

OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CREATION AND FLOOD ACCOUNTS

J. Paul Tanner

ABSTRACT

The past two hundred years have witnessed the rise of a dozen or more different views by evangelicals regarding the creation and flood accounts. This raises the question if it is possible in light of the Old Testament chronological data to determine reasonable dates for the creation and flood accounts. Complicating the discussion is the issue of whether or not there are gaps (missing names) in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional literal view of creation, the historic position of the Christian church, began coming under attack in the late 1700s and early 1800s, with the gap theory of Genesis 1:1–2 being one of the first alternative views.¹ Although the gap theory has fallen out of favor in most quarters, numerous other nonliteral theories (all assuming an old earth view) have replaced it. A description and evaluation of these views is beyond the scope of this article.² Rather

J. Paul Tanner is Middle East Director, BEE World.

¹ George H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages, and Their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876). Pember was not the first to espouse the idea of “gap creationism.” As early as 1814 this suggestion had been made by Thomas Chalmers, a Presbyterian pastor (see Thomas Chalmers, “Remarks on Cuvier’s Theory of the Earth,” *The Christian Instructor* [1814]; reprinted in *The Works of Thomas Chalmers*, vol. 12 [Glasgow: William Collins, n.d.], 347–72. This was a review of Georges Cuvier, *Essay on the Theory of the Earth*, trans. Robert Kerr [Edinburgh, 1813]).

² For introductory help, see J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999); David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux, 2001); Todd S. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of*

this article takes the position that the traditional literal view (a single creation that took place in six literal twenty-four-hour days) is the most defensible position exegetically and best accords with an overall theology of Scripture. This view has the advantage of retaining the usual meaning of the Hebrew word יום (“day”) in the context of a historical narrative genre. While it is true that the Hebrew word יום can mean a longer period of time (for example, “the day of the Lord”), such a nuance is hard to justify in this context. After all, the author repeatedly makes the comment, “And there was evening and there was morning, a __ day” (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). In addition whenever יום is enumerated in the Old Testament (for example, a second day or forty days), it consistently refers to literal twenty-four-hour days. The traditional literal view of creation naturally leads to a young earth position, although the question of gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 leaves some latitude for discussing just how young the earth is.

The approach of this article is twofold. First, it analyzes the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 to determine whether or not these genealogies are “tight” (i.e., without gaps), and it examines the arguments of those who advocate gaps of unknown time duration (i.e., not every ancestor is listed in the genealogy).³ The conclusion reached is that there are *probably* no gaps. This being the case, the Old Testament chronological data are examined to ascertain probable dates for the creation and flood accounts found in Genesis.

THE ISSUE OF GAPS IN THE GENEALOGICAL ACCOUNTS

Are there gaps (missing generations) in the genealogical accounts of Genesis 5 and 11?⁴ Many evangelical scholars today assume there are.⁵ They believe that genealogies experience fluidity over

the Earth, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 131–62; and J. Daryl Charles, ed., *Reading Genesis 1–2: An Evangelical Conversation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013).

³ As early as 1890, William Henry Green of Princeton Seminary argued for gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (“Primeval Chronology,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 47 [1890]: 285–303).

⁴ For a helpful presentation against the notion of gaps in Genesis 5 and 11, see Travis R. Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, 283–313.

⁵ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 82–83; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 254; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 186–88; Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Broadman

time, i.e., names tend to be added, omitted, or changed in form. Omissions result in compression (a shortened list). Those favoring gaps understand the names to mean that “X fathered the line *culminating in Y*,” and that in the case of Genesis 5 only key antediluvian figures are mentioned, not every generation.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE GENEALOGIES IN GENESIS 5 AND 11

Both lists are “vertical” genealogies, used to connect one person with another and thus establish ancestry and document claims to thrones or inheritances.⁶ Both lists consist of ten representatives and end with a list of a person’s three sons (a segmented genealogy), one of whom will carry on the seed of promise. The Genesis 5 genealogy ends with mention of Noah’s three sons, with Shem being the one to carry on the seed of promise. The Genesis 11 genealogy ends with mention of Terah’s three sons, with Abram being the one to carry on the line of blessing. Ross views these two genealogies as two panels, each with ten representatives and segmenting at the end with a cluster of three sons (though Noah’s name has to be implied in the second panel for the scheme to work out right).⁷

Ross is more cautious than most commentators about the possibility of gaps in the genealogies. He writes, “Whether there are gaps or not, there is a balanced symmetry between the lists. The obvious purpose must be to draw the parallel between the line from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Terah.”⁸ Wenham is likewise hesitant to embrace the idea of gaps: “The Hebrew gives no hint that

and Holman, 2001), 302–5; and Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 43. Youngblood postulated that the names in Genesis 5 represent outstanding pre-flood dynasties rather than individuals (Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 75).

⁶ For a helpful introduction to genealogies, see Philip E. Satterthwaite, “Genealogy in the Old Testament,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:654–63.

⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 250.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 251. Elsewhere Ross writes, “Some have argued that the names in the genealogical lists in chapters 5 and 11 are contrived, with the names selected (from among others not listed) to show symmetry (e.g., each list ends with reference to three sons, 5:32; 11:26), but this view cannot be substantiated by consistent exegesis. To show ‘gaps’ in the genealogy, one must posit ellipses: ‘X lived so many years and begot [the line that culminated in] Y.’ Such ellipses are hard to prove. Moreover, gaps are not possible in two places in the list (Shem was the son of Noah, and Abram was the son of Terah). Thus verses 10–26 seem to present a tight chronology” (“Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck [Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1985], 45).

there were large gaps between father and son in this genealogy. 4:25 makes it clear that Seth was Adam and Eve's third son. At the other end of the genealogy, Lamek comments on Noah's birth, and Ham, Shem, and Japhet were contemporaries of their father. It therefore requires special pleading to postulate long gaps elsewhere in this genealogy."⁹

AN EVALUATION OF THE ARGUMENTS FAVORING GAPS

Yet many other respected evangelicals believe there are gaps. Merrill, for instance, notes that without gaps, Shem and Abram would be contemporaries.

If Shem and Abram were contemporary, as a strict interpretation of the genealogy would require, it is difficult to understand how Abram's immediate ancestors could have become paganized or indeed why Abram would have been called at all to his sacred mission, since believers were already available for the purpose God had in view. Moreover, if Shem and Abram were contemporary, the fact that Abram died at 175 years, "at a good old age, an old man and full of years" (Gen. 25:8), is difficult to reconcile with the statement that Shem died at the age of 600, an age even considerably younger than that of his father, Noah (950 years). Clearly, Shem preceded Abram by many more years than a strict reading will permit, and thus there was sufficient time for the knowledge of Yahweh to have disappeared from the line of Shem and for a need to have arisen for Yahweh to reveal himself to pagan Abram.¹⁰

The problem of Shem and Abram as contemporaries. Merrill presents two basic arguments. One is the difficulty, if they were contemporaries, of why Shem would die at age 600 and Abram at 175. But the way this argument is presented obscures the real issue. Yes, they were contemporaries, but there were eight generations between them, with gradually declining lifespans. The following chart shows the total number of years for each generation.

Table 1

Shem	Arpachshad	Shelah	Eber	Peleg	Reu	Serug	Nahor	Terah	Abram
600	438	433	464	239	239	230	148	205	175

Looking from left to right, one observes a gradual decline in lifespans, and the relationship of Abram to Shem must be viewed

⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word, 1987), 133.

¹⁰ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 43.

from this perspective. Yes, Shem had a much longer lifespan, and yes, he lived beyond the birth of Abram (according to calculations laid out later in this article, Abram was born in 2166 BC and Shem died around 2041 BC, some 125 years *after* Abram's birth). But unless one discounts pre-flood long lifespans, the chart above is exactly what one would expect as lifespans after the flood gradually decreased and leveled off to the 100–200-year range for the patriarchs. Thus the argument concerning the overlap in lifespans of Shem and Abram loses its force.

The problem of spiritual degeneration in the Shem line. Merrill's other argument has to do with the transmission of Yahweh knowledge from Noah's day to Abram's. Stated another way, how could Abram and those of his generation be altogether paganized, if people like Shem were still around as faithful witnesses to Yahweh? This is an argument from silence, because the Scriptures say little about the personal faith of the ten men listed in the line from Shem to Abram. One statement in Joshua 24:2–3 provides a mere clue: "Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants" ' ' (NASB). A careful reading of this passage finds nothing definite said about those preceding Terah, Abram's father. For all that is known, the statement could be limited to Terah and his family. In fact the statement is even rather ambiguous regarding Abram himself. Perhaps Abram participated in idolatry, but the verse does not clearly say so. It does say that Terah was the father of Abram and Nahor and that certain "fathers" of the nation "served other gods." Yet this should not be pressed too far. To be exact, no one knows just how "paganized" the line of Shem had become.

Furthermore, the geographical issue of the Shem line needs comment. Presumably Shem initially settled in the regions of Ararat (Gen. 9:21), and according to Genesis 10 the descendants of Noah gradually fanned out from there to populate the earth. Although Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 11:31; 15:7; Acts 7:2–4), the text does not say that he was born there (though Gen. 11:28 acknowledges that Abram's brother, Haran, was).¹¹ Merrill admits,

¹¹ Abram's city of Ur is certainly to be equated with the southern city known as Ur, rather than an Ura of Syria located much closer to Haran. See H. W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 200–9; and Alan R. Millard, "Where Was

“Where Abram’s ancestors originated and how they happened to settle in Ur are not addressed in the historical account.”¹² Certainly the nations of Genesis 10 parted from faith in Yahweh as time progressed, but when and how extensive this became is simply not known. Interestingly Ur of the Chaldeans (lower Iraq today) would have been in the scope of Nimrod’s kingdom-building recorded in Genesis 10:8–12. Nimrod was two generations removed from Ham and therefore parallel with Shelah of the line of Shem. Shelah’s dates are roughly 2506–2073 BC (support to follow). If Waltke is correct that Nimrod is Sargon the Great of Akkad—and it seems he is—then this “blood-thirsty tyrant” (my interpretation of Gen. 10:8–9) was responsible for wreaking havoc, physically and spiritually, on both lower and upper Mesopotamia.¹³ No doubt he had a negative influence upon Ur not long before Abram dwelt there, and Terah (b. ca. 2321) would have been born during Sargon’s evil reign. Paganism would have made an exponential leap under his rule. If Terah and Abram were far-removed geographically from Shem (and other early members of his line), this could have contributed to spiritual decay in the family line.

Finally one should take into account the atrocity of the “tower of Babel” in the land of Shinar (11:1–9). Probably this event happened prior to the birth of Eber’s son Peleg, since (1) in 10:25 Eber is found naming his son “Peleg” because “in his days the earth was divided”; and (2) the author of Genesis 10 interrupts his tracing of the line of Shem when he reaches the sons of Eber, until he has recounted the story of the tower of Babel.¹⁴ It seems then the Babel

Abraham’s Ur? The Case for the Babylonian City,” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 27 (May–June 2001): 52–53, 57.

¹² Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 42.

¹³ Waltke, *Genesis*, 169. The name Nimrod is probably not a throne name, but a name given him in the Bible to mark his character and intentions (Nimrod means “we shall rebel” [so Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 222]). Douglas Petrovich also has argued that Nimrod is Sargon the Great (see “Identifying Nimrod of Genesis 10 with Sargon of Akkad by Exegetical and Archaeological Means,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56 [June 2013]: 273–305). Dates given for Sargon vary. Waltke gives 2350–2295 BC. Amélie Kuhrt has a slightly lower 2340–2284 (*The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 BC*, vol. 1 [New York: Routledge, 1995], 45); and Wolfram von Soden has 2330–2274 BC (*The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 48). Yet all these suggestions would fall within the lifespan of Shelah (2506–2073 BC) and fit the biblical timing for Nimrod.

¹⁴ Matthews (*Genesis 1–11:26*, 463) explains the relation of the naming of Peleg to the Babel incident: “The play between the name ‘Peleg’ (*peleg*) and ‘divided’ (*nīplēgā*) is created by their homonymity, both . . . have the letters *p-l-g*. . . . The verb ‘divide’ occurs only twice more, . . . it is used of digging a channel for rainwater (Job 38:25) and the ‘confounding’ of language (Ps 55:9[10]). Supported by this latter

incident happened before Peleg's birth in roughly 2442 BC, some 121 years before the birth of Terah. The combination of the Babel rebellion and Sargon's evil rule significantly impacted human civilization and furthered paganism. Terah was born in the aftermath of Babel and at the time of Sargon's rule. Spiritual deception was rampant, and apparently Terah himself was impacted by this. So it is conceivable that Shem was living at the time of Abram and that Abram's spiritual experience might have been vastly different from Shem's. Yahweh worshipers had not necessarily died out, Shem (and other believers) may have been separated geographically from Terah and Abram, however, and there certainly had been powerful negative influences upon the world since the flood (notably the Babel incident and Sargon's evil rule).

The problem of comparative ANE genealogies and familial terminology. Matthews contends that there is evidence of "open genealogies" (i.e., with gaps) among other ancient Near Eastern peoples, and familial terms like "father" and "son of" were used loosely for "ancestor" and "descendant."¹⁵ Even though this may be true, the question is whether or not the author of Genesis has resorted to these conventions. The evidence in the text suggests that he has not. In both Genesis 5 and 11, the author is meticulous about pointing out the age at which the father had his son, and the number of remaining years for his life. Had there been gaps in his chronology, this information would be superfluous. In several cases, biological fathers and sons are listed (for example, Adam and Seth, Seth and Enosh, Lamech and Noah, Noah and Shem, Shem and Arpachshad, and Terah and Abram), not to mention that Jude 14 states that Enoch was in the seventh generation from Adam. First Chronicles 1:19 states that Eber had two sons, Peleg and Joktan; so there are no gaps between Eber and Peleg. Finally, there is a difference between someone being listed as a "father" of another (since the Hebrew word for "father" [אב] can mean grandfather [Gen. 28:13] or great grandfather [1 Kings 15:10–13]) and someone "begetting" or "fathering" another. The latter expression is based on a hiphil form of the verb ילד. The noun "father" (אב) is not used in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. The expression translated

passage, the traditional opinion has been to take it as a reference to the tower episode, where the 'scattering' (vv. 5,8–9) of the Babelites is the result of God's 'confusing their language' (v. 7)." *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson [Boston: Brill, 2001], 2:928) indicates that the verb פלל can have the meaning "be separated" in the Niphal stem, which would lend itself to the idea of people being dispersed.

¹⁵ Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 302.

“became the father of” (repeatedly occurring in Genesis 5 and 11) uses the verb יָלַד in the hiphil stem. Of the 170 times that a hiphil form of the verb יָלַד is used in Genesis, it always is used of a man being the literal father of a son, not merely an “ancestor.”¹⁶ These observations point to a tight chronology, not one with gaps.

The problem of ten-generation schematics. Matthews also argues against a tight chronology in light of the use of the number ten, claiming that this “evidences a selective genealogy by its highly structured conventions of language and its schematic ten-generation depth.”¹⁷ He appeals to the use of another ten-name genealogy in Ruth 4:18–22. The latter, however, does not prove his point, since David’s genealogy in Ruth 4:18–22 does not conclusively have gaps (Matthews can only claim that the span of time *seems* too long for ten generations). Furthermore, a comparison of the Davidic line listed in Ruth 4:18–22 with that in 1 Chronicles 2:1–15 supports a tight chronology for Ruth 4. Although the number ten seems rather conspicuous in the Genesis 5 and 11 chronologies, this does not in and of itself disprove a tight chronology. As Nielsen has pointed out, if some ten-generation lists have been schematized, this does not necessarily mean that all have been.¹⁸ Any appeal to a Sumerian king list for its ten-generation form or dependency on any similar ANE document must certainly be rejected.¹⁹ There is just as much reason to believe that God in his providence has beautifully orchestrated the course of history, with numbers

¹⁶ Typical of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 (and 1 Chron. 5) is the hiphil waw consecutive form וַיֵּלֶד, occurring about 45 times in the Old Testament. The hiphil perfect form הֵלֵד occurs about 85 times in the Old Testament (e.g., Ruth 4:18–22 and 1 Chron. 2:10–15). The hiphil infinitive form אַחֲרַי הוֹלִידוּ (“after he begot”) occurs some seventeen times in Genesis 5 and 11. In a few cases a form of the verb יָלַד in the qal stem is used in a way that included grandchildren (see Gen. 46:15, 18, 22, 25). Yet this is exceptional for the verb יָלַד, especially in the hiphil stem. A qal passive form is used figuratively of Naomi in Ruth 4:17.

¹⁷ Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 303.

¹⁸ Richard Nielsen, “A Biblical Approach to Dating the Earth: A Case for the Use of Genesis 5 and 11 as an Exact Chronology,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 19 (June 1982): 63.

¹⁹ Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and Their Alleged Babylonian Background,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 16 (1978): 361–74. Arguing in favor of Genesis 5 and 11 being made to fit a ten-generation form is Abraham Malamat, “King Lists of the Old Babylonian Period and Biblical Genealogies,” in *Essays in Memory of E. A. Speiser*, ed. William W. Hallo, American Oriental Series 53 (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1968), 163–73. Wilson, however, has demonstrated the flaws in Malamat’s presentation (Robert R. Wilson, “The Old Testament Genealogies in Recent Research,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 [1975]: 169–89).

being very much a part of divine design throughout Scripture. Witness the 70 years of Babylonian exile (Jer. 25:11–12; Dan. 9:2) in relation to the “seventy weeks” prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27, the forty days of testing Jesus (Matt. 4) corresponding to the forty years that the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness, and the utilization of numbers in the book of Revelation. One should not readily dismiss the idea that God would intentionally cause ten generations from Adam to Noah, and ten from Noah to Abraham.

The problem of gaps in Matthew’s genealogical account. Some have appealed to known gaps in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 to argue that there are likely gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 as well, especially since Matthew devised a three-fold scheme of fourteen generations each (Matt. 1:17).²⁰ Admittedly, Matthew omitted three names in verse 8 between Joram and Uzziah (Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah) or four if Athaliah is included. There is also a text critical problem in verse 11, which says, “Josiah became the father of Jeconiah [i.e., Jehoiachin] and his brothers.” One might have expected this to say that Josiah became the father of Eliakim (i.e., Jehoiakim), since Jeconiah was the grandson of Josiah and the son of Eliakim. Some manuscripts have Eliakim rather than Jeconiah, though Jeconiah has strong manuscript support. Since Matthew included “and his brothers,” he was obviously cognizant of the cluster of brothers that stemmed from Josiah. By mentioning only one of Josiah’s descendants, Matthew preserved his fourteen-generation scheme. He may have selected Jeconiah because he was the king who survived in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27–30) and through whom the Davidic line continued.

So what is left is not widespread gaps in the Matthew 1 genealogy. There is basically *one omission* at verse 8 (involving a string of three or four names) and one puzzling statement about Jeconiah in verse 11. Regarding the omission at 1:8, were these names excluded for ideological reasons—perhaps because of the illegitimate infusion of Ahab’s line into the Judean kings? (Ahaziah was a son-in-law of Ahab, who was under God’s curse, according to 1 Kings 21:20–22.) Carson has suggested, “The three omissions not only secure fourteen generations in this part of the genealogy . . . but are dropped because of their connection with Ahab and Jezebel, renowned for wickedness (2 Kings 8:27), and because of their connection with wicked Athaliah (2 Kings 8:26), the usurper (2 Kings 11:1–20).”²¹ Even with these tensions, one must admit that the ge-

²⁰ Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 303.

²¹ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (Grand

nealogy in Matthew 1 is distinct from those in Genesis 5 and 11 and therefore does not provide a basis for concluding that they have gaps. After all, Matthew was structuring his genealogy to fit the fourteen-generation scheme that he admitted utilizing (Matt. 1:17), and he did not give the ages (at birth of firstborn son and at death) found in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

The problem of a gap in Ezra's genealogical account. Some have also claimed that there is a gap in the genealogy given in Ezra 7:1–5, which links Ezra to Aaron, the first high priest. In comparison with the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6:3–15, six names are missing from the genealogical list of Ezra (between Meraioth and Azariah). A closer inspection, however, suggests that there really is no gap in Ezra's list. Rather it seems that a copyist (subsequent to the original penning of Ezra) inadvertently left out a string of six names. The list in 1 Chronicles 6 has two men with the name Amariah. The first one follows the name Meraioth and the second follows Azariah. While copying the list, a scribe's eye accidentally skipped from the first Amariah to the second one, causing him to omit six names. The author of Ezra did not leave out names in the genealogical list, i.e., he did not purposefully create a gap. This *apparent gap* probably came about by scribal error.

The problem of Kainan's name in the LXX of Genesis 11:12. At Genesis 11:12 in the LXX manuscripts presently known, there is an additional name in the genealogy of Shem, namely, Kainan (placed between Arpachshad and Shelah). Complicating the textual problem, most Greek manuscripts (excepting D and $\text{P}^{75\text{vid}}$) include the name Kainan (spelled "Cainan" in most English versions) in the genealogy of Jesus at Luke 3:36. Marshall drew the conclusion that Luke was using the LXX, though Bock took the position that the original autograph of Luke did not have the name Kainan.²² For some, the presence of the name Kainan in Luke 3:36 shows that it was in the original LXX manuscript for Genesis, which then confirms a gap in the Genesis 11 genealogy.

A closer investigation, however, suggests that the name Kainan was not part of the original autograph of Luke, despite the numerous Greek manuscripts supporting that reading. Extant copies of the LXX (especially A, B, and \aleph) are largely "late," dating to the 4th and 5th centuries AD, and do not necessarily conform per-

Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 67.

²² I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 165; and Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 359.

fectly to earlier copies of the LXX. Other evidence suggests that copies of the LXX existed in the first century that did *not* have the name Kainan. Josephus, for example, apparently worked with a copy of the LXX that did not have the name Kainan. In his *Antiquities* 1.146, for the most part Josephus used the numbers from the LXX for the pre-Abrahamic list of names (confirming that he was working from a copy of the LXX), but his list did not have the name Kainan between Arpachshad and Shelah. The same is true for Sextus Julius Africanus, the most famous early church historian and chronologist prior to Eusebius. Julius wrote *Chronographiae*, covering all of history from creation until AD 221. Although his work is no longer extant, extracts of it are found in Eusebius's *Chronicon*. Eusebius stated in his *Chronicon* that the Septuagint identified Arpachshad as the father of Shelah (not Kainan). So Eusebius (and Julius Africanus) must have had access to a copy of the LXX without the name Kainan following Arpachshad. Finally, there is the evidence from Theophilus, said to be the seventh bishop of Antioch (ca. 169–ca. 183), who died ca. AD 183–85. In his *Apologia ad Autolyicum* (“Apology to Autolyicus”), he gives the list of men in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.²³ His numbers reflect that he had consulted the LXX, but Theophilus has Shelah, not Kainan, as the son of Arpachshad. In summary, the evidence from Josephus, Julius Africanus, Eusebius, and Theophilus shows that there were copies of the LXX in the first through third centuries that did not have Kainan as a son of Arpachshad.²⁴ This points to the probability that the name was a later insertion into the LXX tradition. This, together with the absence of Kainan from Luke 3:36 in the earliest Greek manuscript of Luke, namely $\mathfrak{P}^{75\text{vid}}$ (third century AD), suggests that the name Kainan (as the son of Arpachshad) was not in Luke's original autograph and thus cannot be used as proof of a gap in the Genesis 11 genealogy.

In summary, any claim to gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 based on comparison with other genealogies fails to settle the debate. As Kulling has demonstrated, biblical genealogies come in more than one genre, which must be considered.²⁵ The genealo-

²³ Book III, Chapter 24, in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, *Fathers of the Second Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 118.

²⁴ Hippolytus, writing in the early third century AD, did include Kainan as the son of Arpachshad. So conflicting manuscript traditions existed at least by this time. See *The Refutation of All Heresies*, Book X, Chapter 26, in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, *Fathers of the Third Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 149.

²⁵ Samuel R. Kulling, *Are the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 Historical and Complete: That Is, without Gaps?* (Reihen, Switzerland: Immanuel-Verlag, 1996), 30–31.

gies of Genesis 5 and 11 have circumstances different from those in Ruth 4, Ezra 7, and Matthew 1. The numerical notations in Genesis 5 and 11 about the fathers' ages mark these genealogies as distinct. Likewise, arguments based on speculative criteria involving the relation of Abram to Shem or on account of the name Kainan in manuscripts of Luke 3:36 are unconvincing.

DATING THE CREATION AND FLOOD ACCOUNTS

Having concluded there are no gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, approximate dates for the creation and flood accounts can be calculated, assuming that literal twenty-four-hour days are in view in Genesis 1. The primary purpose in this is to see how the chronology can be calculated and what results are obtained.

ESTABLISHING A FIXED POINT FOR OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

The point to work from is the date of Rehoboam's inauguration following the death of Solomon. Confirmation for this date is based on the battle of Qarqar in northwestern Syria. This occurred in 853 BC when the army of Assyria, led by Shalmaneser III, encountered a coalition of kings that included Hadadezer (Ben Hadad) of Damascus and Ahab of Israel. The results of the battle are recorded on the Kurkh Monolith, erected by Shalmaneser (housed today in the British Museum), and the date for the battle is firmly established from Assyrian records.²⁶ The death of Ahab at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:3, 35) must have taken place in 853 BC soon after Qarqar.²⁷ The reigns of earlier kings of Judah and Israel can be established from this base in 853 BC.

Edwin Thiele helped clarify that the kingdoms of Judah and Israel did not always employ the same dating systems (hence they must be reconciled), and one must take into account such matters as accession year dating and regnal years.²⁸ More recently, Rodger

Cf. David T. Rosevear, "The Genealogies of Genesis," in *Concepts in Creationism*, ed. E. H. Andrews, Werner Gitt, and W. J. Ouweneel (Welwyn, England: Evangelical Press, 1986), 68–77; and James B. Jordan, "The Biblical Chronology Question: An Analysis" (in 2 parts), *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 2.2 and 2.3 (1979): 9–15 and 17–26.

²⁶ For the text of the Assyrian annals regarding the battle, see James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 278–79.

²⁷ Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 248; and Winfried Thiel, "Ahab," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:103.

²⁸ Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

Young has improved on the research of Thiele and provided a convincing argument for the date of Solomon's death and the accession of Rehoboam to the throne.²⁹ Working back from the battle of Qarqar in 853 BC, the accession of Jeroboam in the north and Rehoboam in the south occurred between Nisan 1 and Tishri 1 of 931 BC (approximately April to September of 931).³⁰

FROM SOLOMON'S REIGN TO THE EXODUS

Based on the above date for Rehoboam's accession to the throne, one can calculate the first regnal year of Solomon's forty-year reign as Tishri of 971 to Tishri of 970.³¹ According to 1 Kings 6:1, Solomon began building the temple in the second month (Ziv) of the fourth year of his reign. This would have been Tishri of 968 to Tishri of 967 BC, and the "second month" (in relation to Nisan) would have been in the spring, i.e., the spring of 967 BC.³² The same verse also indicates that it was in the 480th year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt that Solomon began building the temple. Taking this figure at face value, the Exodus event would have been in the spring (Nisan) of 1446 BC.³³

²⁹ Rodger C. Young, "When Did Solomon Die?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46 (2003): 589–603. Cf. Rodger C. Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 225–48.

³⁰ Further evidence for the accession year of Rehoboam comes from 1 Kings 14:25–28, where a "Shishak king of Egypt" invaded Judah in the fifth year of Rehoboam. If this refers to Sheshonk I, founder of the 22nd Egyptian dynasty, as many scholars believe (note 1 Kings 11:40), the timing is in line with known extrabiblical history. Regnal years for Judean kings were Tishri to Tishri, and Rehoboam's fifth regnal year would have been Tishri of 927 to Tishri of 926 BC. Unfortunately there is debate whether Sheshonk's reign commenced in 945 or 943 BC, and thus there is some inexactitude about the date of his Judean invasion. A conventional date for Sheshonk's invasion is 925 BC, which would be extremely close to the year Young has suggested for Rehoboam's fifth regnal year. Given the lack of exact dates for Sheshonk's reign or his Judean invasion, there is good probability that the extrabiblical account accords well with what is known of the reign of Rehoboam.

³¹ Table 2 in Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," 246.

³² Jack Finegan also concluded that temple construction began in spring 967 BC (*Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 249).

³³ Young ("When Did Solomon Die?" 602) explains that the "proper way to derive the date of the exodus from 1 Kgs 6:1 is to add 479 years, not 480, to the year in which the foundation of the Temple was laid" (hence, 967 + 479). This is because 1 Kings 6:1 says it was in the 480th year "of the going-out" (יציאת) of Israel from Egypt, i.e., 479 years had elapsed and the 480th was commencing. That this is the appropriate way to understand the time involved can be substantiated by comparing the use of יציאת in Exodus 16:1 and Numbers 33:38.

Of course many do not take the 480-year figure in 1 Kings 6:1 at face value. That 480 is a multiple of 40 (12 x 40) supposedly makes it suspect and contributes to the debate between the early and late date for the Exodus event, whether in the thirteenth century BC (in the reign of Ramesses II, r. 1279–1213 BC) or in the fifteenth century.³⁴ Young introduces evidence for the early date based on biblical and Talmudic references to the cycles of Sabbath years and Jubilees. According to Leviticus 25:2, 8–10, the Israelites were to start counting Sabbath and Jubilee cycles when they entered the Promised Land. Talmudic references indicate that the sixteenth Jubilee cycle fell in Josiah's reign, and reference to the Day of Atonement in Ezekiel 40:1 corresponds to the seventeenth cycle. Young writes, "The Talmud records the occasion of two Jubilees: one in the eighteenth year of Josiah (*b. Meg.* 14b) and one which was announced on the Day of Atonement specified in Ezek 40:1 (*b. Arak.* 12a). The Jubilee associated with Ezek 40:1 is specifically called the seventeenth and last by the Talmud, which makes the one in the days of Josiah the sixteenth."³⁵

Knowing that the sixteenth Jubilee cycle began in Josiah's eighteenth year (which began Tishri of 623 BC), Young shows that the entry into the Promised Land must have taken place in 1406 BC: "Once these dates for the sixteenth and seventeenth Jubilees are established, they can be used to determine when the Jubilee cycles began. Since the sixteenth cycle ended with a Jubilee that was announced in Tishri, 623, the first Jubilee must have been announced $15 \times 49 = 735$ years earlier, in 1358 BC. If Tishri of 1358 BC was in the forty-ninth year of the first cycle, then the first year, forty-eight years earlier, was 1406 BC."³⁶ Adding forty years for the

³⁴ For a summary of the issues and a defense of the early date, see Michael A. Grisanti, "The Book of Exodus," in *The World and the Word* (Nashville: B&H, 2011), 194–207. The 1446 BC date for the Exodus is also affirmed by Eugene Merrill, "Fixed Dates in Patriarchal Chronology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137 (July–September 1980): 242, and in "Palestinian Archaeology and the Date of the Conquest: Do Tells Tell Tales?" *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (Spring 1982): 107–21. Finegan, however, argues for a thirteenth-century BC date for the Exodus (*Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 232–45). More recently Bryant Wood defended the early date in "The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 475–89. This was disputed by J. K. Hoffmeier, "What Is the Biblical Date for the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50 (2007): 225–47, with a rejoinder by Wood, "The Biblical Date for the Exodus Is 1446 BC: A Response to James Hoffmeier," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50 (2007): 249–58.

³⁵ Young, "When Did Solomon Die?" 602.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 601. Young takes the position that the fiftieth year, or Year of Jubilee, counted as the first year of the next Jubilee cycle. This keeps the seven-year cycle in

wilderness wanderings confirms a date of 1446 BC for the Exodus.

FROM THE EXODUS TO THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM

The next step is to work back to the age of the patriarchs, which is possible on the basis of Exodus 12:40–41: “Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. At the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.” The words “to the very day” indicate an exact figure, demonstrating that the people of Israel had kept careful record of their time in Egypt. This statement, however, must be evaluated in view of the Septuagint, which says that they “lived in the land of Egypt *and the land of Canaan*” for 430 years. In light of this variant, Hoehner took the position that the 430 years included a short period of time in Canaan followed by 400 years in Egypt.³⁷ In his opinion, the 430 years began with the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob before going into Egypt (Gen. 35:9–15) until the giving of the Mosaic Law two months after the Exodus (Exod. 19:1). For this opinion, Hoehner was influenced by the mention in Galatians 3:17 of 430 years, which he understood (mistakenly) to be the time from the Abrahamic covenant to the Mosaic covenant. More likely, however, Paul was merely reiterating the 430 year figure mentioned in Exodus 12:40–41 and using this to establish that the Law came *at least* 430 years later.³⁸ Even if Hoehner were correct in his assumption about the time having to do with the period between the covenants, it is arbitrary to pick a date for the Abrahamic covenant of “the last confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant” to

harmony with the Jubilees.

³⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, “The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October–December 1969): 305–16.

³⁸ Another reason offered by Hoehner that the *total time* the people of Israel were in Egypt was 400 years (rather than 430) is that the 430 figure is more difficult to reconcile with mention in Acts 13:19 of “about 450 years.” He stated, “Those who hold to the 430-year period of Egyptian bondage make little, if any, attempt in trying to reconcile the ‘about 450 years’ of Acts 13:19–20 and the 430 years of Exodus 12:40–41 and Galatians 3:17. An Egyptian bondage of 430 years plus a 40 year wilderness journey and about 7 years for the conquest of the land (all of which are included in Acts 13:16–20) would make a total of 477 years. Certainly the ‘about 450 years’ cannot be stretched to 477 years!” (ibid., 313). A close look at Acts 13:17–20 finds that Paul did not mention a 430-year figure. Rather he merely made a remark about a “stay in the land of Egypt.” So there is no need to reconcile the 430-year figure of Exodus 12:40 with Acts 13:19. For all one knows, Paul had the 400-year figure of Genesis 15:13 in mind (the years of bondage), to which would be added the 40 years of wilderness wanderings and the 7 years for the conquest. So the Hebrew text of Exodus 12:40–41 need not be rejected on the basis of Acts 13:17–20.

Jacob before going into Egypt (Gen. 35:9–15). A more logical date would have been the time that God first made the covenant promise (12:1–3 or 15:7–21), but this would have been too early for Hoehner's scheme.

Another problem with Hoehner's view is that it assumes the 400 years mentioned in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 are the entire period that the people of Israel were in Egypt. But the text does not say this. Rather the 400 years are the years of their *bondage* in Egypt. During the initial part of their stay, they were under the good graces of the pharaoh whom Joseph served. Chronological remarks in Genesis state that Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt following his arrival (47:28); at Jacob's death Joseph was age 57 (37:2; 41:46–47; 45:11; 47:9). Yet Joseph lived to be 110 (50:26), and it is reasonable to assume that the people of Israel enjoyed favorable treatment for some 30 years after arrival in Egypt (at which point Joseph would have been age 70) and then began to experience harsh treatment (anti-foreigner sentiments?) for the next 400 years, i.e., until the Exodus. With these things considered, the 430 years begin with Jacob's entrance into Egypt with his family, and there is no compelling reason to reject the reading of the Masoretic Text at Exodus 12:40–41 in favor of the Septuagint.

Knowing, then, that the people of Israel were in Egypt for exactly 430 years, the next question is "When did they enter the land of Egypt?" This would not be the entrance of Joseph into Egypt (he entered as an individual). The correct event is recorded in Genesis 46:5–7: "Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him" (cf. Acts 7:11–15). Based on the statement in Exodus 12:40–41 (to "the very day"), this must have been in the month Nisan of 1876 BC (1446 + 430 years).

When Jacob stood before Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked his age, to which Jacob replied, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty" (Gen. 47:9). From this one can calculate that Jacob was born in 2006 BC (1876 + 130) and then determine the date of Abraham's birth. Isaac was sixty years old at the time of Jacob's birth (25:26), indicating that Isaac was born in 2066 BC (2006 + 60). Since Abraham was one hundred years old at the time of Isaac's birth (21:5), Abraham must have been born in 2166 BC (2066 + 100). He lived to be 175 (25:7), and thus the lifetime of Abraham was 2166–1991 BC.

THE GENESIS 11 GENEALOGY: FROM ABRAHAM BACK TO THE FLOOD

Knowing the lifetime of Abraham (2166–1991 BC), there are two problems in trying to use the genealogy of Genesis 11:10–26 to establish a date for the birth of Shem. First, what should be done with differences between the Hebrew text (MT) of Genesis 11:10–26, the Septuagint (LXX), and the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP)? Second, does the statement in Genesis 11:26 (“Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran”) indicate that Terah was 70 years old when he fathered Abram?

Regarding the first question, the following chart shows the differences between the versions. The figures in the Alexandrinus manuscript (LXX^A) differ from those in the Vaticanus manuscript (LXX^B), and many MT figures are lower than the others.

Table 2

	Age at Time of Firstborn Son				Remaining Years of Life			
	MT	SP	LXX ^A	LXX ^B	MT	SP	LXX ^A	LXX ^B
1 Shem	100	100	100	100	500	500	500	500
2 Arpachshad	35	135	135	135	403	303	430	400
(Kainan)			130	130			330	330
3 Shelah	30	130	130	130	403	303	330	330
4 Eber	34	134	134	134	430	270	370	270
5 Peleg	30	130	130	130	209	109	209	209
6 Reu	32	132	132	132	207	107	207	207
7 Serug	30	130	130	130	200	100	200	200
8 Nahor	29	79	79	179	119	69	129	125
9 Terah	70	70	70	70	135	75	135	135
Arpachshad's birth to Terah's birth (rows 2–8)	220	870	1000	1100	2606	1836	2840	2706

The versions have tended to add 100 years to MT figures, as if to stretch the time intervals. Wenham concluded, “The consensus among commentators, then, is that because of their difficulty the MT figures have here the best claim to originality.”³⁹ In addition,

³⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 251.

the LXX appears to be “adjusting” the dates to make the transition smoother from Shem to Abram. Otherwise, there is an abrupt drop-off following Shem (he had his first son at 100, but Arpachshad and others were around 30) and an unexpected jump with Terah (back up to 70). In short, the SP and LXX dates appear artificial, and there is no compelling reason to prefer them over the MT figures.⁴⁰

Regarding the second question, Abram was not the firstborn son of Terah, and Terah’s exact age when he fathered Abram is not known. Consequently only an approximate date for the birth of Terah is possible. Genesis 11:26 indicates that Terah was 70 when he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. However, there is a conflict if one assumes that Abram was the firstborn son. According to 12:4, Abram was age 75 when he departed Haran for Canaan in 2091 BC. But according to Acts 7:4, Abram left Haran *after* his father had died. Genesis 11:32 tells us that Terah died at age 205. Therefore, Terah could not have been 70 at Abram’s birth and also have died before Abram left Haran. Based on this, the latest date that Terah could have been born would be 205 years before Abram departed Haran, i.e., 2296 BC (2091 + 205). To calculate the earliest date that Terah could have been born, one needs to consider Abram’s wife Sarah. Terah left Ur for Haran *after* Abram and Sarah were married (so Gen. 11:31). According to 17:17, Sarah was ten years younger than Abram, and according to 23:1, she lived to be 127 years old. If Abram was born in 2166 BC, then Sarah lived 2156–2029 BC. How old Sarah was at the time of her marriage to Abram is not revealed, but a safe assumption is that she was at least 15 years old. Therefore, Abram and Sarah were married by at the earliest 2141 BC (2156–15), and Terah and his family moved to Haran sometime after 2141 (likely several years later). Given this, Terah probably died between the years 2141 BC (the earliest likely date of Abram’s marriage) and 2091 BC (when Abram left Haran for Canaan). Since Terah lived to be 205, the earliest he could have been born was 2346 BC (2141 + 205) and the latest 2296 BC (2091 + 205)—a 50-year span. Another way to say this is that Terah was born in 2321 BC \pm 25 years (averaging 2346 and 2296). The implication of this inexactness means that ancestors of Terah can be dated to only \pm 25 years of their actual birth year.

Utilizing the dates of the MT, one can use the genealogical data in Genesis 11:26 to calculate that Arpachshad was born 220

⁴⁰ G. Larsson has shown that the LXX (and sometimes SP) altered the numbers in the MT, which he takes as original (“The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 [1983]: 401–9).

years before Terah, i.e., in 2541 BC \pm 25 years (2321 + 220). According to 11:10, Arpachshad was born two years after the flood, thereby yielding a date for Noah's flood of 2543 BC \pm 25 years.⁴¹

THE GENESIS 5 GENEALOGY: FROM THE FLOOD BACK TO ADAM

In considering Genesis 5, again one encounters differences in the data between the MT, the LXX versions, and the Samaritan Penta-teuch. The following chart shows the differences.

Table 3

	Age at Time of Firstborn Son				Age at Death			
	MT	SP	LXX ^A	LXX ^B	MT	SP	LXX ^A	LXX ^B
1 Adam	130	130	230	230	930	930	930	930
2 Seth	105	105	205	205	912	912	912	912
3 Enosh	90	90	190	190	905	905	905	905
4 Kenan	70	70	170	170	910	910	910	910
5 Mahalalel	65	65	165	165	895	895	895	895
6 Jared	162	62	162	162	962	847	962	962
7 Enoch	65	65	165	165	365*	365	365	365
8 Methuselah	187	67	187	167	969	720	969	969
9 Lamech	182	53	188	188	777	653	753	753
10 Noah	500	500	500	500	950	950	950	950
Adam's birth to Noah's birth (rows 1–9)	1056	707	1662	1642				

* Enoch's death at age 365 is unique and obviously breaks the longevity pattern (since God took him).

In this case the LXX traditions are the same (except with Methuselah), and the ages at death are similar for all versions.⁴² For

⁴¹ The assumption is that Arpachshad's birth was two years from the time that the flood *began*, rather than from the end of the flood. Notice a similar phrase "after the flood" is used in regard to Noah's life in Genesis 9:28–29. From the time that the flood started (in the 600th year, 2nd month, and 17th day according to 7:11) until the time the earth was dry (the 601st year, 2nd month, and 27th day according to 8:13–14) was one year and ten days. So Noah's family was in the ark for at least a year. But Noah's life is divided into 600 years before the flood and 350 after (a total of 950) without any apparent allowance for the time on the ark.

⁴² The difference in LXX manuscripts for Methuselah is easy to account for. LXX^A implied that Methuselah died after the flood (obviously incorrect), and LXX^B rectified that blunder by shortening his age at the time of his firstborn son by 20 years.

the most part, the LXX has added 100 years to the age at the time of the firstborn son. Which of these chronologies, however, is closest to the original? Wenham suggests that the LXX is secondary. He states, “The regular lengthening, usually by 100 years, of the period till the birth of the patriarch’s first son and the corresponding contraction of his subsequent years of life looks artificial. When the LXX was being translated in Egypt, there was great interest among Egyptian Jews in chronological issues, and it seems likely that these patriarchal ages were adjusted by translators to compete with Egyptian claims about the antiquity of mankind.”⁴³ There is no sufficient reason to distrust the MT figures, and until there is, one should assume them to be the most reliable.

The lifespan of every person in the Genesis 5 list is remarkably long. Though some today might scoff at such figures, they are not unrealistic. Other traditions outside the Bible witness to extraordinary longevity both before and after the flood (for example, the Sumerian king list).⁴⁴ From a broader perspective, there is also a tapering off of years after the flood until Abram and the patriarchs Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (each of whom lived more than 100 years but less than 200). Probably the flood event had something to do with this, since there is a noticeable difference in lifespans following Shem, a survivor of the flood.

According to Genesis 7:6, Noah was 600 years old at the time the flood began, and by dating the flood at 2543 BC \pm 25 years (see above), Noah’s birth would have been in 3143 BC \pm 25 years (2543 + 600). According to the genealogical data in Genesis 5:3–32, there are 1056 years from Adam’s creation to Noah’s birth. This would yield a date for Adam’s creation at 4199 BC \pm 25 years, or roughly 4200 BC. This would also be the date of the Genesis 1–2 creation, assuming that “day” (יָמִים) means a literal twenty-four-hour day.

⁴³ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 130. Cf. G. Larsson, “The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX,” 401–09. There is some speculation that it was Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* (“History of Egypt”), supposedly written during the reigns of Ptolemy I Soter (323–283 BC) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BC), that may have influenced translators or scribes of the LXX to adjust the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 to conform with Egyptian chronological accounts.

⁴⁴ Although a great many questions remain concerning what to make of the Sumerian king list, there is certainly some historicity to it. For example, Enmebaragesi, a king of Kish (fl. ca. 2500 BC), is said to have ruled 900 years. He is the earliest ruler on the king list, however, whose name has been attested from archaeological discoveries. At the ancient site of Nippur, where he is said to have built the first temple, two alabaster vase fragments inscribed with his name were found. See *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* <etcs1.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcs1.cgi?text=t.2.1.3#>.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the traditional view (that God created the present universe in six literal twenty-four-hour days and that this took place relatively recently) is still the most defensible position. In order to be able to calculate dates for the creation and flood events, however, one must first establish that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are “tight,” i.e., without gaps. One of the purposes of this article has been to examine the arguments used by those holding to gaps in these genealogies. The conclusion was reached that there is no convincing evidence to support the presence of gaps. In fact, at many points literal fathers and sons are clearly involved: Adam-Seth, Seth-Enosh, Lamech-Noah, Noah-Shem, Shem-Arpachshad, Eber-Peleg, and Terah-Abram. If there were gaps, they would have to be between other names in the lists. Furthermore, the author of Genesis is careful in these two genealogies to record the ages for the birth of a father’s son and the length of life each member had, a different system than in the genealogy in Matthew 1.

With a high probability that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 have no gaps and taking the biblical chronological data at face value, one can reasonably calculate the dates for most major events of the Old Testament, including the creation and flood events. The conclusion is reached that the flood would have occurred in 2543 BC \pm 25 years, and the creation event would have been 4199 BC \pm 25 years or about 4200 BC. Such a position has much to commend it and ought to be given more serious consideration in the evangelical community today.