

Morning Star by the ancients,<sup>4</sup> a title used of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 22, in close proximity to the reference to him as “Alpha and Omega”. On 30 March Venus became the ‘Morning Star’ and will remain so till the end of 2001. Moreover, for the period 24 January to 10 June (137 days) it was situated in the constellation of Pisces, a rare astronomical event. Such a long sojourn in one constellation was only possible because, instead of moving straight on through the heavens, the path of Venus in our skies performed a loop within the constellation of Pisces. Also, on 11 and 12 April Venus passed very close to the star *omega* ( $\omega$ ) in Pisces, probably the closest for millennia.

Whatever might be the figurative application of Matthew 24:30, these remarkable astronomical phenomena surely provide a literal fulfilment of “the sign of the Son of man in heaven”, and warn us that the day of his return is near.

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4. Venus orbits between the earth and the sun. It is therefore visible (when it can be seen at all) either for a few hours before sunrise or for a few hours after sunset, never throughout the night. This led the ancients to refer to it as both the Morning Star and the Evening Star, thinking they were different ‘stars’.

### The 430 years of Galatians 3:17

I recently completed a short article on the above subject, and am pleased to see that Brother Ralph Green has come to the same conclusion regarding the length of the Israelite captivity in Egypt (“[Bible chronology reassessed and the seventh vial](#)”, April 2001, pp. 132-3). The following are a few extra thoughts to add to his conclusions.

The 430 years are usually calculated from when Abraham was seventy-five years of age (Gen. 12:4), for it is argued that the promise of the land as a possession to his *singular* seed did not occur until Abraham was already in Canaan (Gal. 3:16,17; Gen. 12:7). Nevertheless, there is some disagreement about which of the promises Paul refers to when he cites the words, “And to thy seed” (Gal. 3:16). Some are confident that the first reference to a singular seed occurs in the promise given to Abraham after the sacrifice of Isaac: “and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:17, 18). This prom-

ise, however, was given quite late in Abraham’s life, when he was nearly 120 years old. To begin the 430-year countdown to the giving of the Law at that point leaves insufficient time for the various stages set out in the tables below.

The only recorded promise that contains the exact words, “and to thy seed”, was given after Lot separated from Abraham: “for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, *and to thy seed* for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (13:15,16). However, this passage generally speaks of a plural seed, with emphasis on the great number of Abraham’s future descendants. From both Paul’s words in Galatians 3:16,17 and Stephen’s in Acts 7:2-7 it is reasonable to conclude that a promise of the singular seed was made very early in Abraham’s pilgrimage, indeed right at the first, even though this aspect is not so clearly detailed in the first recorded promise (Gen. 12:1-3).

[Table 1](#) gives the usual breakdown of the 430 years. However, the 115-year gap between the death of Jacob and the birth of Aaron seems a little too long when the overlapping generations within it are considered. Kohath, having entered Egypt with his grandfather Jacob (Gen. 46:11), must have been at the very least eighteen years old when Jacob died seventeen years later. Indeed, Kohath had a younger brother, Merari, who also entered Egypt with Jacob, so it is unlikely that Kohath was himself still a baby at the time. Kohath lived for 133 years (Ex. 6:18).

This means, according to [Table 1](#), that Kohath died the year that his grandson Aaron was born ( $1 + 17 + 115 = 133$ ), or some years earlier if he was more than one year old when Jacob entered Egypt. In those days of longevity, it would be unusual for a grandson not to know his grandfather. Furthermore, in surmising how old Kohath was when Jacob went down into Egypt, we note that Kohath’s father Levi had eight *younger* brothers who all took children into Egypt, the youngest, Benjamin, having ten sons at the time. This confirms that Levi’s own three sons were probably not among the youngest of the fifty grandchildren of Jacob who entered Egypt, and that Kohath was almost certainly older than one year at the time.

[Table 2](#) resolves the above, and simultaneously accounts for both the 430 years of Galatians 3:17 and the 400 years of Genesis 15:13. The sojourn in Egypt is thereby reduced to 195 years.

<b>Table 1 The usual calculation of the 430 years</b>		
Abraham enters Canaan at 75 (Gen. 12:4), dies at 175 (25:7), Isaac 75 (21:5)	100 yrs.	
Jacob then 15 (from 25:26), enters Egypt at 130 (47:9)	115 yrs.	
<b>In Egypt</b>		
Jacob dies at 147 (47:28)	17 yrs.	17 yrs.
115-year gap to make up 430 years	115 yrs.	115 yrs.
Aaron born 83 years before the Exodus (7:7)	83 yrs.	83 yrs.
	430 yrs.	215 yrs.

<b>Table 2 Revised calculation of the 430 years</b>		
Abraham called in Ur at age 55 (Acts 7:2-7), goes to Haran		
Abraham leaves Haran at age 75 (Gen. 12:4)	20 yrs.	
Covenant with Abraham at age 85 (ch. 15, 16:3)	10 yrs.	(400 years remain, 15:13)
Abraham dies at 175 (25:7), Isaac 75 (21:5)	90 yrs.	
Jacob then 15 (from 25:26), enters Egypt at 130 (47:9)	115 yrs.	
<b>In Egypt</b>		
Jacob dies at 147 (47:28)	17 yrs.	17 yrs.
95-year gap to make up the 430 years	95 yrs.	95 yrs.
Aaron born 83 years before the Exodus (Ex. 7:7)	83 yrs.	83 yrs.
	430 yrs.	195 yrs.

Levi would have gone down into Egypt at about the age of forty-nine, being about nine years older than Joseph, who, according to Genesis 41:46,47 and 45:6, was approaching forty at the time (30 + 7 + 2). This calculation is based upon the fact that the first eleven sons of Jacob were all born during the fourteen years from Jacob's two marriages to his departure from Haran (30:25; 31:41).

On the basis of the revised calculation that Israel were 195 years in Egypt, Kohath, the second child of Levi, could have been about eight years old when he entered Egypt. Since he lived to 133 (Ex. 6:18), it can then be calculated that he died about seventy years before the Exodus (195 + 8 = 203 - 133 = 70), at which point Aaron would thus have been about thirteen, since he

was eighty-three at the Exodus (Ex. 7:7). Amram lived to 137 years (6:20), and, if Kohath begat Amram at about the age of forty, following on from the above calculation, Amram would have died about twenty-five years before the Exodus. Thus the known life-spans fit more comfortably into an Egyptian period of 195 years.

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### The Song of Solomon

Having recently come to the end of the Song of Solomon in our daily readings, which we do together at 'Fairhaven' where I live, it seemed to me that brethren were nervous of giving an opin-