

450 or 480 years – Acts 13:20 and 1 Kings 6:1

The most bothersome “contradiction” in Scripture is that of the presumed conflict between the 450 years of Acts 13:20 with the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1. However, such is a mirage – the two actually have nothing to do with one another. Acts 13:20 concerning the length of the period from the judges until Samuel the prophet is no more than Paul’s affirming of the Hebrew Scriptures. He is merely giving a summary total, without any regard to overlap, of all the years of servitude and peace as recorded in the Book of Judges (as well as Eli’s judgeship, for it says “until Samuel the prophet”), thus:

8+40+18+80+20+40+7+40+3+23+22+18+6+7+10+8+40+20
+ 40 for Eli in 1 Sam. 4:18 = exactly 450

As already explained (*Chronology*, pp. 72-76), each period of oppression was overlapped by the time of peace that followed Israel’s deliverance by a judge. The relevant passages in Acts 13 reads:

Acts 13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred & fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

Although these verses are given in the historic chronological order, verse 19 gives neither the length for the span of the war with the Canaanites nor the time required for the distribution of the land among the 12 tribes. Thus, when taken alone, it is of no actual chronological value. Even verse 21, which gives the span of Saul’s reign as 40 years, does not tell us the length of time covering from when Samuel actually became established as a prophet until the people desired a king. Indeed, verse 22 does not give the number of years for the reign of David.

From these observations, as well as the context of Acts 13:14-43, it becomes obvious that the main purpose of Acts 13:17-22 is not that of furnishing chronological data. Moreover, the giving of Saul’s reign as being 40 years is probably because it is not recorded in the Old Testament (although it can be determined: see footnote 2, page xiii in my *Chronology*).

This straightforward solution to the conundrum reveals that the 450 years have *no chronological significance* and has no bearing whatsoever on 1 Kings 6:1. The problem between the two passages never actually existed and was always only a matter of perception – or the lack thereof.

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D. – 2007