourth generation – would return to the land.

The Bible does not tell us how long Yocheved lived or when she died. But, like the rabbis who derived the years of the Egyptian Exile algebraically, we can also solve her age algebraically. According to the Covenant Between the Parts, the sum of the years of the three generations preceding the generation of the return would total 400 years. The sum of the first and third generations – Levi and Aaron – is 260. leaving 140 years<sup>18</sup> for the second generation – Yocheved.

And so, God had faithfully foretold the future after all – but it was man, by an exercise of his free will, who brought that future to fruition. God's Covenant was fulfilled punctiliously, but it was through the autonomous decision-making of men, and the will of God to do justice and grant mercy, that the fulfillment was made manifest in its historical form.

This reconstruction, I believe, has forged a plausible resolution of most, if not all, of the puzzling anomalies that were raised at the outset concerning the Covenant Between the Parts:

- It has shown how the pharaoh could reasonably have known about the Covenant Between the Parts and other parochial matters relating to the Israelites.
- It has shown how it was in the pharaoh's interest not to lose his Canaanite protectorate to the Israelites.
- It has shown how the various calculations pertaining to the Covenant could have been made.

- It has shown why the pharaoh asked Jacob about his age, why the Israelites did not leave Egypt after the famine, why they were restrained from returning there even to bury Joseph, why the Covenant was not anticipated at the time of Moses, and how it was fulfilled, after the wandering in the wilderness, at the time of the conquest.

What remains to be determined is the historical period during which these reconstructed events could plausibly have taken place.<sup>19</sup> The following conjecture is hesitantly offered as a very diffident, very tentative stab at this very elusive target.

The narrative notes that Potiphar, Joseph's first master in Egypt, was an Egyptian [*ish mitzri*] (Gen. 39:1). That the reader has to be told that this personage in Egypt is "an Egyptian" may mean that at this time the native Egyptians had only recently re-assumed power from the Hykos. Similarly, that Joseph is introduced to the pharaoh as a Hebrew [*na'ar ivri*] (41:12) may mean that the pharaoh was himself an Egyptian and not a Semitic Hyksos king. This strongly suggests the immediate post-Hyksos period, when many Semites/Hyksos still remained on in the Egyptian Delta but no longer ruled. This points to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, perhaps during the turbulent reign of Ahmose I (1550-1525), or one of his early successors, Amenhotep I (1525-1504), Thutmose I (1504-1492), or Thutmose II (1492-1479). This period further coincides with the beginning of Egyptian military campaigns and suzerainty in Canaan proper. During this period, too, a significant citadel complex (*cum* regional administrative center?) was built in the Delta in the environs of the old, mostly abandoned Hyksos capitol at Avaris.

It could well have been the site where Joseph, as viceroy and overseer of rations, first espied his brothers among the masses of starving Canaanites seeking sustenance from Egyptian granaries, and where he then incarcerated them. Somewhat later, he would have returned there from his residence south of the Delta, near the royal palace in the capital at Memphis, to greet his arriving father and family and to escort them back to the palace for an audience with the pharaoh. All this would appear to accord with the emerging archaeology of the region and with the biblical text (42:1-26; 46:28-47:11). This pharaoh, then, would have been the pharaoh who knew Joseph, who saw fit to insulate Joseph's family from his often oppressive treatment of other Semites/Hyksos in his realm.

Some 200-250 years later, as the 18th Dynasty drew to a close and the 19th Dynasty arose, the pharaohs of the time, Horemhab (1323-1295), Ramesses I (1295-1294), Seti I (1294-1279), and Ramesses II (1279-1213), embarked upon extensive building projects, including a new royal palace and capital in the Delta, and their need for corvée and slave labor increased greatly. Local Semites/Israelites again would have been handy targets. Horemhab, then (or Seti I) would have been the new pharaoh *who did not know Joseph* (Ex. 1:8) and who initiated the oppression, while Ramesses II – who later lent his name to one of the great storehouse cities conceived at this time (1:11), and whose grand ego and obduracy are mirrored both in the monuments and the biblical text (5:2, 7:13 *et al*) – would have been the pharaoh of the Exodus (2:23, *cf.* 4:19, 2:15). This interval between Ahmose I (or one of his early successors) and Horemhab (or Seti I) also fits well with the primary biblical data that only four Israelite generations span the birth of Jacob to the birth of Moses, as well as with the rabbinic chronology that counts only 210 calendar years from the descent of Jacob into Egypt until the Exodus of his descendants out of Egypt by the hand of Moses.

On a victory stela commissioned by Ramesses II's successor, Merneptah (1213-1203), dated ca.1209, the name "Israel" appears denominated as a people, in a Canaanite context. Israel by then had already made its way out of Egypt and through the Sinai and had returned at long last, precisely in accord with the Covenant Between the Parts, to the land that God had promised them.

#### NOTES

1. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 6:5.
2. *Seder Olam Rabbah* 3.
3. See e.g. W.H. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Bible/Doubleday, 1999) p. 415.
4. See e.g. J. Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 241 (1981) pp. 1-28.
5. See Ezra 4-6; K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) p. 63.
6. Kitchen, pp. 245-66, 466.
7. Kitchen, p. 167. See also *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992) 2:346, §4 (Foreign Policy): "The Execration Texts...show an astounding ability on the part of Egypt to collect intelligence about its neighbors [Syria-Palestine, Libya and Nubia]...."

8. T. Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939) p. 161; A.H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 150; U. Casuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1959) p. 57. [3<sup>rd</sup> Heb. Ed.]

9. See J.K. Hoffmeier, "Out of Egypt: The Archaeological Context of the Exodus," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33:1 (Jan.-Feb. 2007) pp. 30-40, 77; *idem*, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996).

10. Genesis 34:25-31; 48:22; 49:5-9, 16-19, 23-24 (Jacob); 14:14-16, 24 (Abraham); 26:20-21 (Isaac).

11. The phrase *vedor rev'i* is without the definite article, and means "some fourth generation." Cf. Genesis 1:8, *yom sheni* – a second day, *NJPS* p.3; *Tanach/The Stone Edition* (New York: Mesorah, 1996) p.2; E. Kautzsch., ed., A. Cowley, trans. *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Eng. Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, 1985).

12. B. Herring, *Joseph Ibn Kaspi's Gevia' Kesef* (New York: KTAV, 1982) p.178.

13. This was a reasonable hypothesis because Joseph's two nearly identical dreams would seem to deserve equal "weight."

14. There are altogether 25 unique mathematical possibilities of Jacob and Joseph co-existing followed by Joseph living on after Jacob, with each possibility totaling 51 generation-years. These 25 possibilities range from (25+25) +1 to (1+1) +49, yielding from 26 to 50 calendar years. They had to be narrowed down to the one most likely solution. Numerologically, the "building blocks," or "atoms," of a positive whole number are its factors. The number 51 can be factored only by 3 and 17 (besides itself and 1). Of all the 25 possibilities, these two factors of 51 are present only in a division of the 51 generation-years into two equal 17 calendar-year periods (17+17) +17, which comprise 3x17=51 generation-years. This reckoning would thus appear to be the surest working hypothesis because it – and only it – can equate the remaining period of the Covenant Between the Parts (51 generation-years) with the apparently equal periods of Joseph's two dreams, (17+17) +17=51 generation years. Numerologically, then, the remaining years of the Covenant and Joseph's two dreams would have the same "atomic" structure.

15. W. Braude & I. Kapstein, eds., *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975) §5:17, p.100.

16. The Levitical genealogy of Exodus 6:16-27, 7:7 will be used to calculate the ultimate fulfillment of the Covenant Between the Parts because it is the only one in the Pentateuch that gives the life spans of the constituent generations of the Egyptian Exile. It appears that the tribe of Levi was meant to be distinguished by this genealogy for providing the critical leadership of the Israelites during the Egyptian Exile. From this perspective, therefore, it may be treated as a "king list" of sorts. See note 8 and associated text.

17. Although biblical genealogies are usually patriarchal, they not infrequently include women. See, e.g., I Chronicles 2:16-17.

18. This number, 140 years, fits well in context: Yocheved's father Levi and her husband Amram each lived 137 years (Ex. 6:16, 20). Ramban on Genesis 46:15 estimates that Yocheved also lived 137 years.

19. Cf. generally, Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, pp. 122-26, 223-27; Kitchen, pp. 241-372.