

The Hidden Beauty of Hebrew Genealogies

Harmonizing Old Testament Words and Numbers

Seventh Edition, July 2022

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- **The nature and function of Hebrew genealogies**
- **Four witnesses to Israel's 430-year sojourn in Egypt**
- **An iron-clad example of a condensed biblical genealogy: Levi-Aaron**
- **Chronological insights into the lives of Abraham and Jacob**
- **35-55 Generations Missing between Eber and Peleg**
- **Confirmation of missing names from Job who lived before Peleg**
- **Inspiration versus the preservation and transmission of Scripture**
- **The impact of misunderstanding Hebrew genealogies on creation science**

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For the present, only available in digital although a friend will print/bind/ship at cost. So many seldom known and original insights must be debated within the inerrancy community. Author continually refining material.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to those who hold faithfully to the inerrancy of Scripture. The Old Testament genealogies have challenged that faith due to all the confusion surrounding them. Now, *HB* replaces the confusion with harmony. The faith of inerrancy believers has been justified. *HB* is free without charge in digital form so that faith in the Word of God may grow stronger among God's people worldwide.

Acknowledgments

In a sense the author of *HB* is a compiler, taking the ideas of numerous creationists and other inerrancy believers and stitching them together to build a case for omitted generations in Shem's list. Among those I salute for contributing key ideas found in *HB* are Merrill F. Unger, John Whitcomb, Henry Morris II, Bernard E. Northrup, Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr. (military strategy in Genesis 14), Walt Brown, John Baumgardner, Larry Vardiman and John Sanford. Without their original insights this book could not have been written.

Digital Search Subjects

Hidden Beauty is available printed and bound at cost while the digital version is free without hassle to all. With the digital version, searching the topics below will reveal many interesting ideas in the book. MS Word does not distinguish between capitals and small letters, but placing a space after the word may make a difference.

Behemoth	Ebla Tablets	Book of Job	35-55 Generations
Essenes	Gilgamesh	Cuneiform Script	Archbishop James Ussher
Joktan	Hatshepsut	Dead Sea Scrolls	Bernard E. Northrup
Josephus	Hieroglyphics	Hiphil of YALAD	Funerary Avenues
Philo	Leviathan	Larry Vardiman	Hebrew Genealogies
Pliny	Lifespans	Longevity Decline	Hebrew Kinship Terms
Storms	Peleg's Name	Masoretic Text	Hypercyclones
Tannin	Qumranians	The Ice Age	Major Ideas of Book

Executive Summary

Hidden Beauty offers to the Body of Christ a promising solution to a nagging and contentious Bible problem that has escaped explanation for two thousand years. The problem has to do with whether Shem's genealogy in Genesis 11 is complete or not, and if not, where and how many names are omitted. Historically, the Church has interpreted it as complete, but this view conflicts with numerous other Scriptures. Further, recent discoveries of huge numbers of cuneiform tablets testify to an earlier Flood date than is found by adding the numbers in Shem's genealogy. We propose that Shem's list has been shortened from 45-65 names to ten which means the Flood of Noah occurred nearer 4000 BC than 2500 BC. This solution eliminates the many biblical conflicts, confirms recent cuneiform finds and comes with a book full of biblical support.

One of those many biblical conflicts involves the Levi-Aaron genealogy. Four times the sequence of Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron is stated or inferred (I Chronicles 6:1-3; Numbers 3:17-20, 26:57-59; Exodus 6:16, 18, 20). The thinking goes that if it omits names, even though those passages give no hint that names are omitted, maybe Shem's list also omits names. In Levi's case the issue turns on whether Israel sojourned in Egypt 215 or 430-years. If 215-years, it could be complete; if 430-years, it cannot be complete. Thus, many of those who add Shem's numbers have supported 215-years in a never-ending 2000-year controversy. When it comes to the lives of Abraham and Jacob, they have invoked unusual explanations to uphold 215-years. The key verse, Exodus 12:40, allowed either interpretation until scholars in modern times corrected a textual problem in it. Now it clearly states, "The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years." (ESV). Levi's list is incomplete.

For 65 years I have studied the Bible as inerrant which means that God was behind the writing of every word of the Bible so its original documents were error free. Since 1998 I have had a growing suspicion that Shem's list omits names. More recently I began searching the Bible for an answer. The Shem passage is clear—when Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah; when Shelah had lived 30 years he fathered Eber, etc., etc., (Genesis 11:12 and following). Since God moved the writers of Scripture and God cannot lie, people of faith are obligated to take those numbers literally. While most Evangelical Old Testament scholars suspect Shem's list is incomplete, they can't explain how or where.

Slowly it dawned on me that Hebrew genealogies had a different orientation than the genealogies of most other people groups. Their purpose served to identify descendants with forefathers and forefathers with descendants rather than establish legal descent. In the thinking of the Hebrew all male descendants were the sons of their forefathers and all forefathers were the fathers of their descendants.

This thinking is reflected in the very first verse of the New Testament: "Jesus Christ, the son of David." Since David lived 1000 years before Christ, calling Jesus the "son of David" is using "son" in the broad sense of the word. Jesus was a descendant of David, not his immediate son. The Hebrews used the other common family terms such as "father," "brother" and even "to bear" (the mother's part), "to beget" (the father's part) in the same way, i.e., in the broad sense as well as in the conventional narrow sense. My favorite verse illustrating this concept is I Chronicles 4:1 which uses "son" in both narrow and broad senses: "The sons of Judah: Perez,

Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobal.” Perez is the only immediate son of Judah in the list. You would never know from the verse that Hezron was a grandson, Hur and Shobal were great grandsons and Carmi was a distant descendant. Yet this was one way the Hebrews used “son” and other family terms.

In Shem’s case not only is the word “beget” found, but also the age of the father when he begat his son. It would seem that this additional information would require “begat” to be understood in the narrow sense, but it doesn’t. Levi’s list shows how to take the begetting age. In a Hebrew genealogical list factual data about a parent refers to the next generation, whether named or omitted. If omitted, “beget/bear” is used in the broad sense of a descendant born further down the line.

But where and how many generations are missing in Shem’s case? The Bible gives an overwhelming clue. All those who died before the Flood lived about 900 years while the longevity of those born after the Flood steadily declined from 438 to 70 years (Genesis 11:12; Psalm 90:10). While there were special cases the overall decline appears small to begin with, then varied from four to eight years per generation before eventually declining to about two or three years per generation and finally ceasing. But there is one glaring exception. The decline between the third and fourth names is 61% of the total decline. By dividing this huge decline by the per-generation decline and making other adjustments, 35-55 generations seem to be missing (1300-1900 years). What clarified this issue? Here was the break through: coming to realize that the Flood itself was so violent that it permanently cut human longevity in half.

The multiplication of Noah’s descendants totally agrees with the appearance of the world’s first advanced societies. An advanced society is defined as one that has developed a written language. After the Ark came to rest where the mountains of Ararat eventually arose, Noah’s descendants migrated to the plains of Southern Mesopotamia and built a city (Genesis 8-11). In seeing this city God said that now nothing they proposed would be impossible (Genesis 11:6) so He confused their tongues. Speaking different languages forced them to spread out. After a time one group reduced its language to writing. Secular history has concluded that the very first society to develop a written language was the Southern Mesopotamian people of Sumer about 3000 BC. The Egyptians soon followed with hieroglyphics. Other Near East peoples adopted their languages to Sumer’s cuneiform script. Secular history confirms Scripture’s record with regard to the location of the world’s first advanced societies.

Noah’s Flood brought on the Ice Age which lasted over a thousand years and impacted all of his descendants for centuries. Those who settled in the upper latitudes resorted to survival tactics—stone tools and caves. Those in the lower latitudes experienced powerful and frequent rain storms that caused permanent vegetation in areas of the Near East now desert. As a result, large populations developed in one place while elsewhere cave men struggled to survive. Job lived about 16 generations before Abraham, dying at the age of 280. His book speaks of these heavy rains, numerous other ice age phenomena, an extensive population in Arabia and even dinosaurs in the Jordan Valley, all forgotten by Abraham’s day.

When one understands how to take Hebrew genealogies and applies that knowledge to Shem’s list, dozens of misinterpretations of Scripture are corrected and Scripture stands with greater trustworthiness and authority. *Hidden Beauty* is long because it must overcome much disinformation. Determine for yourself if the following pages are convincing or not.

Foreword

(Yet to be written- OT Hebrew Authority Needed)

As of July 2022, none of the world's leading inerrancy Hebrew/Old Testament scholars has agreed to review this book. Maybe they are too busy; maybe this issue is not that important; maybe it is too unique. But this does not mean that competent scholars with doctors' degrees have not reviewed this material. The author has communicated with three who have encouraged the publishing of these ideas. All three are respected senior scholars at or near the end of fruitful lifetime ministries in teaching the Old Testament.

In contrast those who reject the idea that Shem's list is incomplete do not have this kind of experience or even these skills. Chapter 17 explains the difference between true scholars and those who add Shem's numbers to declare the date of the Flood. Some of the latter have corresponded personally with me. Their explanations and arguments are unconvincing and without merit. For the sake of unity in the Body of Christ I will not identify them. Love among the brethren is the greater requirement.

The true issue of this book is the practice of Scripture. Is it true that it uses family terms in a broad sense as well as in the standard narrow sense? Is it true that the details of Amram and Jochebed were true of the parents of their unnamed immediate son and that the Hebrew verb "to bear" refers to bearing Miriam, Aaron and Moses in the broad sense of being born somewhere down the line? Is it true that there is a 61% decrease in longevity between Eber and Peleg and other than this enormous decrease, the average generational decrease was never higher than six or seven years and eventually declined to zero by the end of Moses life? Yes. These biblical uses are clear and they are the point of this book. Thus, the Flood occurred nearer 4000 B.C. than 2500 B.C.

Maybe someday the needed Old Testament Hebrew authority will come forward.

Lloyd T. Anderson

July 2022

PART I - THE ABBREVIATION OF LEVI'S GENEALOGY

Chapter One

Apparent Contradiction of Words and Numbers

The words and numbers of certain Hebrew genealogies appear to contradict each other when read literally. For example, advanced societies thrived across the Near East when the numbers of Shem's genealogy are used to determine the date of Noah's Flood. There is no error in Scripture so we need to understand the method that the Jewish people used in compiling genealogies and read accordingly. With this help we can affirm the inerrancy of Biblical statements without denying the overwhelming testimony of historical studies.

Furthermore, if we understand the OT practice of condensing genealogies, we will not unnecessarily give people an excuse to attack the Bible as being unreliable. Therefore, such insight is very important. In fact, it is so important that we call those methods "the hidden beauty of Hebrew genealogies." This hidden beauty focuses on identity in the family line, not necessarily the succession from father to son. It sometimes includes significant gaps. Such understanding harmonizes those words and numbers of the Old Testament often viewed as contradictions and clumsily reinterpreted.

The Executive Summary (pages 5-6) explains the conclusion of this book—that Shem's genealogy of Genesis 11 omits 35-55 generations. This chapter introduces the first evidence for that conclusion. The Levi-Aaron list covers about 500 years which includes the 430-years Israel dwelt in Egypt. Yet it contains just four people (Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron). We are given much information about them, even their overlapping life spans which fail to bridge those 500 years. The list omits up to a dozen names.

This position has not been the view of the church historically. The reason has to do with the number of years Israel sojourned in Egypt. Whether it was 215 or 430-years has been a continuing controversy for 2000 years. The preponderance of Scriptural evidence favors 430 but historical evidence supported 215. For instance, the Septuagint (i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament) says Israel sojourned in Canaan and Egypt 430-years. Early authorities like Josephus concurred. The church fathers added their "Amen." Because the Hebrew text of the key passage, Exodus 12:40, had a problem, it could be understood to mean that 430-years was the total time in Canaan **and** Egypt. Events in the lives of Abraham and Jacob were then erroneously interpreted to support a 215-year Egyptian sojourn. As a result, the Levi-Aaron list was viewed as complete. To this day some still insist that Israel only sojourned 215-years in Egypt.

While 430-years in Egypt only adds a few years to the antiquity of Noah's Flood, an incomplete Levi list opens the door to other Old Testament genealogies being incomplete. An abbreviated Shem list could push the date for the Flood back hundreds or even thousands of years. To find the approximate time of the Flood, *Hidden Beauty* must address the many controversies that have clouded this question. In the process the book has become very long.

Before proceeding, it must be stated that foundational to this book is the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, the biblical truth that God so moved its authors that they wrote His message without error. It applies to every word of the original writings. It means that all

Scripture was originally in harmony with the original writings of all other Scripture—that no statement contradicted any other statement in its original writing. It also means that all Scripture is important, that every word is equally true, that no Scripture should be dismissed, overlooked or regarded as insignificant. The church has restated this doctrine at critical times in history. Most recently in the Fall of 1978 an international gathering of nearly 300 noted evangelical scholars produced “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” which reaffirmed this truth in clear but precise terms.¹

Because Scripture is God’s word, it is the final authority on every issue it addresses. In this book every effort is made to answer each issue solely on the basis of what the Bible itself says. After determining what Scripture says, the secular view of where and when advanced societies first developed will be discussed because surprisingly it supports what the Bible has said all along. Also, by way of introduction the following purpose and function of Hebrew genealogies must ever be in the minds of those who discuss them.

Overview of Hebrew Genealogies

Most peoples, and especially the West, have used genealogies and chronologies to display an unbroken list of immediate relationships such as father-son, rulers, priests, etc. In contrast, the basic idea of Hebrew genealogies was identity, not succession. Hebrews identified descendants with their forefathers and forefathers with their descendants. It could be boiled down to this: all descendants were in the loins of their forefathers and all forefathers were the fathers of their descendants. It was perfectly accurate in Hebrew usage to say B was the son of A or to say G was the son of A when actually generations B-F came between A and G.

For example, Hebrew genealogies could be as specific as Adam knew Eve who conceived Cain (Genesis 4:1) or as broad as “Jesus Christ, the son of David” (Matthew 1:1). Cain was the immediate result of the union of Adam and Eve. There were no intermediate generations between the parents and their son. This is the narrow use in Hebrew thinking (A begat B). On the other hand, one thousand years separated David from his distant son Jesus Christ. This is the broad use of genealogies in Scripture (A begat G). The broad use could compact many generations into one, yet be perfectly truthful. The intentional skipping or omitting of names could be considered condensing or abbreviating. It was beautifully efficient and simple.

Matthew made no error when he wrote “Jesus Christ, the son of David.” His purpose was to identify Jesus Christ with David genealogically. Authors of Scripture determined the degree of completeness of a blood line, often providing only as many names as their purpose required. Those in the day of any particular author would discern whether his list was complete or not, but as time passed this discernment became more difficult. In time, even Bible scholars, misunderstanding this broader use of Hebrew genealogies, began to wrest the Scripture with their interpretations.

Condensing a Genealogical List—A Clear OT Example

A 215-year sojourn by Jacob and his descendants in Egypt is an essential element in the historic view that the Flood occurred about 2348 BC according to Archbishop James Ussher. His

¹ <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>

monumental work, *Annals of the World*, first published in Latin in 1650, used the typical approach of working back from later known dates to Abraham. This method then added the years when each father in Shem's genealogy of Genesis 11 had his heir to finally reach the Flood date.

A 430-year Egyptian sojourn adds a mere 215-years to this date. But recognizing a 430-year Egyptian sojourn introduces a game-changing precedent. It means that many names are omitted in Levi's genealogy that appears to be complete. Since the Shem list has characteristics similar to the Levi-Aaron list, it opens the door to omitted names in that list which some vehemently deny.

While many have been told that Scripture is confusing about the years Israel spent in Egypt, the next chapter will show that no less than God Himself witnessed to a 430-year sojourn there. But that is not all. Moses likewise witnessed to 430-years in Egypt. Then over a millennium later Stephen affirmed God's word and Paul affirmed Moses' word. On the other hand, nowhere does Scripture state that Israel sojourned in Egypt 215-years. Nowhere!

Then where did the idea of 215-years in Egypt come from? It was primarily from a deduction made from the following words in Exodus and Numbers which lists Kohath as a son of Levi, Amram as a son of Kohath and Aaron as a son of Amram:

¹⁶These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. ¹⁸The sons of Kohath: Amram..., the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. ²⁰Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years. Exodus 6:16, 18, 20.

⁵⁸These are the clans of Levi: ...of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; ...And Kohath was the father of Amram. ⁵⁹The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. Numbers 26:58-59.

While the two narratives appear to be a full and complete record of descent (Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron), the following pages conclusively demonstrate that these genealogical records are abbreviated. But the historic approach views them as complete which requires rewriting much other Scripture. In so doing the cardinal rule of interpretation—inerrancy—is violated. This book will apply the broader concept of the nature and function of Hebrew genealogies to such passages. With this approach those violations of Scripture will be eliminated.

The passages above report three generations leading to Aaron—that of Levi, Kohath and Amram. No one disputes the relationships in these four generations, i.e., that Kohath was a direct descendant of Levi, that Amram was a direct descendant of Kohath and that Aaron was a direct descendant of Amram. When Jacob moved his people to Egypt, Levi was about 46 years old so his sons may have been teenagers or even in their twenties. All Jacob's male descendants accompanied him to Egypt except Joseph and his sons who were already there. Genesis 46:8-26 records that list and begins:

⁸Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons, Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, ⁹and the sons of Reuben.... ¹⁰The sons of Simeon.... ¹¹The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Genesis 46:8-11.

Kohath is among the names in the list above. He was born in Canaan before the move to Egypt. The next generation mentioned after Kohath was Amram. Exodus says Amram was a son of Kohath. Numbers agrees, saying Kohath was the father of Amram. Each passage validates the other. Both Exodus and Numbers report that Amram and his wife had children—Exodus reports the births of Aaron and Moses while Numbers reveals the names of three—Aaron, Moses and Miriam. The 215-year view teaches these four generations—Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron—are consecutive, i.e., immediate father-son relationships and span the 215-years in Egypt.

How long of a sojourn in Egypt could they possibly span? Let's calculate. Suppose each of these generations dwelling in Egypt fathered his named son in the last year of his life. This number would be the maximum number of years these four generations could have contributed to the total sojourn in Egypt if the genealogies were consecutive without any gaps or omissions. Then that number could be viewed in the light of a 215 or 430-year sojourn.

Calculations: Aaron was 83 at the time of the Exodus, so he accounts for 83 years in Egypt (Exodus 7:7). Levi's grandson, Amram lived 137 years (Exodus 6:20), all of them in Egypt. Add: $137 + 83 = 220$ years. None of Levi's years in Egypt can count since his son Kohath was already alive when they moved to Egypt. The only father left to contribute years in Egypt is Kohath. How many years did he contribute? Scripture doesn't tell his age when they arrived, so for contrast both the maximum and minimum years possible will be calculated.

Kohath's minimum age: he was alive when they moved down to Egypt and he had a younger brother. If his younger brother had just been born, Kohath could have been as young as one year old.

Kohath's maximum age: eleven sons were born to Jacob within a nine-year time span at uncle Laban's place. Levi was #3 and Joseph was #11. Thus, Levi was born about two years into the nine-year time span while Joseph was born last so he was born about seven years later. This makes Levi about seven years older than Joseph. Scripture reveals that Joseph was 39 when his family joined him in Egypt; Levi would have been about 46 ($39+7=46$). At this time Jacob's sons were starting families when they were very young, even younger than 20. If Levi's second son, Kohath, was born when his father was just 20, he would have been 26 when they moved to Egypt.

Maximum Range for the age of Kohath: So Kohath could have been as young as one or as old as 26 when the family moved to Egypt. If he were just one year old, he would contribute the most number of years to the Egyptian sojourn. So that number will be found first. Kohath died at the age of 133 (Exodus 6:18) so he could have contributed as many as 132 years to Israel's time in Egypt. Now the numbers are available to determine the absolute maximum number of years in Egypt if this genealogy (Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron) is complete. Aaron provides 83 years. Amram provides another 137 years and Kohath could have provided up to 132 years. The total is 352 ($83+137+132=352$).

Three hundred fifty-two years is the maximum number of years these three named fathers could contribute towards Israel's total sojourn in Egypt if this list is complete. Although, it is most unlikely that a father would have had his named heir in the very year he died at such an advanced age. For this to happen twice in a row is even more unlikely. As already noted, Jacob's sons were starting families as early as the age of 20. But for now, the maximum

possible number of years in Egypt has been found if this genealogy is complete. That total number of years, 352 years, is more than enough for a 215-year sojourn but it is not enough for a 430-year sojourn.

Because of this the 215-year people conclude that when Moses said Israel's sojourn was 430-years (Exodus 12:40), he was referring to the entire time from Abraham's arrival in Canaan until the Exodus. Scripture reports that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in Canaan 215-years before the move to Egypt. The remaining 215-years would be the years that are left for Israel's sojourn in Egypt. Thus, they say, Israel sojourned in Egypt 215, not 430-years.

But that interpretation conflicts with the very words of God, Stephen and Paul as well as those of Moses, all of whom uphold the 430-year number for the years Israel was in Egypt. In effect this approach jumps from the frying pan—trying to escape the difficulty of Exodus 6 and Numbers 26—into the fire—doing violence to the words of God, Moses, Stephen and Paul. If the Exodus and Numbers passages will only support a 215-year sojourn while the four witnesses testify to a 430-year sojourn, the Bible apparently is contradicting itself and inerrancy is compromised. Since inerrancy assures that Scripture does not contradict itself, how is this dilemma resolved? The answer is found in the hidden beauty of Hebrew genealogies.

The Hidden Beauty of Hebrew Genealogies

Because Biblical Hebrew relational terms were used in both narrow and broad senses, "father" could mean father, grandfather or ancestor. The same was true of son, beget, and other common kinship terms. In Hebrew genealogies both the narrow and broad senses of these family relationships were employed. In the Levi-Aaron genealogy the maximum possible consecutive years of the named four living in Egypt (352) falls short of 430-years in Egypt. To get 430-years more generations are needed. Since they are not stated, **this genealogy is abbreviated**. Generations are omitted. The following table shows the impossibility of four generations spanning 430-years on the left and therefore what missing generations might look like on the right.

Four Generations Cannot Span 430-years ¹				What Levi's List May Have Looked Like ²		
	Gener- ation	Age at Death	Maximum Possible Years in Egypt		Gener- ation	Year Born- Age at Son's Birth
Levi	1	139		Levi	1	1922/28 ²
Kohath	2	133	132	Kohath	2	1894/28
Amram	3	137	137	Amram	3	1866/28
Aaron	4	123	83	MG1 ²	4	1838/28
			352	MG2	5	1810/28
				MG3	6	1782/28
				MG4	7	1754/28
				MG5	8	1726/28
				MG6	9	1698/28
				MG7	10	1670/28

¹Note to table above: Kohath was alive when Jacob moved his family to Egypt so none of Levi's years can be counted.

² Notes to table at right:	MG8	11	1642/28
--MG=Missing Generation	MG9	12	1614/28
--For sake of an average, figure the father to be 28 when his heir was born.	MG10	13	1586/28
--Aaron was 83 at the time of the Exodus. Thus he was born in 1529, 83 years before the Exodus.	MG11	14	1558/29 ³
--Designated heir not always firstborn.	Aaron ²	15	1529
--The birth of daughters must be considered.	Exodus		1446
	³ Years adjusted to equal 430-years.		

What actually happened? Amram had a son who had a son and somewhere down the line Aaron, Moses and Miriam were born. To say Aaron was the son of Amram when many generations came in between is no different than Matthew 1:1 saying Jesus Christ was the son of David when many generations came in between. This was a common and accepted way for ancient Hebrews to state their genealogical relationships.

Conclusion to the 215/430 Debate

This chapter began by pointing out that a 215-year Egyptian sojourn is not stated in Scripture but is primarily a deduction based on the Levi-Aaron genealogy recorded in Exodus 6 and Numbers 26. The few generations stated in those two passages do not permit a 430-year sojourn. While those passages appear to be reporting that a grandson of Levi married a daughter of Levi and they became the immediate parents of Miriam, Aaron and Moses, that is the overview but there is more to the story. Rather Amram and Jochebed had these children through intermediate generations. Omitting generations between Amram and Aaron was not a scribal error; it was a way to state genealogies efficiently.

Nature of the Levi-Aaron Abbreviation

The Jewish people all descended from a common ancestor. The God of creation told that ancestor, Abraham, that He would make of him a great nation. His grandson, Jacob, had twelve sons. Each formed a unit of the promised nation called a tribe. The sons and sometimes further descendants of these tribal fathers formed units within each tribe with various designations. As populations increased in succeeding generations that division was further broken down into a third level. It also had various names. Knowing a person's identity with these three levels provided a powerful picture of the person. It showed where he belonged in the nation.

God said all booty from the battle of Jericho was under a ban. A soldier violated the ban. In judgment God caused the Israelites to lose their next battle. When the leaders cried out to God, He said to find the guilty soldier and execute him. To find him they were to bring each tribe before the LORD. Scripture continues: "And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man" Joshua 7:14. Here is an instance where God Himself spoke of those three levels of organization of the nation—He called them tribe, clan and household (ESV). While Scripture uses various designations for them in other places, here God used specific designations for them. This book will follow His example and refer to that first level as tribe, to the second level as clan and to the third level as household.

Without question Levi, the third son of Jacob, formed a tribe. Numbers 26 speaks of the second census of Israel. It was conducted just before entering Canaan. The tribe of Levi was dedicated to the spiritual life of Israel so its population was not counted with the other tribes that became the army of Israel. In the census each of the twelve ordinary tribes are individually named. In doing so Scripture speaks of each son as follows: “Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, the sons of Reuben: of Hanoch, the clans of the Hanochites....” Numbers 26:5. The chapter lists each of the twelve tribes with the same sons as found in the list that went to Egypt 470 years earlier. Then it speaks of the tribe of Levi in the same way: “This was the list of the Levites according to their clans: of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; of Merari, the clan of the Merarites” (Numbers 26:58). Next it says that Kohath was the father of Amram. So, the organization of Israel adds to the view that these names are consecutive: Levi-Kohath-Amram.

When Moses recorded the Levi-Aaron list, he first cited the tribe that Aaron belonged to (Levi), then the clan (Kohath) and finally the household (Amram). He knew who Aaron’s father, grandfather and great grandfather were. But they were unknown and unimportant to the nation at large. To list them would have been tedious, clumsy and unnecessary. But knowing the three levels of Aaron’s ancestry was very important. This pedigree showed that both Aaron and his younger brother Moses were part of the very foundation of the nation. While God called Moses and authenticated him with signs, ancestors that laid the foundation of the Hebrew people added respect and legitimacy to him as God’s chosen leader. This understanding of purpose explains why Levi’s list is so short. Moses omitted all the generations between Amram and Aaron. The existence of one undeniably abbreviated Hebrew genealogy in Scripture sets a precedent. If one genealogy was abbreviated, others could be as well.

Implications for Shem’s Genealogy

While the abbreviation of most Hebrew genealogies would have no significant effect on the date of the Flood, an abbreviation in Shem’s genealogy would. Then, adding those numbers would give an incorrect date. But Shem’s genealogy contains a feature that makes it different from the Levi-Aaron list. It not only identifies each father’s son but gives the year when that son was born, saying two years after the Flood a son by the name of Arpachshad was born to Shem (Genesis 11:10). It continues by saying that when Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah (Genesis 11:12). Scripture states the age of each succeeding father when his heir was born.

This feature appears to assure that Shem’s list is complete—no ifs, ands or buts. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that most inerrancy scholars are certain the Ussher date is too late, is there anything in Scripture to suggest the years of any of the fathers might be interpreted differently? Does Scripture anywhere provide information or give an example that would answer this difficulty? In fact it does. The very iron-clad genealogy of Levi provides a completely satisfactory solution to the Shem issue in the following way.

What is overlooked is that the Levi-Aaron list also gives factual details about the father before the confirmed omission. While some of that information could be true of Aaron’s immediate parents, other factual details make it impossible for Amram to be the immediate father of Aaron. If so, to whom does that factual information apply? It must be true of the unnamed immediate son of Amram and only in a broad sense is it true of any further omitted

generations and of Aaron. The following paragraphs identify an amazing list of factual details about the generation in question.

The father at issue is the third name in the Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron genealogy, Amram. The following facts are stated in Scripture about him: first, Amram is the first of four named sons born to Kohath (Exodus 6:18). Remember, Kohath was alive when Jacob joined Joseph to begin the sojourn in Egypt. Second, Amram took a wife (Exodus 6:20). Third, her name was Jochebed (Exodus 6:20, Numbers 26:59). Fourth, she was the daughter of Levi (Numbers 26:59); fifth, she was the sister of Amram's father (Exodus 6:20) and, sixth, she was born in Egypt (Numbers 26:59). In other words this daughter of Levi was not born in Canaan like Levi's three sons—Gershon, Kohath and Merari (Genesis 46:11). Rather, she was born after the move, making her younger than her three brothers.

Seventh, since Amram was not listed among those sons of Jacob that moved to Egypt (Genesis 46:11), he, too, was born after the move, that is, he too was born in Egypt. If Scripture hadn't included the information about Jochebed being born in Egypt, it might have left the impression that Amram married someone old enough to be his mother. Eighth, in addition to Aaron, Moses was also born to Amram (Exodus 6:20). Ninth, in addition to Aaron and Moses, Miriam was also born to Amram and Jochebed (Numbers 26:59). Indeed, depending on what is counted, up to nine specific facts are revealed in Scripture about the third generation male in the Levi-Aaron list of Exodus 6:18-22 and Numbers 26:58-59.

Because Hebrews commonly named descendants after famous ancestors, some of these facts could apply to the parents of Aaron. But the fact that both Amram and Jochebed were born at the beginning of the 430-year sojourn in Egypt while Aaron was born near the end of that 430-year period separates the third and fourth names in the Levi list by some 300 years. Three hundred years makes it impossible for Aaron to be the immediate son of Amram. Therefore, those nine entirely true factual details about Amram apply to his unnamed son and only by the Hebrew custom of viewing all descendants as the son of the father do they apply to Aaron.

Some might suggest that numbers are more factual than other information, that in the statement "When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg" (Genesis 11:16), the number "34" is an absolute fact and cannot be viewed in any other way. We agree. The number "34" is an absolute fact. It cannot be viewed in any other way. It is just like the absolute fact of Jochebed being born in Egypt. Thus, the entire list of nine facts about Amram cannot be viewed in any other way. The insight lacking through all church history was that Scripture used Hebrew family relational terms in both a narrow sense and a broad sense. The question here is whether Eber fathering Peleg is used in a narrow sense or broad sense. If the writer used it in the broad sense, generations are omitted between Eber and Peleg.

The Levi-Aaron list becomes the biblical pattern for understanding details of a father before a suspected omission. The details apply to the first unnamed son while the name that appears is used in the broad sense of a son further down the line. For beyond doubt names are missing between Amram and Aaron because Aaron came some 300 years after Amram. To remove that impossible timespan previous generations argued fiercely for a 215-year sojourn in Egypt. Since some creationists still hold that view, the entire next chapter explains the impossibility of that position.

When the biblical pattern is applied to Shem's list, if there are one or more omissions, the age of the father when his heir was born refers specifically to the first unnamed generation. But a high degree of certainty is needed to suspect names are omitted from any list. Shem's list gives two. First is the impossibly late Flood date it produces apart from omitted names. But chapter seven gives an overwhelming second reason. While longevity decreased between two and eight years per generation after the Flood, the decrease between Eber and Peleg was 225 years or 61% of the entire decrease from the Flood until human longevity stabilized at 70 years for a full lifetime. The Eber-Peleg record is another Amram-Aaron case.

Viewing Shem's List as a Chrono-Genealogy

Those holding that Shem's list is complete add the ages of the fathers when their sons were fathered and declare that those years make it possible to determine the date of the Flood. They call that type of genealogy a chrono-genealogy. They then reason that even if there are omitted **names** between Eber and Peleg the **number** 34 ties Peleg to a **chronology** and therefore the total time between Eber and Peleg cannot exceed 34 years. This argument is also called the "bookends" argument.

Yet, how is a number different from any other category of words that express an absolutely true detail, such as the detail that Jochebed was the sister of Amram's father who lived at the beginning of the 430-year sojourn in Egypt? Clearly there is no difference. Numbers are no different from other precise words expressing a fact. Words that express true facts are true whether they are numbers or not. The bookend argument makes a superficial distinction between numbers and other words and interjects a false element into the time of the Flood debate.

While that argument is clever, it is incorrect and must be recognized as an invention of man to support a particular interpretation of how to treat those numbers. It is not stated by Scripture and violates how Scripture itself treats such details in Levi's genealogy. Further it is not verified by Moses in as much as he did not add up those numbers in Shem's list. Most important of all this argument could not be why God included those numbers because they give the wrong answer for the time of the Flood.

Those who hold this view reason: "Why else would Eber's age be given when he fathered Peleg other than to tell when the Flood happened?" In response Andrew E. Steinmann answered this question (applying it to Genesis 5 as well as Genesis 11 since the two instances of this format actually provide a stronger case against viewing them as having a chronological purpose):

This [chrono-genealogical argument] assumes that the information was included for chronological purposes and then argues that the genealogies must therefore be useful for chronological calculations. In fact, the author does not state the reason for including this information.... This information could well have illustrated several points without being intended to be used in chronological calculations relating to the events of the narrative. For instance, the information may simply have been intended to demonstrate:

1. The different environmental and societal conditions that prevailed in that era. People not only lived longer in Genesis 5, they matured more slowly and/or married at a later age.

2. That conditions had changed in Genesis 11 and people came to marry and have children at a younger age, and they lived shorter lives.

3. That the persons in genealogies were actual historical persons, not fictions or fictionalized historical persons.

These points could be illustrated with selective genealogies that do not include every generation. The information would not be superfluous, but it also would not be useful for the purpose of chronological calculations.²

In fact, the merits of the chrono-genealogical argument are not strong in the eyes of most Bible scholars. Moses wrote around 1400 BC when the lifespan of man was 70. Saying that people once lived to the age of 900 would be met with skepticism. Moses knew about the well-known fictitious stories of exceptionally long lifespans in the past. The Sumerian King List included one king who was said to have reigned 43,200 years. Moses' numbers had to be separated from such exaggerations. By giving the years before the birth of the heir, the years after and the total years of each father in Genesis 5, God through Moses did all He could to assure His readers those people actually lived that long. Furthermore, those numbers provide the very patterns that have aided us in building our explanations concerning man's decreasing longevity which is the key argument for the missing 35-55 generations between Eber and Peleg.

In the Abstract of Steinmann's 2018 article, he noted a recent spate of articles arguing that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 were complete, skipping no generations. In checking his observation this author found that three of the articles in a single issue of a popular monthly age-of-the-earth magazine mentioned the too-recent year number. Steinmann summarized his article as follows: **"The major arguments they use are defective and falsifiable."**³ His version is 18 pages. But he only scratches the surface. Somewhere a book must spell it all out in detail. Hopefully by showing the nature and function of ancient Hebrew genealogies *Hidden Beauty* will open people's eyes to the frequent abbreviating of biblical genealogies.

The Abbreviation of Shem's Genealogy in Retrospect

Human longevity declined gradually from the first fathers born after the Flood until the days of Moses, from average full lifespans of 450 years to average full lifespans of 70 years. This is an average full lifespan decline of 380 years. Scripture gives abundant details to track this decline. Shelah who represents the second generation born after the Flood (433-year lifespan), lived five fewer years than his father (438-year lifespan) who was born two years after the Flood. Over the next two millennia the rate of decline was sometimes faster and sometimes slower but longevity stopped declining in Moses' day when he wrote that a full lifetime was 70 years. To this day 70 years generally stands as a full lifespan. But there was one exception

² Andrew E. Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 174 (April-June 2017): 148-149 (141-158). Andrew E. Steinmann is Distinguished Professor of Theology and Hebrew, Concordia University, Chicago, Illinois. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, published by Dallas Theological Seminary, alma mater of *Hidden Beauty's* author, is America's oldest continuously published theological journal.

³ *Ibid.*, 141.

during the gradual decline of those born after the Flood, a sudden one-time drop of 225 years. This one instance is between Eber and Peleg. Eber lived 464 years while Peleg, the next named person, lived 239 years, a decline of 225 years or 61% ($225/369=61\%$) of the total decline of human longevity after the Flood. This eye-popping decline was either produced by another catastrophe as great as the Flood or it is another Amram-Aaron case. There is no evidence for such a catastrophe 100 years after the Flood. Thus, it is another Amram-Aaron case.

The Amram-Aaron sequence leaves out an estimated 8-12 generations. The Eber-Peleg sequence leaves out as many as 55 generations. With new generations starting each 30-34 years when people lived 200-450 years, this represents up to 1900 more years of human history after the Flood than previously thought (and pushes the first man back accordingly). Since God is not more specific, we dare not violate this ambiguity. These few additional years make no difference at all in the creation-evolution controversy, but they make a world of difference in honoring Scripture because they treat both the words and numbers of Scripture as inerrant.

Once we understand what the Bible literally says, we are free to examine the findings of secular disciplines; for, sooner or later when the secular world has all the facts, it will confirm God's record. So, have such findings caught up with the revelation of Scripture? The Flood changed the face of the earth up to ten miles down so it obliterated the physical evidence of human existence that would speak to the condensing of the Genesis 5 list. However, the Genesis 11 list involves the history of man after the Flood. To some extent evidence for that history still exists and is constantly being discovered through such disciplines as studies of Hebrew and related languages, textual studies, archaeology and ancient Near East history.

Adding the time represented in the missing generations between Eber and Peleg to the additional 215-years in Egypt provides enough time to encompass all well-established human history as found in written records since the Flood. Thus, getting the genealogies of Scripture right provides harmony between the words and numbers of Scripture and removes a huge stumbling block between biblical creationists and other Evangelical scholars. (See chapter seven for a full development of the abbreviation of Shem's genealogy.)

The next chapter examines the words of four witnesses to a 430-year sojourn in Egypt. In Archbishop Ussher's day the text of Exodus 12:40 was deficient; so, for centuries believers held the 215-year view believing they were standing on Scripture. Over the next two centuries the text was clarified. Now eminent Hebrew scholars are unanimous—Moses clearly said the Egyptian sojourn lasted 430-years. But all along the words of God Himself to Abraham in Genesis 15:13 pointed to a 430-year sojourn in Egypt and excluded a 215-year sojourn.

Chapter Two

Four Witnesses to a 430-year Sojourn in Egypt

To build a case for the contention of this book, that 35-55 generations are omitted in Shem's genealogy, chapter one explained that beyond question the Levi-Aaron list omits generations, possibly 8-12. Clearly, the Hebrews abbreviated their genealogies. But this could only be true if Israel sojourned in Egypt 430-years and the traditional view was 215, not 430-years. God, Moses, Stephen and Paul speak to the issue. Beyond doubt they testify to a 430-Year Egyptian sojourn. Consequently, this chapter must examine the testimony of these four in considerable detail because the past confusion is still bothersome. In the process it will become apparent why the 215-year option was preferred but is now obviously incorrect.

God Himself in Genesis 15 is the first witness. He spoke of 400 years of affliction but did not name the country where the affliction would occur. However, He did say Israel would come out of that country in the 4th generation. That sounded more like 215-years than 430 to the traditionalists. The second witness, Moses, wrote about 430-years but his words could be understood as a total of 430-years between Canaan and Egypt until a corruption in the text was corrected in modern times. The third witness, Stephen, quoted God's 400 years so his words fall in the same camp as God's. The final witness, Paul, quoted Moses' 430-years but his words are usually understood to be the total time in Canaan and Egypt so he was viewed as supporting 215-years.

Josephus, the church fathers, Ussher, the Reformers and the King James translators all held the 215-year view, but looking back, they were the victims of historical inaccuracies. Many in the inerrancy camp are still in this fog. The following will give better material for an informed view.

A. The Witness of God—Genesis 15:12-16

When Abraham was a young man, God was searching for a vessel to greatly further His work among mankind and begin a line of men who would know Him. Their descendants would eventually become a nation that declared His ways and produced both the Bible and the Messiah. The man God called was Abraham. In the beginning Abraham did not know God. He and his relatives were idol worshippers. They lived in one of the most culturally advanced cities on planet earth, but it had forsaken the knowledge of God.

Even yet, God appeared to him and told him to separate from his remarkable city, his many relatives, even from his father's house and follow God to an undisclosed location. If he met those four conditions, God promised that his name would be great, that he would become a great nation and that in him all the earth would be blessed. Heady stuff! Eventually Abraham would fully obey so that God could fulfill His promises.

Need for a Covenant

God cannot lie because His word proceeds from His nature—perfect righteousness. All His promises to Abraham were real and would happen. However, the road to becoming a great nation would be incredibly difficult and take many generations. His descendants would eventually be reduced to slavery in another land. While the promises were certain, hardships

along the way might lead to despair so God reassured Abraham as well as his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob with visitation after visitation, repeating and even expanding the promises.

The visitation in which God disclosed the frightening news that the path involved 400 years of affliction stood above all others. In Genesis 15 God made a blood covenant, swearing by Himself alone that no matter what, He would unconditionally do what He had promised. In the vision God was saying, “May I be like the slain animals of the covenant if I do not keep my word to you.” There was nothing Abraham or his descendants could do to produce the results of the covenant except obey God. Fulfilling the promises would be the supernatural work of God.

This covenant was given about ten years after Abraham followed God to the Promised Land. Abraham and his descendants needed to have clearly in their minds that a time of fearful terror lay ahead. This horrible period would happen in another land. God would be with them and their oppression would finally end with them suddenly becoming a great and wealthy nation. As for Abraham, he would die in peace before this period of servitude began.

Setting for the Covenant—Genesis 15:1-11

Genesis 15 opens with Abraham gripped in fear. The preceding fall he had rescued Lot from the invasion of four powerful Mesopotamian armies and slaughtered its soldiers. Now it was the next spring, the time when armies went on the march. Abraham was scaring himself to death as he envisioned the certain revenge for which he was no match. In addition, he had turned his back on the spoils of his victory and was being stung with criticism for such a foolish act. These thoughts left him in deep distress.

Then God’s word came to Abraham in a vision, saying “Fear not, Abram. I am your shield; your reward shall be very great” (Genesis 15:1). God was saying that the mightiest army in the world could not harm him because the God of creation would be his defense. In addition, God would give him a far greater reward than the spoils of Sodom he refused.

Abraham had other troubling thoughts. How could he become a nation when he didn’t even have a son? God replied that he would have a son and his descendants would be like the stars—more numerous than he could number. Abraham asked how he could be sure this would happen. God told Abraham to cut in half a heifer, a goat and a ram and lay the halves on either side of a path. After foretelling key events of the next 700 years God alone passed between the bloody pieces of the animals thereby signing the covenant and making Him alone responsible for its fulfillment.

Terrifying Times Ahead — Genesis 15:12-16

About dusk, in his vision Abraham fell asleep. Then God made him sense the horrors his descendants would experience during a future time of servitude. That nightmare is described in Genesis 15:12 while its meaning is explained in the next four verses. Abraham’s offspring would be aliens in a foreign country. There they would suffer affliction 400 years. But they would not be destroyed. Instead, they would return to this Promised Land in great numbers and with great wealth. They could not take possession of the land yet because others were still entitled to it. But the land was Abraham’s and his descendants by right of divine promise. As for Abraham, this dark period would not touch him. He would die in peace. Is this indeed what these verses are saying or is the traditional explanation to be preferred?

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.” Genesis 15:12-13.

Grouping these two verses together shows the terrifying sense of danger that came over Abraham and the divine explanation for it. The traditional viewpoint generally ignores the dread of verse 12 and begins with God’s words in verse 13. But without acknowledging the overwhelming darkness, any explanation of verse 13 will overlook its intent. The table below examines God’s explanation for the cause of Abraham’s fear. It contains six elements (left column) together with a reasonable explanation of each element. Most explanations are obvious while several may be more interpretative, but all are consistent. The right column expresses how the traditional view interprets the six elements.

Obvious Explanation-verse 13	Traditional Explanation-verse 13
1- “Know for certain...” indicates that God is about to make an extremely grave disclosure. Abraham had just been in a deep sleep when he was overcome with a terrifying sense of darkness/dread. God then told him what this dreadful darkness was about in verses 13-16.	God’s solemn warning, “Know for certain,” preceded by Abraham’s frightening sense of the coming slavery is overlooked or minimized. ⁴
2- “that your offspring...” This dreaded time involved Abraham’s descendants.	The sojourn God speaks of involved Abraham as well as his descendants.
3- “will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs...” This dreaded time would happen in a land other than the Promised Land.	The sojourn would be in both the Promised Land and a land that was not theirs.
4- “and will be servants there...” During this dreaded time Abraham’s descendants would be servants in this land that was not theirs.	Abraham was already a servant in Canaan and his descendants would continue to be servants until the time of the Exodus.
5- “and they will be afflicted...” The servitude of this dreaded time would be of a most grievous kind. In retrospect we learn they were treated as property, not as people, and cruelly driven in labor gangs with whips.	This adversity was as mild as Abraham’s and Isaac’s friction with the Canaanites or the mocking of Ishmael at the time of Isaac’s weaning.
6- “for four hundred years....” This exploitation would begin after Joseph’s rule and last 400 years in Egypt.	The affliction could have happened over a period of 430-years or it could have begun at Isaac’s weaning or the 400 number could be a rounding of the 430-year number.

⁴Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, 15th Edition (Green Forest, AR.: Master Books, 2005), 57-60.

Their explanation actually violates some of the elements of God's words. The traditionalists have this difficulty because God says in verse 16 that Abraham's descendants will return to Canaan in the fourth generation. They feel four generations demand a 215-year Egyptian sojourn, so they have no other choice than to wrench some of God's clear statements in verse 13 as well as verses 14 and 15. Besides all this confusion in attempting a consistent interpretation, various 215-year supporters give interpretations of verses 13-16 that even disagree with each other. Clearly their explanation of Genesis 15:12-16 is inconsistent and must be rejected.

But there is more. God continues...

¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Genesis 15:14-16.

The two assertions of verse fourteen are momentous in their own right. God would judge the nation that enslaved His people and His people would come forth from that nation with "great possessions." Over 430-years Jacob's small band multiplied to a population of several million. Then, when God ordered the oppressing nation to free His people which it refused to do, He sent ten devastating plagues of judgment. With that, the oppressors urged His people to leave before they all perished and sent them away with valuable gifts. A few days later, the nation had a change of heart and sent its chariot army to bring the Hebrews back. God thwarted this effort by destroying their military force in the waters of the Red Sea.

All this happened in the land of Egypt. Egypt was not promised to the Hebrews but was the land in which they would become servants, the land where they would be afflicted four hundred years. Egypt was the nation God would judge and its wealth would enrich His people.

God spends all of verse 15 with words of assurance to Abraham—he would not endure the grueling slavery destined for his descendants. While it might be possible to argue that verse 13 implies the affliction would touch Abraham as well, God clearly rules out Abraham's participation in this sojourn of servitude with these key phrases: "As for you," "go to your fathers in peace," and "buried in a good old age." In the light of these words, it is hard to understand how the traditional view can insist that Abraham shared in the affliction of verse thirteen.

Three momentous assertions by Jehovah

And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Genesis 15:16.

1. "And they shall come back here." Hundreds of years of affliction, some involving grinding slavery would not annihilate Abraham's descendants. They would be given the Promised Land just as Jehovah had covenanted.

2. "In the fourth generation." God did not give a vague promise of a return "someday." This specific time marker would constantly provide hope during the period of affliction.

3. "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Amorites occupied the land God promised Abraham. While God is longsuffering, there is a point where a people group has advanced so deeply into sin that hardly anyone in it can get come to know Him. Thus, He must remove that

entire people group. God saw the direction and result of their iniquity. It was headed towards the place where justice would obligate Him to remove them. Once their iniquity was complete, they surrendered their right to the land and God was free to give it to others. God would remove the populous city-state of Sodom just years later for this very reason; there weren't even ten righteous in it. So verse 16 provided another reason for the lengthy stay in Egypt and thus the need for patience until the right time arrived.

Genesis 15:16—Fourth Generation Promise

The statements about returning to Canaan and the Amorites' iniquity are clear and understandable but what did God mean by His statement that they would return in the fourth generation? It means, says the majority view, the fourth generation of Israelites in Egypt would return to Canaan. They claim this proves a 215-year Egyptian sojourn and eliminates a 430-year Egyptian sojourn, since four generations could reach 215-years, but not 430-years. They point to Exodus six which names four generations ending with Moses and Aaron who participated in the Exodus (passage cited below). Exodus six records that Levi had a son named Kohath. Kohath had a son named Amram and Amram had two sons, Moses and Aaron. The four generations were Levi, Kohath, Amram and Aaron. While this explanation requires strained explanations for a dozen other details in Genesis 15:12-16 it is the only way, they say.

But this idea doesn't work because Aaron had four grown sons at the time of the Exodus. If Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron were the right four generations, God did not keep His promise. To make matters worse Exodus six also names Aaron's grandson, Phinehas, who possibly was born in Egypt. Maybe Levi's line came out in the sixth generation. Others have recognized this problem and attempted to identify four other generations, but none work. The fact is, the four generations can't be found if "fourth generation" is interpreted as four consecutive father-son generations. The critical verses are found in Exodus 6:16, 18, 20, 23 and 25:

¹⁶These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. ¹⁸The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. ²⁰Amram took as his wife Jockebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years. ²³Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²⁵Eleazar, Aaron's son, took as his wife one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. (Emphasis ours.)

"Coming out in the fourth generation" also raises the question, "How many years elapsed from the start of one generation to the start of the next? While many years elapsed in the generations of Terah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, beginning with Jacob's sons new generations generally started every 20 to 30 years. At that rate four generations would place the deliverance in 80 to 120 years (20x4=80; 30x4=120). Such a time frame even falls short of 215-years in Egypt. Further, God does not say four special generations but simply four generations. Everyone could count the generations in his family and expect deliverance when the number reached four.

"Generations" as "Lifetimes"

If a way could be found to harmonize the "either/or" verses, it would be a "both/and" victory for inerrancy. All the verses and each statement of each verse could be embraced without qualification, without diminishing, without violating inerrancy. We suggest that way is in a full

understanding of the Hebrew concept of genealogies. It is much broader than in other cultures. Here the generations would be lifetimes—Israel would come out in four lifetimes, or in the fourth lifetime. Add up four known lifetimes and before the end of the fourth, Israel would come out of Egypt.

Moses wrote these words. He must have puzzled over what God had told Abraham 600 years before. He doesn't identify four successive generations (the 215-year interpretation) but he does provide the numbers to make the idea of "lifetimes" work. He lists 40 men in the genealogies of Exodus six but amazingly he only records the ages of three: Levi-137 years (6:16); Kohath-133 years (6:18) and Amram-137 years (6:20). Their ages added together total 407 years. In the next chapter Moses wrote, "Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh" (Exodus 7:7). Those confrontations produced the Exodus. Adding those 83 years to the 407 years gives a total of 490 years, which more than covers a 430-year Egyptian sojourn ($137+133+137+83=490$). So a perfectly satisfactory interpretation is that in the total of four lifetimes or in the fourth lifetime Israel would come out.

This interpretation allows each of the dozen details in Genesis 15:12-16 to be taken at face value, in their normal meaning. It completely upholds the principle of inerrancy. God had promised the affliction would end at a certain time and that the outcome would be marvelous. Under this interpretation the end of Israel's servitude in Egypt would come in just four lifetimes.

Accepting the Witness of God

God Himself is the first speaker in Scripture to address the years of sojourn in Egypt. He said Abraham's descendants would be afflicted in a land that was not theirs. Nearly all acknowledge this to be referring to Egypt. He said affliction in that land would continue for 400 years. Since 400 years is clearly more than 215-years, God's statement eliminates the traditional 215-year view. While the 215-year folks quickly fall back to Moses' statement about Israel's stay in Egypt in Exodus 12:40, we will show next that Moses statement does not support their view either.

Some see God's 400-year statement and Moses 430-year statement as a conflict and then imply that it is impossible to know for sure what is being said. This conflict is resolved once one recalls that Moses was talking about Israel's total time in Egypt which began with welcome, while God was speaking about the portion of time in Egypt after the welcome wore off and was characterized by affliction. The number 400 is also more general and could suggest that the time of affliction was introduced over a period of time. God's statement agrees with Moses' 430-years statement but rejects a 215-year Egyptian stay.

God is not only the first speaker in Scripture to address the issue but He is speaking specifically about the length of time in Egypt. Further, He is the most important speaker in all of Scripture. In just five words, the first five words of Scripture, "In the beginning God created," He settled the creation/evolution issue. Certainly in five verses He could settle the 215/430-year issue. As we shall soon see, the position of the traditional view only seems to worsen.

B. The Witness of Moses—Exodus 12:40-41

So, how does Moses weigh in on the subject? After all, he was there. Under the LORD he led Israel out of Egypt. Maybe we have missed something, but his words seem clear. In Exodus 12:40-41 he states:

⁴⁰**The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years.** ⁴¹**At the end of 430-years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.**

The Hebrew text of verse forty was not always clear. In the days of Sir Isaac Newton, Archbishop James Ussher, and the translation of the King James Version there were long standing questions about the text. The Septuagint gave the translation “lived in Egypt and Canaan.” Josephus took that view. As a result, the nearly universal view of Christians 400 years ago was that the 430-year sojourn included both the years in Canaan and in Egypt. This is where the idea came from that 215 of the 430-year sojourn were spent in Canaan by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Newton, Ussher and the King James translators were all products of their age and expressed the understanding of their day.

Over the next two centuries textual scholars worked to resolve the difficulties with the text. By the late 1800’s Robert Jamieson of the six volume Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary series could say that hardly any Hebrew scholar of eminence still accepted the corrupted text that allowed for understanding that the 430-years spanned the time Abraham and his descendants lived in the Promised Land and in Egypt.⁵ Today even those few eminent Hebraists are history. Only the incorrect translation of 1611 and its successors remain to uphold the faulty interpretation. Those who still teach that Israel sojourned in Egypt just 215-years reject hundreds of years of work to determine the correct text. Today’s translations such as the ESV used in this book (Exodus 12:40 cited above) clearly state that Israel sojourned in Egypt 430-years.

Many have unwittingly clung to the incorrect view of Newton and Ussher’s day. What are the authorities saying today? US career missionary to Israel [Bill Rogers—over 20 years in Israel and now with Operation Mobilization] answered our question about what people in Israel believe about the years in Egypt as follows:

Regarding the 430-years, I have never even heard that this was in question, as it is accepted universally by Jewish scholars and most evangelicals too (I thought). The period of time began when Jacob went to Egypt at the end of his life. The Bible is also very clear when God said “your descendants” will be strangers for 430 [sic, 400] years. It is a no brainer to me. Of course I realize that there are all kinds of higher criticism people who question all of the Bible chronology, including the timing of the Exodus, but again it seems to me that the Bible is the final authority and speaks quite clearly on the subject of timing.⁶

Since the subject is Jewish history, it would seem that of all people living today, Jews would have the most accurate understanding of their history.

Dr. C.F. Keil, co-author of the authoritative 25-volume commentary on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, writes as follows about Israel’s time in Egypt:

⁵Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments, Volume I, Genesis--Deuteronomy*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 318-319.

⁶Bill Rogers, (Missionary residing in the Galilee, Israel: Serving with Unevangelized Fields Mission, 2014), personal correspondence.

The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt had lasted 430-years. This number is not critically doubtful, nor are the 430-years to be reduced to 215 by an arbitrary interpolation, such as we find in the LXX [Septuagint].⁷ (Emphasis ours.)

“Not critically doubtful” means that Hebrew biblical scholars find no substantial reason to question 430-years in Egypt. Dr. Keil acknowledges that lesser texts contain “arbitrary interpolations” such as the LXX which reduces this number by adding the interpolation “and Canaan,” but that all such interpolations should be ignored. They have no bearing on the Hebrew text. Dr. Keil wrote his commentary over a century ago.

Dr. Thomas Constable, Professor of Bible at Dallas Theological Seminary for 45 years and author of the vast web site, soniclight.com with over 8000 pages of expository notes covering all the books of the Old and New Testament writes this succinct statement:

The text is very clear that Israel was in Egypt 430-years “to the very day.”⁸ (Emphasis ours.)

So not only God Himself but also Moses, the greatest instrument of God in producing the Old Testament, testifies to many more than 215-years in Egypt.

C. The Witness of Stephen—Acts 7

God’s revelation in Genesis 15 was given to Abraham 4000 years ago. Moses’ record in Exodus was prepared 3400 years ago. Long after the words of God and Moses, the New Testament also spoke to the years in Egypt. The church’s first martyr, Stephen, before being stoned, declared:

⁶And God spoke to this effect—that his [Abraham’s] offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. ⁷“But I will judge the nation that they serve,” said God, “and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.” Acts 7:6-7.

Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,” (Acts 6:5) was citing God’s words to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14. The common elements agree—the subject is Abraham’s descendants who would be living as aliens in a land God had not promised them; they would be enslaved and this affliction would last 400 years. Stephen unwittingly disclosed that in 2000 years the belief of Jewry had not changed. After all that time they still understood God to be saying that the sojourn in Egypt would involve 400 years of affliction.

We have already seen how the traditional view feels compelled to find other explanations for God’s seemingly clear words to Abraham in Genesis 15. But reinterpreting Stephen’s words to mean something else would be very difficult. So, what does the traditional view do with Stephen’s testimony? They say Acts 7 is exactly what he said. Then they add that inerrancy only guarantees what a person says, not the accuracy of what is said. They say that this man whom Scripture says was full of the Holy Spirit misspoke. He was under pressure and/or was confused, so his words

⁷C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* [25 Volumes], *The Pentateuch, Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co, Original-late 1800’s. Reprint undated), 30.

⁸Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Exodus 2017 Edition*, Exodus 12:40-42, <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/ot/exodus/exodus.htm>

cannot necessarily be accepted as factual. On the contrary, Stephen must be added to the witnesses to a 430-year Egyptian sojourn. Now three consecutive witnesses in Scripture testify to the larger sojourn number.

D. The Witness of Paul—Galatians 3:17

While Stephen is the New Testament witness to the 400-year number God gave to Abraham, the Apostle Paul is the New Testament witness to the 430-year number given by Moses:

This is what I mean: the law, which came 430-years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. Galatians 3:17.

Without question this is the traditional view's favorite verse. "Here is absolute proof" they say, "that the 430-years began when God first appeared to Abraham and ended with the Exodus." They say God made the promises of Genesis 12:1-3 to Abraham when he was living in Haran. He immediately obeyed God's call and moved to Canaan. Then 430-years later the law was given at the time of the Exodus. Therefore the 430-years began when Abraham moved to Canaan and ended with the Exodus. The 430-years consisted of the years of sojourning in Canaan plus those in Egypt. Since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sojourned in Canaan 215-years, the remaining 215-years was the time of sojourning in Egypt.

The traditional view cites Paul's authority. Because he wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer and his books contain the heart of Christian doctrine, he outranks all other writers of Scripture. If there is some confusion between the Old Testament and the Apostle, one must prefer the Apostle. They suggest that possibly the Old Testament isn't clear, but the Apostle is perfectly clear and he is the final authority. Thus, the traditional view stands with the Apostle—the entire sojourn in Canaan and Egypt lasted 430-years, period, end of discussion.

When this view leads the discussion, it doesn't start with the very words of the LORD Himself in Genesis 15, but immediately starts with Galatians 3:17 and then reinterprets the words of Stephen, Moses and Jehovah to agree with Paul. But which is better: to start with the primary sources, Jehovah and Moses, then work to the secondary sources in the New Testament, or start with one secondary source, work on the other secondary source and then rework the primary sources?

Reconciling Paul with God, Moses and Stephen

Nevertheless, every knowing Christian takes very seriously what the Apostle wrote. What, then, are we to do with Paul's words? First we should observe that the subject of both God and of Moses was the number of years in Egypt; Stephen and Paul were addressing other subjects. Stephen's point was that Israel's leaders historically rejected God's messengers. So he specifically quoted God's words to Abraham as he reminded his hearers that God had raised up the nation to sovereignly accomplish His will even though His will was constantly resisted.

Paul, like Stephen, was not discussing how many years Israel sojourned in Egypt. He was showing that God's grace preceded God's Law. In his argument He cited a number every Jew would know—the 430-year number. It was repeated annually in the Passover celebration. Paul's point was that the Law did not finally make a way for man to have a right relationship with God. God dealt with the forefathers of Israel in grace from the beginning, long before the law. That grace is seen in the promises and covenant God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All this promise/covenant development happened 430-years before God gave Israel the Law.

If there was no standing before God until the Law, the promises were meaningless and all the Jewish people who lived before the giving of the law missed out on a right relationship with God. The 430-year number was a powerful argument for grace rather than law. Yet the Galatian believers were being told that they needed to keep the Mosaic Law to enjoy God's blessings. So, Paul argued that God established promises and a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then 430-years later He gave the Law. In this way, Paul agrees with God, Moses and Stephen in supporting 430-years in Egypt.

It should also be noted that since God's and Moses' core subject was the time in Egypt while Stephen's and Paul's core subjects were other matters, God and Moses should be preferred over Stephen and Paul. But since Stephen's words agree with God's words, only Paul can be viewed to be at odds with the other three. Rather than working on the words of the other three witnesses, many of which are not subject to another interpretation, shouldn't the first consideration be, "Can Paul's rather general words can be understood in another light?"

Proceeding on that basis—one insight would be Paul's reference to covenant. God did not give Abraham a covenant when He called him. The covenant was not made until Abraham had been in the land about ten years—shortly before Abraham took Hagar to give Sarah a child. If Paul were talking about the time from the Covenant to the Law, he should have said 420 years, not 430-years. On the other hand if the call came to Abraham when he was living in Ur, not when his father died in Haran, then the time from the call to the Law would have been greater than 430-years. (The next chapter shows that the call came in Ur, not Haran.)

But Paul is not speaking about Abraham's call. He is speaking about the promises which foreshadow Jesus Christ and the salvation God would provide through Him. These promises were amplified over time to Abraham, then to his son Isaac and finally to his grandson Jacob. They were sworn to by God Himself in the covenant of Genesis 15.

Joseph invited his father to move to Egypt where there was food because five years of famine remained. Jacob accepted. He took his household as far as Beersheba in Southern Israel, but then he hesitated. Previously it had not been God's will for him, his father or grandfather to leave the Promised Land. Jacob offered sacrifices. In a vision God gave him assurance to continue to Egypt.

¹So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." ³Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." Genesis 46:1-4.

In this passage God restates and amplifies the promises for the final time before the sojourn in Egypt. On this night the promise-making period that began with God's call to Abraham concluded; the next day Jacob moved his people to Egypt. So the promises were given, restated and expanded over more than 215-years. After the promises (this promise-making period) came the 430-year sojourn in Egypt. Following this came the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Thus sandwiched in between the development of the promises and the giving of the Law were those 430-years in Egypt. First came years of making the promises/covenant. Then came the 430-year sojourn in Egypt. Following that God gave Israel the Law at Mount Sinai. Thus, from the [end of the] promise and covenant making period to the law was precisely 430-years. Paul was not contradicting the words

of Moses but was actually confirming them. This interpretation fits perfectly with the testimonies of the other three witnesses.

So which is better? To make Paul's words of a very general nature to agree with the specific words of the other three witnesses or to make all the words of the three witnesses agree with one interpretation of when the 430-years in Paul's statement began? Logically, the first approach seems preferable. Thus, it is sound hermeneutics to understand that Paul's words agree with those of God, Moses and Stephen. The New Testament confirms the words of God in Stephen's message to the leaders of Israel and the words of Moses in Paul's argument to the Galatians. In contrast to the traditional 215-year view, the Bible gives no less than four passages to emphasize that it was 430-years that Israel sojourned in Egypt. All the statements and numbers in these four passages are harmonized without conflict. Inerrancy is honored.

Path to Violating Scripture

In retrospect, where did the practice of preferring numbers to words begin? As stated in the previous chapter, it all began when people, thinking they were taking the Bible literally, added the numbers in Levi's line and realized that Amram could not possibly be the immediate father of Aaron if Israel were in Egypt 430-years. They eventually concluded the 430-years referred to the entire time from Abraham's arrival in Canaan until the Exodus. That left just 215-years in Egypt. It was possible for Amram to be the immediate father of Aaron if Israel were in Egypt just 215-years. But unfortunately, the obvious meaning of many other words of Scripture would need to be reinterpreted in difficult and unnatural ways.

Why do all that to Scripture when it is clear that Hebrew genealogies can be as narrow as Adam begetting Cain or as broad as Jesus being the son of David? When one recognizes the nature and function of Hebrew genealogies, the record of Amram begetting Aaron is obviously a skipping of multiple generations. It is the broad sense of Amram being a forefather of Aaron, of Aaron coming from the loins of Amram. Once this is understood, the Scriptures become whole, no contradictions, no errors, no explaining away clear verses, no ignoring difficult verses.

Conclusion Number One: Israel Dwelt in Egypt 430-years

The debate over whether Israel dwelt in Egypt 430 or 215-years is not between those who accept the Bible and those who question the Bible. Both sides believe the Bible is inerrant and the final authority. Motive distinguishes the two positions. 430-years didn't work with an uninformed view of the genealogies, so long ago the traditional view found a way to cut the 430-years down to 215. Today, the typical Evangelical Christian has never heard the 215-year view taught or even talked about. When he reads about those who reduce the 430-year Egyptian sojourn, he is shocked. He asks, "How could anyone who claims to honor Scripture treat it with such callousness?"

He might even reexamine what Scripture actually says and find that four authors address the subject. The first author is no less than God Himself who promised to make Abraham a great nation but warned that the path to nationhood would involve exploitation and servitude. To give hope God revealed that difficult time would end in 400 years. Centuries later Moses wrote a description of the deliverance from Egypt and said that the deliverance came 430-years to the day after Israel went down to Egypt. While God's 400 years only spoke about the affliction time in Egypt, he would realize that Moses' 430-years referred to the entire time in Egypt which included a period at the beginning when Jacob's family was given good land and was not afflicted. Thus, the two periods,

400 and 430, were actually the overall period and then a period within the overall period. They were true periods, each supporting the other. Thus, no less than God and Moses attested to 430-years in Egypt.

He comes to the New Testament which states both the 400 year and 430-year numbers. Stephen rehearsed Israel's history and quoted God's statement about 400 years of affliction in a land belonging to others while Paul cited Moses 430-year statement as the time from the making of promises and covenant to the giving of the Mosaic Law during the first year of wilderness wandering. Thus he finds that both the Old and New Testaments attest to 430-years in Egypt. With his study completed, he concludes, "Certainly the testimony of these authorities should be adequate. If not, how can a Christian trust anything Scripture says?"

Motivation also tests the two interpretations. True motivation attempts to determine what the passages in question say. The 430 view is motivated by this desire while the 215 view is motivated by a desire to reduce the 430-years in some way. If there are compelling reasons to understand a passage in some other way than its normal meaning, it may be necessary to explore the subject passages in unconventional ways. But if not, such tampering must be avoided. The 215-year view has no such compelling reason. Four hundred thirty years is not harmful to Scripture. Instead, it is beneficial because it forces the interpreter to take the genealogies as they were meant to be taken. Finally, while four authors support the 430-year number, nowhere does a single author of Scripture suggest or imply Israel was in Egypt only 215-years.

While trying to avoid being dogmatic, we are stating what appears to most to be obvious. It appears that beyond question Israel's sojourn in Egypt lasted 430-years. To say otherwise is to teach something the Scripture simply never says and to deny what the Scripture says multiple times. Two hundred fifteen years dishonors Scripture. It is not the way that inerrancy treats Scripture. Once a person has a clear understanding of the four witnesses' testimonies, a 430-year sojourn in Egypt can no longer be disputed.

This 430-year number is like a brick wall. All those who throw themselves against it only injure themselves while the wall stands. Hopefully they will give glory to God who has revealed clearly a 430-year sojourn in Egypt and abandon this longstanding distraction.

A 430-year Egyptian sojourn would seemingly push Ussher's date for the Flood back 215-years, from 2348 BC to 2563 BC (in truth it doesn't because of other errors). This will make the historians and archaeologists a little happier since they find much human activity during that span. However, if the people who emphasize numbers over words in Scripture have made other errors in their calculations, the 2563 BC number will need further correcting.

Conclusion Number Two: Genealogies May be Abbreviated

Chapter one showed that a 430-year sojourn in Egypt would require understanding that the Levi-Aaron line of Exodus chapter six was abbreviated. This chapter shows that beyond doubt Israel did sojourn in Egypt 430-years. These two facts raise two alternatives: either the Bible is in error at this point or the Levi-Aaron genealogy is abbreviated. The first alternative is both unacceptable and unnecessary. Therefore, the only other alternative must be accepted: their genealogy is selective rather than comprehensive.

Such a conclusion is a stumbling block to some. But it need not be. When they examine the many ways Scripture uses genealogies, they will realize that Exodus six acceptably and accurately

uses Hebrew genealogies. This insight will be a momentous advance for those who cherish Scripture as God-breathed.

Looking Ahead

God, Moses, Stephen, Paul—four witnesses. Are four enough? In Deuteronomy 17:6 the very life of a person rested in the hands of just two or three witnesses. If someone turned to idolatry God said to put them to death on the evidence of two or three witnesses. This principle regarding the required number of witnesses to establish a fact carried through to the New Testament church. Paul said that two or three witnesses were necessary to establish a charge against an elder (I Timothy 5:19). The testimony of four witnesses more than meets the biblical requirement for establishing the truth.

Having established by four witnesses that Israel dwelt in Egypt 430-years and therefore the Levi-Aaron genealogy of Exodus six is abbreviated, our initial goal has been reached. While we could end here, some may still believe Abraham's call came in Haran and therefore three witness for 430-years while one witnesses for 215-years. We will next examine extensive evidence for that call coming in Ur, not Haran, leaving all four witnesses solidly in the 430-year Egyptian sojourn camp. Then we will take a careful look at Jacob's life to correct details which have also been altered to fit the numbers over words approach. In effect this book provides a fresh look at some of the key moments in the lives of Abraham and Jacob, a prize for those wanting to correct mistaken notions regarding aspects of their lives.

Once these interpretations are addressed, we can get to the heart of this paper, a look at the nature and function of Hebrew genealogies. Chapter five addresses how family relationship words can be used in both narrow and broad senses; chapter six gives numerous examples of condensed genealogies and chapter seven provides many evidences for Shem's line (Genesis 11) being condensed. And so it goes. Hold on to your hats. We have just begun.

Chapter Three

Abraham's Witness to a 430-Year Egyptian Sojourn

The previous chapter observed that of the four witnesses only the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:17 can reasonably be made to support a 215-year Egyptian sojourn. For his words to have this meaning, God's call had to come when Abraham was living in Haran, a position that is fatally flawed. Such an idea comes both from misinterpreting the Scriptural record of certain events and oversimplifying how God was preparing Abraham for a life of faith. Yet the subject is complex and is not settled with a few simple proof texts.

This chapter begins by noting the many contributions to Abraham's total life story in those first 75 years overlooked by Ussher and his followers. In the process most readers will gain an entirely new appreciation for this one whom God used to found the Jewish people and birth our Savior. Those years were not unlike the early years of Moses, Paul, Joseph and David whose stops and starts laid groundworks for their future ministries. Understanding these puts flesh on the bones of Abraham's life of growing faith. Although sinning and doubting along the way, this man who worshipped idols in Ur with his kindred, (Joshua 24:2) came to build altars to the one and only true God in Haran so that when he arrived in Canaan his first response was to build an altar (Genesis 12:7-8). How did that happen?

When the call came in Ur, even Abraham's idolatrous father must have been awed by his son's claims that if he followed the true God's leading, God would make of him a great nation and in him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3). Apparently once Terah realized that he could not talk his son out of this insane plan to walk away from his life in Ur, he began to wonder if maybe God did appear to him after all. Terah had taken delight in his son's impressive achievements in Ur and had the strongest confidence in this only son still in his household. In the end, with his final years looming, his only option was to accompany his son although some of this remains a mystery. We can only surmise but history points to difficult times ahead for Ur. God often uses circumstances in His leading. Perhaps in this case the winds of war were already in the air. Whew, away from that!

Along the journey the family most likely questioned Abraham: what next? God had said "to go to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). Hebrews 11:8 concurs:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

In a way not explained by Scripture God was showing Abraham where to go just as He had said. At each fork somehow God led him. As they journeyed from Ur Abraham confidently told his party whether to go left, right or straight ahead. Because this went on for nearly two months Abraham's party must have felt better and better about the move with each passing day. Then suddenly about 700 miles from Ur Abraham didn't know which way to go. Whatever method God used to lead him stopped, vanished, disappeared into thin air. So there they waited and waited. Not a sign, not a hint from God. Finally, after some days, heavy with disappointment, they began to discuss what went wrong. Abraham knew—while he had separated from his country and relatives, he had not separated from his father's idolatrous household. Now what?

The decision was made to settle in Haran. Scripture doesn't tell how far Haran was from where the leading stopped but it does report that "when they came to Haran, they settled there" (Genesis

11:31) even though they eventually learned that the destination was Canaan. After all this divine leading and the visitation that triggered it, Abraham would never be the same. Now he knew there was a great difference between the idolatrous gods of Ur and the true God who spoke to him in Ur and led him as far as Haran. He must know this true God. Information was available to those so motivated and Abraham began to gather that information and seek this God. With the passing of time he began to worship this true God. He began to build altars as those before him who worshipped the true God had done.

For the next 10 or 15 years Abraham got to know the true God better and better and worshiped at the altar more and more frequently. This in itself is remarkable but another remarkable thing began to happen. The members of Terah's household began joining Abraham at the altar. Eventually, apparently Terah's entire household worshiped at the altar. He was in his final days and now totally dependent on his son. Very possibly before the end he also joined with the others at Abraham's altar. Oh, how marvelous was the grace of God in allowing this family situation to play out in Haran over those years.

The proof for all this is the large evidence of faith demonstrated by Abraham's household once they reached Canaan—immediately worshipping at altars upon arrival, ascribing faith to Lot (II Peter 2:7), choosing for Hebron and the suicidal mission of rescuing Lot from the invasion of the Mesopotamian armies.

Abraham's Place in the Birth Order of Terah's Sons

Piecing together those 75 years before the move to Canaan requires solving the issue of birth order of Terah's three sons. Stephen said that Abraham moved to Canaan after Terah died (Acts 7:4). He died at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:32). Since Abraham arrived in Canaan at the age of 75 (Genesis 12:4), he was born when Terah was 130 years old ($205-75=130$). Because Terah began fathering his three sons when he was 70, Abraham had a brother who was 60 years his senior ($130-70=60$).

But Abraham is generally considered the oldest son. Twice Scripture names Terah's three sons and in both cases the order is Abraham, Nahor and Haran (Genesis 11:26, 27). People assume the sons are named in the order of their birth. While this is the normal practice of Scripture, sometimes it names sons in the order of their importance or impact in the plan of God. Such is the case here. Abraham would touch the entire world. Nahor would supply wives to Abraham's descendants. Haran died in relative obscurity. As to why the three brothers were born over a period of 60 years, Terah apparently had a fertility problem. This explanation seems reasonable because his daughter Sarah was barren, his granddaughter Rebekah also was barren and even his great-granddaughter Rachel was barren.

As to the ages of Abraham's two brothers, Nahor and Haran, Scripture provides important hints to work with. First, Nahor married Haran's daughter Milcah. Second, Haran's name suggests Terah enjoyed business success at the trade route town by that name before moving to Ur. Third, Haran died before Abraham left Ur. These three details point to Haran being older than Nahor. When was Nahor born? He had eight sons by Haran's daughter and was no longer living with his father when God called Abraham. Further Abraham was attached to Lot, the son of Haran, not his brother Nahor. These details indicate Nahor would have been 30 or 40 years older than Abraham. Now a possible picture emerges: Haran was born when Terah was 70. Nahor was born 20-40 years later. Abraham was the youngest brother, born 60 years after Haran.

More details emerge. Abraham married his father's daughter by a second wife. Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham. They were married long enough in Ur to discover that unlike her sister-in-law, she was barren. This seems to indicate that Abraham lived many adult years in Ur. The age for adulthood was 25 at the time. Possibly Abraham married Sarah once she reached that age. Then, 25-30 years of marriage would be adequate to realize that Sarah could not have children and would place the call of God when Abraham was 60 or 65. If so, Haran died by the age of 130 or 135 and Terah was 190 or 195. Living 35-40 adult years in Ur allowed Abraham to learn and achieve much and drink deeply from Ur's culture while 10-15 years of mature adult life in Haran would have been enough time to become wealthy both materially and spiritually.

Nephew Older Than Uncle

With Lot's father 60 years older than Abraham and Lot's sister marrying Abraham's other brother, Lot himself must have been some years older than Abraham. Does this fit the context? Actually, Lot being older than Abraham makes better sense of what Scripture reveals of their relationship. One gets the impression that Abraham was more attached to Lot than Lot was to Abraham which would be expected if Lot were older than Abraham.

Abraham's real older brother, Nahor, was preoccupied with a growing family. Meanwhile Lot continued to live in the household of his grandfather. So Lot, not Nahor, became the "big brother" figure in Abraham's life. This bonding would be a new explanation for why Abraham was so loyal to him and would also explain why Abraham offered Lot first choice of the land when they separated (Genesis 13). It would further explain how Lot could go his separate way and seek out Sodom rather than staying close to Abraham. He thought for himself. He had his own views. He did what he pleased. In summary, if Lot were the elder, he would have been something of a big brother in Abraham's childhood and this early relationship colored Abraham's relationship with him in adulthood.

As to Terah, he was becoming infirm and dependent on others. His oldest son was dead and the other was living on his own. Abraham was the only son left to care for him when God's call came. As it played out, this youngest son and his daughter cared for Terah until his death. These also became the obvious heirs to Terah's household along with Lot who must have received an inheritance in place of his father who was the oldest son. This would also explain where Lot got the vast herds that forced him and Abraham to separate shortly after arriving in Canaan.

Life in Ur

Of all the cities on the face of the earth in which to live in Abraham's day, Ur would have won top honors. It was the Paris of its time, even more advanced than any city in Egypt, leading in wealth, education, security, comfort and pleasure. Standing at the head of the Persian Gulf, it controlled the mouth of the Euphrates. Thousands of tablets have been recovered from the site that reflect this period. Numerous royal graves were found unrobbed and filled with historical artifacts. The temple complex housed a school. Sir Leonard Woolley excavated the levels of Ur from 1922-1934 and learned from student work tablets the extensive knowledge taught its youth, even high school level math. Consequently, the free population was both intelligent and well educated. The monarchy and the worship of the moon god were unifying institutions.

Archaeologists report that most of Ur's population consisted of servants/slaves. If 90% were not completely free and the country's total population numbered 250,000, then only 25,000 were

actual citizens. Abraham's kin could have numbered in the hundreds and wielded a significant influence within the free population. About Abraham's time Ur had a powerful and successful army. At one point it was the dominant force in Mesopotamia, establishing hegemony all the way up the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. Free citizens made up the higher echelons. If Abraham had followed a military career, he would have studied military science and worked up to a significant command position. Whether or not the military was his career, his military savvy shines in the following event.

The Campaign of Four Mesopotamian Armies

In an astonishing military victory Abraham defeated a coalition of four Mesopotamian armies some nine years after he arrived in Canaan. After serving the King of Elam 12 years the population center where Lot moved rebelled. Scripture is clear about the military force that retaliated (Genesis 14:1-16)—its size, objective and success. The king, Chedorlaomer, brought his army from Elam, an area to the east of Lower Mesopotamia, today's southwestern Iran. These people were later called Persians. After Abraham followed God to Haran, Chedorlaomer's country defeated Ur and destroyed the city. This is well-known in secular history. In short order Elam extended its governance all the way to the Sodom-Gomorra region. Now its present ruler came with three allies—Amraphel king of Shinar (Babylon), Arioch king of Ellasar (Larsa, longtime rival of Ur) and Tidal, king of Nations (apparently from Upper Mesopotamia).

These four kings controlled an enormous area, from Upper Mesopotamia to well beyond Lower Mesopotamia, 500 to 1500 miles distant from Sodom. One commentator suggested this force could have numbered 100,000 soldiers. Their columns stretched for miles. As they left the Euphrates and marched southwest towards Sodom, raiders from the badlands to the east fell upon their columns and supply lines. Distracted from their original mission they began fighting people group after people group to the east of their route (Genesis 14:5). Eventually they fought all the way to Eilat at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba (Genesis 14:6).

Turning west they encountered and defeated the desert people that occupied the lands south of Sodom (Genesis 14:7). Finally, they reached their objective, attacking the Sodomites but apparently in a surprise maneuver only hinted at in Scripture. The defenders expected the enemy to approach from the south but seem to have been pinned against the bitumen pits. This would point to an unexpected and unexplained backdoor route descending the hills to the west and only lightly guarded by the defenders. In this battle the consortium utterly crushed the five kings that governed the heavily populated Sodom-Gomorra civilization bowl. With no opposition remaining, the victors began the long march home loaded with plunder and the population whom they would sell into slavery. Abraham's "big brother" was headed for a miserable future.

Abraham's Private Army

An escapee brought the bad news to Abraham who immediately gathered his forces to free Lot. The odds at this point appeared to be 100 to 1. This was certain suicide, unless Abraham was a military genius. Scripture suggests as much, relating that Abraham "led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them." (Genesis 14:14). Abraham had his own private army.

Until now Scripture had said nothing about Abraham training his servants for combat. From what happens in the battle one must conclude that they had military skills equal to the invaders who were professional soldiers, battle hardened after an unexpectedly difficult possibly year-and-a-

half long campaign. With Abraham about 84 years old the youngest of his fighters would have been born when Abraham was 64 years old or 11 years before he left Haran for Canaan. The fact that they were born in his house indicates he began their training at an early age and that this practice had been going on for many years.

What did these trained fighters look like? As a general over his army Abraham trained them to handle lethal weapons and kill. His forces knew how to work together to overcome far superior forces. They were cunning, strong and had tremendous endurance. Where could Abraham possibly have gained this military knowledge? You guessed it—in Ur. During his early years in Ur its army was having great success. Now he had an army like Ur's in his very own household. His men could face the best from Mesopotamia. Would it be too much to say Abraham's 318 were among the best soldiers alive in their day?

Abraham's Amorite Confederates

Even more remarkable, Abraham had Amorite confederates who joined this suicidal venture. Why? They had to have confidence in Abraham's knowledge of warfare. This explains another mystery. Why would the Amorites share their land with Abraham in the first place? Shortly after arriving in Canaan the range land proved insufficient for Abraham's and Lot's cattle so they separated. Lot set his tent towards Sodom while Abraham moved to Hebron. What Scripture doesn't explain is that Hebron was the highest ground in Israel, even higher than Jerusalem which is a half mile above sea level. It was one of the most out of the way and defensible locations Abraham could choose. Furthermore, it had limited access. It was at a dead end. Abraham literally took the high ground. But it was occupied by Amorites. So while this act displays great military savvy, how would the Amorites ever be persuaded to share their land with him?

First, Abraham proved to be a diplomat and a business man. Somehow, he showed them that his presence would be to their advantage. Second, he must have shared his military experiences from Ur. The Amorites had never heard such things. They were impressed. His fighters and the Amorite fighters would have contests. Abraham's were superior. Abraham began telling them how he trained his fighters. They formed a mutual defense alliance. Over a five or six year period the Amorites greatly increased their military skills and came to have unflagging confidence in Abraham.

A Military Victory for the Books

Now Lot and his family were prisoners. Abraham loved his nephew and saw his interest in the true God ("righteous Lot" II Peter 2:7). But what chance did Abraham have against the ocean of invaders? Again, his knowledge of warfare. He would know that once the invader's campaign was successful, the kings and most of their soldiers would head for home at top speed. At a much slower pace a small but adequate force would return with the vast plunder and the many slaves. Possibly only 5,000 to 10,000 soldiers remained, but still the odds were five or ten to one.

But Abraham had one more ace up his sleeve. He knew that discipline would be almost non-existent now that the army had vanquished all opposition. The coalition had been fighting for over a year. This was a time to celebrate and those celebrations typically came in the form of nightly drunken orgies at the expense of the female prisoners. Apparently even nighttime reconnaissance patrols were neglected. From his days in Ur Abraham understood the various plans for night watches, passwords, trumpet signals, command structure, and camp layout. He also knew the typical contingency plans for night attacks. In other words, he knew the military science of Southern

Mesopotamia. Further, he and senior members of his household knew the various languages of Mesopotamia and could use those languages to get inside the enemy's defenses. Further yet, he had grazed his flocks for years through the entire area and knew every trail like the back of his hand. Undoubtedly he sent scouts ahead to gather intelligence. Here in abbreviated fashion is the scriptural account:

And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Genesis 14:15.

Abraham's plan was to strike in a night attack from multiple directions. This plan employed a major strategy of military science—surprise. But it also violated two principles—attacking at night and dividing one's force against a superior force. It was very, very risky. There would be either great reward or great loss. Abraham was the overall commander with three Amorite bands taking orders from him. Possibly his force numbered 600-700. Abraham and senior officers had to have gone over the plan in great detail. They caught up with the invaders where the city of Dan would later be established on the northern boundary of Israel about 110 air miles north of Hebron. The forced march could hardly have been accomplished in four exhausting days. Along the way they encountered injured and dead prisoners and a trail of their discarded possessions. By the time they reached Dan, though exhausted, they were highly motivated.

Abraham's night attack was a complete success. He could have found wounded or dead soldiers along the way and taken their uniforms to dress some of his troops to infiltrate their lines. Perhaps he impersonated a commander of the invaders and gave guards contradictory orders, using his mastery of the languages of Lower Mesopotamia and his intimate knowledge of their military operations. Whatever strategy he used, he utterly surprised and routed the invaders. He drove the fleeing confederation fifty miles, to a place called Hobah somewhere north of Damascus. He knew that if the army regrouped and counterattacked it would all be over for him and his allies. No enemy soldier could be spared; it was either complete victory or eventual disaster. Even one escapee could provide the information needed for a retaliatory strike the next year.

HB has Col. R. B. Thieme Jr. to thank for many of the above insights. Col. Thieme's military genius was followed by international Bible teaching from studying the original languages of Scripture. Thieme served his country in World War II, becoming the youngest man ever, up to that point, to make full colonel in the US Army. After the war he graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1950 (Th.M.) with the intention of entering the DTS Hebrew doctoral program in the Fall. That summer found him as the interim pulpit supply at Berachah Church in Houston Texas where he was made pastor and served that church until 2004, maintaining a unique schedule of seven hours of Bible teaching at his church weekly. Tapes of those studies circled the globe.

Abraham's Best Defense

The next spring when armies go to war found Abraham knotted up in fear. This would be the time when the Mesopotamians would return to wreak vengeance on him and his neighbors. Where does this idea come from? The very next chapter records how God appeared to him in a vision and said, "Fear not, Abram. I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." (Genesis 15:1). Abraham had dared to strike the flower of Mesopotamia. Now he feared the worst. But he did not have to fear because the God of creation would be his shield. Further, apparently he was having second thoughts about having lifted up his hand "to the LORD God Most High, Possessor [Creator] of heaven and earth, ...not to take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that [belonged to Sodom] lest

[the king of Sodom] should say, 'I have made Abram rich'" Genesis 14:22-23. Had that been the right thing to do? Yes, because for that stand God promised that his reward would be **very** great.

75 Years of Preparation in Ur and Haran (see also Appendix 3.4)

Abraham's military skills point to many adult years in Ur, not the sleepy village of Urfa 25 miles northwest of Haran while his altars point to years of growing closer to the LORD in Haran. During the Haran years Terah's influence waned while Abraham's influence grew. The vast numbers of Abraham's cattle when he separated from Lot and the 318 shepherd/warriors born in his house indicate that Abraham did not separate from his father's household but rather influenced his father's household to worship the God who led him to Canaan.

Genesis 14 provides a remarkable fit of Scripture and secular history with regard to Abraham's early years. It records that the Sodom-Gomorraha confederation had paid tribute to the king of Elam for 12 years. When they did not pay in the 13th, the war machine from Mesopotamia led by Elam came to teach them a lesson in the 14th year. The campaign apparently lasted the better part of two years. Secular history records that Ur reached its zenith during the 97 golden-year rule of the five kings of the Third Dynasty. It is an historical fact that its end came suddenly at the hands of Elam. Elam broke Ur's control of the lower Euphrates in a military invasion that overwhelmed the capital itself, burned its palace and enslaved its population. In a strange and as yet not understood alliance with other Mesopotamian powers only specifically reported in Scripture to date, Elam extended its control all the way to Sodom and Gomorraha. Had Abraham not left Ur in obedience to God, he would have lost his freedom and wealth if not his life.

The timeline looks like this: Scripture clearly indicates the passing of 14 years, from the first year in which the pentapolis paid tribute to Elam until Elam and its allies arrived to punish them for not paying in the 13th. The time needed to forge alliances and establish control from Ur up the Euphrates and then down the Jordan Valley to the five cities is unknown. This could have been accomplished in as little as a year or two. Thus, an estimated minimum of 16 years passed from the fall of Ur to the punishment dealt the five cities.

Sometime before the fall of Ur, God called Abraham. Upon responding to the call, he lived an unknown number of years in Haran. Then God led him from Haran to Canaan and when Elam arrived to punish the rebels Abraham had been in Canaan approximately nine years. This is known because of the next sequence of events in Abraham's life: God's appearance in a vision and the blood covenant the next spring, the birth of Ishmael a year later and the birth of Isaac when Abraham was 100 and Ishmael was 14. Since Abraham was 75 when he arrived in Canaan, he would be 84 when the invaders defeated Sodom and enslaved Lot.

Secular history gives various ranges of dates for the glorious years of the Third Dynasty of Ur. The ancient cuneiform documents are consistent in their records of the names of the five kings of the Third Dynasty, the number of years each reigned and the major achievements of each. It was the second of five that actually raised Ur to dominance. However, secular history has been unable to anchor their 97-year total reign to a fixed time. Instead, it offers various ranges of dates, from early, to moderate, to late, etc. The earliest and latest dates differ by as much as 155 years. The earliest range ends at 2150 BC and the latest ends at 1995 BC. Abraham was 75 at 2091 so he fits well into the secular range of dates.

Two entire chapters of the Bible come out of Elam's rise (Genesis 14 and 15). Is that enough to set us thinking that maybe Abraham was an important figure in Ur? Could it be that at the time of

God's call, Abraham was well into the politics or military of Ur and did not like the way negotiations were going between his country and Elam? Could it be that due to the growing problems facing Ur's leaders, he was not so certain about Ur's future after all? Could it be that when God called, for the first time in his life he might actually consider leaving Ur? We can only wonder but we do know that God's timing is perfect.

Here is another thought to chew on: Elam's having conquered the Jordan Valley just years before Abraham arrived in Canaan would explain why he could move about so freely. The long established powers of the land had been shaken to their roots and were busy recovering and rebuilding after Elam swept through so they paid little attention to this man and his many flocks and shepherds. This unusual freedom also vouches for our dates.

Finally, in an entirely different vein, Elam only dominated Southern Mesopotamia for a short time. Then in some as yet unexplained way the alliance or one of its members turned on Elam and its power was broken in that region until the rise of the Persian Empire 1500 years later. A 215-year sojourn in Egypt would place the birth of Abraham long after Elam's dominance in Mesopotamia and Sodom. If that were the case, Genesis 14 would be fiction. Further, rivals of Ur governed that city-state once Elam's control had been broken. So whether it was Elam or Ur's rivals, such a time would not have been conducive to Terah and his relatives thriving in Ur. If his kinsmen survived at all, it would have been because they fled the country. If they returned, they would have been involved in picking up the pieces and living under the control of various other powers and that is not how secular sources picture the Ur of Abraham's day.

Scriptural Support that Abraham's Call Came in Ur

We are convinced that God's call came to Abraham in Ur, not Haran, and that he spent a number of years in Haran before God led him the rest of the way to Canaan. But hyper literalists who bend all Scripture to the numbers in Shem's genealogy reject this position. To support their 215-year Egyptian sojourn view, they interpret the Apostle Paul's words in Galatians 3 to mean that God called Abraham in Haran, not Ur and that he immediately followed God to Canaan. Then 430-years later God gave Israel the Law on Mount Sinai immediately following the Exodus. They interpret the details of Abraham's life to fit this view. Book after book repeats this idea. The Apostle is their only hope even though they misinterpret his argument. When they deal with the four witnesses of chapter 2, they always start with Paul.

Nevertheless, what saith the LORD? In the first half of this chapter we showed that such a view is ruled out by the events in Abraham's life. The rest of the chapter will look at specific statements of Scripture. The information will be organized around eight Old Testament passages, one New Testament passage and an argument from silence. These ten arguments show beyond question the error of a Haran call and the 215-year sojourn behind it.

Stephen Says "Ur"

In the days following the resurrection of Christ, Stephen was full of grace and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people. Those who disputed with him could not withstand the wisdom and the **Spirit** with which he spoke, so they found people who falsely charged that Stephen spoke blasphemous words against Moses and God (Acts 6:8-11). This caused a disturbance that landed Stephen before the council where additional false charges were made. Stephen defended himself by reciting major events in the history of Israel, especially showing how the nation had

established a pattern of rejecting God's messengers, last of all, the Messiah. Speaking by the Holy Spirit, he began with Jewish history that none could deny:

²Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³and said to him, "Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you." ⁴Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land. Acts 7:2-4.

Stephen said exactly what this book maintains are the facts and which those who add only numbers deny. His words are clear. They can't be interpreted to mean something else. So, in this case the numerologists don't deny or put a spin on what he said. Rather they say he made a slip of the tongue; what he said was erroneous. They say that inerrancy only guarantees that Stephen said these words, not that he had his facts straight. They say maybe he was under pressure and was rattled or maybe he was a young believer and didn't have a good grasp of the Old Testament. Somehow, Stephen misstated. Their numbers supplant words.

It is true that inerrancy assures us of what someone said, even when they speak error. For instance, God had told Adam he would die if he ate fruit from a certain tree. Then the serpent said to Eve that she would not die if she ate from that tree (Genesis 3:4). Scripture accurately reported that the serpent said this even though what he said was untrue.

This interpretative tool is useful, but used wrongly is dangerous. It can be used against any of the people in Scripture that said something the critic disagrees with. There must be strong evidence that the speaker spoke in error. Where is this evidence? Their only evidence is that it conflicts with their interpretation of what Paul said in Galatians three. So they say Paul was right; Stephen was wrong. We suggest both Stephen and Paul were right. When Paul's words are correctly understood, his words will agree completely with the words of Stephen. Invoking this extraordinary use of the principle of inerrancy is incredulous, strained. After all, Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit:

⁵Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. ⁸Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ¹⁰They could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Acts 6:5, 8, 10.

Recognizing that Stephen did speak accurately, others find a different interpretation of Acts 7:4 in order to maintain Abraham was the firstborn of Terah's sons. They observe that three personalities are found in verses 2-4: God, Terah and Abraham. While verse four speaks of "his father," it uses the personal pronoun four times. They say "he removed him" refers to Abraham removing his father Terah, not God removing Abraham. So rather than God leading Abraham on to Canaan after Terah died, this view says that sixty years after Abraham arrived in Canaan, his father died. Abraham then returned to Haran and brought his father's body to Canaan for burial. They emphasize that this is consistent with the Hebrew mindset of the importance of where one was buried and are adamant about this interpretation.

Such an explanation is strained and unnecessary. Why would Stephen begin his address with where Abraham's father was buried rather than that God Himself led the founder of the Jewish race to Canaan? This bad explanation demonstrates just how far the numbers over words folks will go to uphold their chronology from Shem to Abraham. They seem to suffer from over-literalism. This chapter previously showed another example of over-literalism. When Scripture says that at the age

of 70 Terah fathered three sons, Abraham, Nahor and Haran, it was not implying that they were triplets or that this was their birth order. Rather, Scripture was naming them in the order of their importance. Abraham was the youngest, not the oldest.

Now for the eight Old Testament passages that indicate the call came in Ur. Many times a single statement in the Bible is used to establish a biblical truth. Two or three witnesses established a truth in a Jewish court of law. Including the silence of Scripture, we find ten to establish that Ur was the country God called Abraham to leave.

Eight Old Testament Scriptures Argue for “Ur”

1. **Genesis 15:7.** God Himself said He brought Abraham out from Ur. If the call had come in Haran, God would have said “I am the LORD who brought you out of Haran.”

And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” Genesis 15:7.

2. **Genesis 12:1.** In the call God told Abraham to separate from his father’s household. That would make sense if the call came in Ur because his father had compromised with the idolatry of that city and God wanted to get Abraham away from his father’s influence. But if the call came in Haran after his father died, there would be no father with his idolatry to separate from. Death would have done the job. Further, by the time his father died, his father’s household had turned from the idolatry of Ur and was worshiping at Abraham’s altar in Haran. In the end Abraham and Lot inherited Terah’s household.

3. **Genesis 11:31.** At God’s prompting the journey began in Ur, not Haran.

Terah took Abram [Abraham] his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai [Sarah] his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.

This verse was written in retrospect. It clearly says they departed from Ur, not Haran, to go to Canaan. While Terah was the patriarch and therefore nominally in charge, his son Abraham was determined to obey God and go to a land God would show him, so in effect, Terah was accompanying his son, not leading his son.

4. **Genesis 11:28** says that “Haran [Terah’s oldest son] died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans.” Terah’s kindred which we would call relatives lived in Ur, not Haran. Since one of the conditions of God’s call to Abraham was to leave his kindred, the call must have come where Abraham’s kindred lived—Ur.

5. **Genesis 11:27-25:11.** Argument from the organization of Genesis. The 215-year view notes that the death of Terah is recorded in Genesis 11 while the call is recorded in Genesis 12. They conclude that the call was issued after Terah’s death. When they read “Now the LORD said to Abram...,” they understand it to be saying, “**Then** the LORD said to Abram...” Genesis 12:1. But, are these events sequential? Does the fact that the record of the call follows the notice of Terah’s death prove God issued the call after Terah’s death? Not at all.

Genesis arranges biographical material in logical groupings. First one life or episode is stated, then another life or episode is presented. Terah’s life is presented in Genesis 11:27-32. Abraham’s life follows in Genesis 12-25:11. This is followed by Ishmael’s in Genesis 25:12-18, Isaac’s in Genesis 25:19-26:35, Jacob’s in 27-35, Esau’s in 36, then Joseph’s and so on. What could be more important

in the Abraham section than his call? Thus, the Abraham chapters begin with his call. The fact that Abraham's call is recorded following the end of the section on Terah says nothing about when it was issued.

6. **Nehemiah 9:7-8.** Other Old Testament books refer to Abraham's country as Ur, not Haran. Abraham was told to leave his country. Since his country was Ur, the call came when he was living there.

⁷You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. ⁸You found his heart faithful before you and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite....

Nehemiah ranks high among pious Old Testament Jews in prominent places. He mourned and wept with fasting and prayers for days when he heard that the walls of Jerusalem had not been repaired. Then when he was performing his task of setting wine before the emperor of the Persian Empire, Artaxerxes, the king noticed his sadness. The story came out and Nehemiah was allowed to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. He organized those who had returned to Jerusalem and in the face of much opposition, the walls were rebuilt in just 52 days. Following this was a time of intense spiritual renewal. He records the Levites praying the words quoted above. They acknowledged that God had brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans. For fifteen hundred years the descendants of Abraham had understood that God first called Abraham in Ur and later in Canaan made a covenant with him to give his descendants that land. God's bringing was from Ur, not from Haran.

7-8. **Joshua 24:2-3.** Two arguments come from these and other verses:

²Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Long ago your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, and they served other gods. ³Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many..." Joshua 24:2-3.

Joshua specifically states that the fathers of Israel, Terah, Abraham and Nahor, practiced idolatry ("served other gods") before God took Abraham from where they lived "beyond the Euphrates" to Canaan. Their idolatry was real. They did this in Ur. God broke Abraham's idolatrous ways by separating him from the powerful idolatrous culture of Ur. In Haran Abraham established the worship of the true God in Terah's household. This worship continued during the lifetime of Isaac and was the faith Jacob was raised in. On the other hand, Nahor followed Terah and Abraham to the general area around Haran but kept his idols. His grandson still held to them when Jacob came to live with him. Abraham's break with idolatry began when he moved from Ur, not from Haran. Therefore, the call came in Ur, not Haran.

Joshua's use of the phrase "beyond the Euphrates" also points to the call coming in Ur, not Haran. Altogether this phrase or similar words occur a dozen times more in Ezra and Nehemiah. The Euphrates is 1000 miles long. It begins near the mountains of Armenia, flows somewhat west, curves south and finally heads southeast to empty into the Persian Gulf. Haran is across the Euphrates River but the expression is mostly used for more than simply crossing the river. It is like a sweep of the hand to indicate a great distance. In most of its occurrences this phrase refers to Lower Mesopotamia. Thus, it also confirms that the call came in Ur.

9. While Scripture specifically says the call came in Ur as seen in the many references above, nowhere in the Old or New Testaments does it say or even hint that the call came in Haran.

Arguments from silence in themselves do not establish a truth of Scripture. But when combined with positive declarative statements, they do add validity to the concept under consideration.

In summary, the conditions of Abraham's call, to leave country, kindred, family and go to a land God would show him could only apply to the time when Abraham lived in Ur. Why is that so important? Abraham had to replace the idolatry that gripped Ur with faith in the one true God. Was he ready for that? He was ready to leave his kindred and Ur, but leaving his father's household was a road block. Refusing to stay behind they also would need to leave their idol worship and that was not easily done. So Haran became an important first step. It cannot be dismissed which the call coming in Haran does. Hebrews 11 makes it clear that by faith Abraham obeyed, going out to an unknown destination but ultimately expecting a city with better foundations, one whose builder and maker is God. Exactly what he left is very important: the world with all its idols, wealth and glamor. That was Ur, not Haran.

Brief Chronology of Abraham --- Focusing on Elam's Defeat of Ur

Overview: Based on 1876 BC arrival in Egypt (Dates BC):

- 2006 – Birth of Jacob
- 2066 – Birth of Isaac
- 2166 – Birth of Abraham

Firm (f) and estimated (e) dates for events in Abraham's early years:

- 2166f – Birth of Abraham in the country of Ur, Mesopotamia
- 2156f – Birth of Sarah
- 2131e – Abraham marries Sarah when she turns 25; he is 35
- 2111e – 2106e – No children after 20-25 years of marriage; Sarah is obviously barren
- 2111e – 2106e – God calls Abraham to leave his country;
 - Abraham accompanied by his father's household follows God's leading
 - Abraham and Sarah with their father's household settle in Haran

2100e – Approximate year that Elam crushes Ur

- 2097e - Elam puts the Jordan Valley pentapolis under tribute
- 2091f – Terah dies; Abraham is 75; God leads him from Haran to Canaan
- 2082e – Mesopotamian armies defeat Jordan Valley pentapolis; Abraham rescues Lot
- 2081f – God's promises and prophecy to Abraham in Genesis 15
- 2080f – Birth of Ishmael
- 2066f – Birth of Isaac (when Abraham is 100 and Ishmael is 14)

Chapter Four

Jacob's Life Requires a 430-Year Egyptian Sojourn

The record of Jacob's life is a moving account of divine intervention and growing faith. It also supports a 430-year Egyptian sojourn. To make it read otherwise those who elevate numbers over words reinterpret events in his life to make them support their 215-year, no-abbreviated-genealogies view. In order to see that his life does support 430-years, a careful, in-depth look at the events in his life after the pattern of chapter three is necessary.

When Jacob's father turned 40, Abraham secured a bride for him (Genesis 25:21). After twenty years of barrenness Isaac prayed for her and God granted his prayer. Miraculously, she became pregnant with twins. As the babies developed a strange thing began to happen. She sensed a struggling in her womb. She inquired of the LORD and He said:

Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger. Genesis 25:23.

The struggle in Rebekah's womb foretold the future of the twins and their descendants. There would be strife, not harmony. There would be two separate nations pursuing their own interests, not family working toward a common goal. The older would dominate for a time but eventually the younger would prevail. Rebekah did not learn this from a soothsayer or even second hand from a prophet of God. No less than God Himself gave this information to her directly in answer to her prayer.

As to their actual births, of Esau Scripture records "The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak." Of Jacob, Scripture continues, "afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel" (Genesis 25:26). The midwives must have been dismayed when the second of the twins immediately followed with his hand holding the heel of the first. Next, Scripture gives a snapshot of the direction the boys' lives took:

When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Genesis 25:27.

In the above verse Scripture immediately advances from their birth to the two as grown men, reporting that the twins grew up to be very different. Hunting characterized the one, the quiet of home the other. Of Jacob Unger writes "Jacob preferred the quiet of a home life to the active dangerous career of a hunter."⁹ So Scripture is extremely brief about their early years. Just the struggling in the womb, God's personal explanation and what characterized their adult years. How different is the story of their father Isaac and all Scripture told of his conception, birth, youth and adult years before marrying at the age of 40.

Scripture does not elaborate on what it meant to be a skillful hunter or a quiet man living in tents. It only hints at these two pursuits by saying "Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Genesis 25:28). Esau wasn't just the average hunter; he was "skillful." He greatly enhanced the family table with his game. Because of this he was number one in his father's books. Rebekah's greater concern was the family's livelihood. Because Jacob focused on learning and operating the family ranching business, he became number one in her books. While Esau loved

⁹Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, (Chicago: Moody Press, Revised 1961), 546.

to feel the adrenaline of the hunt, Jacob accepted the discipline of repetitive daily chores. That daily routine tied him down to a predictable schedule. These two men couldn't have been more different.

Purchasing the Birthright

After explaining the direction of each twin's life, Scripture discloses just one event in their adult lives before Esau married at the age of 40. One day Esau returned home from the hunt. Apparently he had pressed and pressed without success to the point of exhaustion. He asked Jacob for a bowl of his stew. This indicates that the quiet man was there at his typical station, doing something useful to sustain the family, this time cooking. Here is what happened:

³¹Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." ³²Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" ³³Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. ^{34b}Thus Esau despised his birthright. Genesis 25:31-33, 34b.

Birthright? Where did this come from? How could Jacob suggest such a thing? While Scripture gives commentaries on Esau's action, it does not explore the background of this event. It assumes the reader would know all that was involved, that grandfather Abraham died when the twins were 15 years old and would have told them again and again about God's appearances to him and the promises those appearances conveyed. Isaac also had similar personal experiences with God and had witnessed God's visitations to his father Abraham as well. These stories were also told over and over in family gatherings. While Rebekah may have kept secret God's words to her before the birth of the twins, they must have been aware of at least some of the details of their births and why they were given such unusual names.

Thus, while Scripture does not elaborate, it only seems reasonable that over the years Jacob and Esau wondered about those stories. Though God's visitations to his father and grandfather seemed remote, so beyond anything actually happening in their lives, if there was something to them, Jacob wanted to be their recipient. Eventually Jacob came to place a measure of faith in them and decided to watch for an opportunity to gain the birthright. Then suddenly the opportunity came. Esau was famished and wanted something Jacob had. Jacob made the offer and maybe to his amazement the possessor of the birthright agreed saying "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" (Genesis 25:31).

Just what was the birthright at this time? It is worth hearing from a leading Hebrew commentator:

The birthright consisted afterward in a double portion of the father's inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17); but with the Patriarchs it embraced the chieftainship, rule over the brethren and the entire family (Genesis 27:29) and the title to the blessing of promise (Genesis 27:4, 27-29), which included the future possession of Canaan and of covenant fellowship with Jehovah (Genesis 28:4).¹⁰

Possessing this birthright conveying all God promised to Abraham and Isaac; it was the deed to these promises, but it required faith in the true God. Scripture pronounces harsh judgment on Esau's act. This passage says he despised his birthright. Hebrews calls him unholy because of selling

¹⁰C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch, Volume 1*, 268-269.

his birthright for a mere meal (Hebrews 12:16). Malachi 1:3 gives an overall divine assessment: “I have loved Jacob, but Esau, I have hated” (Malachi 1:3). Henry Morris concurs in these assessments:

It is remarkable that so many Christians are quick to defend Esau and rebuke Jacob [trading a meal for the birthright], when God has done neither. Esau was a profane fornicator, with no redeeming qualities whatsoever, caring nothing about the spiritual significance and responsibilities of the patriarchal birthright, until he thought that its loss might diminish his inherited wealth.¹¹ (Our words in brackets.)

After the birthright incident nothing more is said of the boys until the end of the next chapter of Genesis. There Scripture reports Esau got married. By way of background, when Isaac turned forty, Abraham found him a bride—Rebekah, a granddaughter of Abraham’s older brother Nahor. Now Esau was 40, yet his father gave no indication of finding him and Jacob mates. Possibly Esau became convinced his father would do nothing so according to the following verse, before the year was out, the man of action, Esau, married not one but two Canaanite women:

³⁴When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, ³⁵and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah. Genesis 26:34-35.

This action brought Canaanite life with all its evil right into Isaac’s household. The two Canaanite women made life bitter for both Rebekah and Isaac. Jacob, seeing their distress, decided to wait for the right woman. That wait lasted forty more years. This second report of Esau’s actions conclude how Scripture would have us view Esau at this point in his life, confirming the characterizations of Genesis 25:34, Hebrews 12:16 and Malachi 1:3.

The next glimpse of the twins is even more distressing and not without controversy. When Isaac thought he was dying, he determined to pass on the blessing of the firstborn to Esau, the twin born first. In view of the words of God to Rebekah and the direction of Esau’s life, Isaac’s plan is unexplainable. Without question he was badly confused. But we know what happened. Rebekah learned of the plan. She dressed Jacob to impersonate Esau and Isaac unintentionally gave the blessing to Jacob.

Esau was angry and let it be known that he would kill his brother once his father died. At that point he would add murder to his list of evils. Jacob didn’t doubt his older brother’s word and feared for his life. But sanity prevailed. Rebekah discussed the situation with Isaac who blessed Jacob and sent him away to the household of his mother’s father in Haran. He must take a wife from his mother’s people. He must not marry a Canaanite woman. Trusting God he departed on the 500-mile journey with only a staff in his hand. In this way God preserved the Abrahamic line from the abominations of the Canaanites.

Only a few nights from home 74-year-old Jacob had a dream. In it he saw the angels of God rushing up and down on a grand staircase as they carried out God’s work on earth. At the top was God Himself. He spoke to Jacob, saying He was the God of Abraham and Isaac, that He would give this land to Jacob and his offspring, that his offspring would be like the dust of the earth, that in

¹¹Henry M. Morris, *The New Defender’s Study Bible*, (Nashville: World Publishing, 1995), 1916-commenting on Hebrews 12:16.

Jacob and his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed, that He would keep Jacob and return him to this land (Genesis 28:10-15).

Nothing more is said of the journey but no sooner had Jacob reached his destination than he was taken with Rachel who was “beautiful in form and appearance” (Genesis 29:17). Rachel was the daughter of his mother’s brother. Since her older sister, Leah, was becoming something of an old maid, Rachel might have been considerably older than a teenager. Jacob offered to serve seven years for her hand in marriage and Laban agreed to the offer.

A Closer Look at Jacob

Jacob has received much criticism for the actions of his youth. But are they consistent with God’s revelation? What do we learn from Scripture? First, Jacob’s character. Dr. Morris was distressed to find most commentators characterized Jacob as a crooked man, a heel grabber. While it cannot be denied he was shrewd, even crafty, he had fine qualities that need to be laid beside his stealth. Per chance they mitigate and even cast a different light on the broad judgment that he was basically dishonest. After all, Rahab told a direct lie but no commentator casts her in the light of being a liar. David committed adultery but no commentator characterizes him as basically immoral. Other qualities far outshine Rahab’s lie and David’s adultery. As for Jacob, he was professional, productive, hard-working, likable and God was with him.

Was he basically dishonest? It was his mother who all but ordered him to impersonate Esau. She had great influence on him. He had even foregone marriage out of his respect for his parents’ feelings and judgment. His father was apparently about to disregard God’s will and his mother proposed a way to avoid that. As to her plan, it certainly was dishonest, but the tendency toward dishonesty came mostly from her side of the family. Her brother was as crooked as they come. He changed Jacob’s wages countless times to steal what rightly belonged to Jacob. He gave Jacob Leah after Jacob had served him seven years for Rachel. So let’s dispense with labeling Jacob “dishonest.” Instead see him as Scripture begins to speak much of him, beginning with his arrival in the region of Haran.

Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. Genesis 29:10.

Notice Jacob’s skill with animals. Although he was a complete stranger to this flock, Rachel’s sheep immediately sensed they were in good hands, allowing him to water them. Jacob also understood the sheep business for he had previously noted to the other shepherds that it was high noon and the sheep needed to be grazing, not waiting to be watered. Then, without help, he removed the cover from the well and watered Rachel’s sheep. He was not bound by incompetent practices which limited the success of shepherding in that area. This act displayed initiative, independence, strength, confidence and competence.

If Jacob acted with professionalism towards this newly encountered flock, his next action showed a soul filled with deep emotion and expectation. His skill with the sheep was only exceeded by his way with the shepherdess.

¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. ¹²And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s kinsman, and he was Rebekah’s son, and she ran and told her father. Genesis 29:11-12.

The kiss: Maybe tender and on the cheek, but arising from deep emotion. This 74-year-old man bawled aloud. Just as Abraham's servant had found his mother immediately upon his arrival 94 years before, Jacob no more arrived than he stumbled on what he must have hoped would be his life's partner. Both events happened somewhere near Haran. She was the right fit—his mother's niece, his own cousin whom he had never met and probably did not know existed, beautiful, enterprising, engaging and receiving. What a reward after forsaking his home of 74 years and making a perilous, lonely, 500-mile journey. The girl's father invited Jacob to stay with them.

The next verses tell us Jacob was smart and industrious. Rather than spending all of his time with Rachel, he immediately set out to impress her father with his work ethic and he succeeded. A month later Laban uncharacteristically began the following conversation:

Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be? Genesis 29:15.

Wages? Here was Jacob's opportunity. Jacob wanted Rachel. He had no money for a dowry but he could work. He made an offer of service for this daughter of Laban. He would serve Laban seven years for Rachel and then she would be his. Next we read:

²⁰So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. ²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." Genesis 29:20-21.

What love it had been that seven years would seem like a few days. Then Jacob went to Laban and asked for Rachel so he could "go in to her." The reason he was asking was that he had completed his seven years of service for her. "Going in to her" is a euphemism for marital intimacy. In effect Jacob was saying that he had not violated Rachel's virginity even though he had been with Laban seven years.

Jacob Marries the Wrong Woman

Next Scripture reports on the wedding celebration:

²²So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. ²³But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. ²⁵And in the morning behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn." Genesis 29:22-23, 25-26.

The passage does not say how Laban switched daughters but it clearly states he successfully did. In the morning Jacob was outraged and accused Laban of deception. He said, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel?" Why then have you deceived me? (Genesis 29:25). Clearly Jacob had fulfilled his end of the bargain. He had served seven years for Rachel. Laban affirmed it by explaining a previously unmentioned custom, that the oldest daughter had to be married first.

The Traditional Approach: Marriage before the Years of Service

Astonishingly, the leading advocate of the 215-year approach, Archbishop James Ussher as well as others to this day say this wedding celebration took place before Jacob had served any of the 14 years. In complete disregard to the words of the Bible Ussher offers the following chronology:

1759 BC – Jacob flees from Esau to Haran

1758 BC – Leah bears Reuben

1757 BC – Leah bears Simeon

1756 BC – Leah bears Levi

1755 BC – Leah bears Judah¹²

Ussher's chronology above shows Jacob to have fathered his firstborn the year following his arrival in Haran. Since Leah was the mother, by implication both daughters became wives of Jacob at the beginning of his 20-year stay with Laban. Ussher's dates show he believed Leah's first four sons were born just one year apart beginning one year after Jacob's arrival in Haran. Why would he and those holding the 215-year view to this day contradict the clear words of Scripture? The following three reasons are offered; this chapter shows that each was unsound.

1. Scripture relates a sequence of births one after another, not several at the same time.
2. All the children were born by the time Jacob had been with Laban 14 years because of the six year work contract
3. The children had to be several years older than they would be if he worked seven years before receiving his bride(s) because of later events in the life of Jacob.

Confirming Marriage to Leah; Serving for Rachel

Back to our story. Laban had a solution:

²⁷[Laban said] "Complete the week of this one [Leah], and we will give you the other [Rachel] also in return for serving me another seven years." ²⁸Jacob did so, and completed her [Leah's] week [of wedding celebration]. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. Genesis 29:27-28. (Our words in brackets.)

Laban's solution was that Jacob could have Rachel as well as Leah for seven more years of service. He only asked that Jacob fulfill the week of wedding celebration with Leah and then he would give Jacob Rachel as well. The solution seemed straight forward. Jacob was to complete the very public marriage celebration to the older sister. There would be no doubt in anyone's mind that he was married to her. After the festivities he would be given the younger sister as well and then serve Laban seven more years for the second wife.

This new offer meant Jacob would continue to celebrate his marriage to Leah for the remaining six days—no public scene denouncing Laban as a deceiver, no cold shoulder to Leah; rather, pleasant, cheerful, celebrating. Jacob had not planned to be a bigamist. Both his father and grandfather were one-woman type of men. For seven years thoughts about Rachel had helped him through each exhausting day. Her presence lit up his life. He had no interest in any other woman.

Jacob was over a barrel. He wanted Rachel with all his heart. He would do almost anything for her. Further he was a decent man and didn't want to denounce Leah. Wittingly or not, he had spent the night with her. Who would want her now? He was undoubtedly angry and probably confused and he didn't have the luxury of time to think it over. Scripture records his decision and

¹²James Ussher, *Annals of the World*, (Green Forest, AR.: Master Books, Revised and Updated by Larry and Marion Pierce, 2003), 28.

Laban's response: "Jacob did so and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife" (Genesis 29:28). So Jacob said "uncle" and soon had twice as many wives as he ever intended. Nine months later Leah gave Jacob his first son, sealing her status as his wife.

Laban's plan was a complete success. His older daughter who had attracted no successful suitor was very publicly wedded to Jacob. Laban's honor was intact. He would have no old maid daughter languishing in his house. Most likely at least his household knew what he had done but woe to the person who questioned his actions. Thus was the power of the family patriarch in his day.

Problem of the Sequence of Children's Births

The genealogists say the Scripture tells the sequence of the children's births. This sequence requires approximately fourteen years. The only way to find that much time is for Laban to have given his two daughters to Jacob at the beginning of Jacob's 20-year stay. We suggest that on occasion, Scripture groups similar events and thoughts before going back over the same time frame to report other events and thoughts. The following are examples of Scriptural grouping:

Esau's genealogy is inserted between the death of Isaac and Joseph's story. Genesis 35 ends with the death of Isaac. Genesis 36 chronicles 500 years of Jacob's twin brother's line. Genesis 37:1 actually backtracks to events before Isaac's death. Thus 500 years of Edomite history are inserted in the middle of the Jacob/Joseph narrative.

Genesis 2:5 returns to day six of creation week after Genesis 1:1-2:3 reports the full seven days. The sons of Japheth are listed in Genesis 10:2-5, then the descendants of Ham (10:6-20) and finally the descendants of Shem (10:21-31). No one would dispute that division of history, but Genesis 10 would be very confusing if it reported each birth as it happened. Genesis 11:27-32 reports the record of Terah before taking up God's dealing with Abraham which reaches back to his call in Ur (Genesis 12-24) 10 or 15 years before. Genesis 35:28-29 reports the death of Isaac even though it happened 13 years after the selling of Joseph in Genesis 37.

Similarly, we believe that because several mothers were expecting at the same time and therefore births overlapped, the writer chose to group the births of Jacob's children: Leah's first four, then Bilhah's two, then Zilpah's two, then Leah's final three and lastly Rachel's son. Because of overlapping pregnancies, twelve children were born in just 10 years.

Twelve Births in Ten Years

Over the next ten years Jacob fathered eleven sons plus a daughter. But the other side can only see seven years available for these 12 children if Jacob served seven years before he received two wives and then six years for the cattle. Thus they manipulate Scripture to make more time. We will see that ten years were available and that ten years was sufficient. But first, we must acknowledge that this was the work of God. The odds of having eleven sons in a row are enormous. God was behind all this and the goal was our salvation, Jesus Christ, Jacob's ultimate seed and the defeat of Satan. Scripture does not tell us all the details of the scenario God used. Because some insist it was impossible, we suggest one scenario that is entirely consistent with Scripture. While the following is speculative, it honors Scripture.

When the week of celebrating Jacob's marriage to Leah was over, Laban quietly gave Jacob his younger daughter as well. Jacob immediately transferred to Rachel's bedroom and spent nearly all of his time there for the next 13 years. At first possibly this was a family secret but in time it simply

became accepted as the way things were. This transfer of bedrooms is apparent from the names Leah chose for her six boys and the mandrake event. She called her firstborn Reuben “Because,” she said, “the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.” (Genesis 29:32). How was she afflicted? How was she unloved? Her husband paid her no attention. He spent his nights in Rachel’s tent. Score: Leah-1; Rachel-0. Elapsed time: 9 months since the marriage.

Jacob knew about conception. Animal breeding was his life. To say he was a successful animal breeder would be an understatement. He became wealthy through his breeding skills. In the next few years Jacob discovered that Leah was a virtual baby machine, and sons at that! Leah would deliver a son and six months later she would conceive again—spacing boys about 15 months apart. Rachel had not conceived in nine months while Leah conceived that very first week. So about 6 months after Leah’s first delivery, Jacob began visiting her bedroom until she became pregnant again. But then he went back to Rachel. Scripture tells us as much. Leah named her second son Simeon “Because the LORD has heard that I am hated.” (Genesis 29:33). Hated? Yes. Her husband spent his nights with Rachel, not with Leah. Score: Leah-2; Rachel-0. Elapsed time: 24 months since the marriage ($9+6+9=24$).

About 6 months after Leah’s second delivery, Jacob returned and soon she was expecting a third time. A total of 30 months had elapsed ($9+6+9+6=30$). This may have been when a new development unfolded. Rachel engaged Jacob in a heated argument. She demanded he make her pregnant. He said he was not God. Well, if he couldn’t make her pregnant, he must give her a child by her handmaid, Bilhah. Jacob must have thought, “Is a third wife the price of peace?” With that, Bilhah conceived and behold, another boy. This son was born shortly after Leah’s third. Score: Leah-3; Rachel-1. Elapsed time since Jacob’s marriage: 42 months ($30+9+3=42$).

Six months after her third delivery, Leah became pregnant a fourth time. About three months later, Bilhah became pregnant with her second. So fifty-four months after her marriage, Leah mothered a fourth son ($9+15+15+15=54$) while Bilhah delivered her second son three months later. For the first time Leah did not complain about her husband’s absence. Instead she said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” (Genesis 29:35). Score: Leah-4; Rachel-2; Elapsed time since Jacob’s marriage: 57 months ($54+3=57$). Jacob now has six sons in just four and three-quarter years.

When Leah didn’t get pregnant as she usually did about six months after the birth of her fourth son, she became uneasy. Maybe Bilhah became pregnant for a third time which would later prove to be a girl, but Leah would not know it at the time. Leah must have fretted, “Rachel is catching up! I must do something. Rachel enlisted her handmaid. I’ll do the same with my handmaid Zilpah.” As to Laban’s thoughts on the matter, he was already bragging to his men friends: “You hear? Six grandsons in less than five years. Isn’t that a record?”

At the same time Jacob may have been thinking, “God, you said, ‘Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ (Genesis 28:14). God, I had no idea, but if this is how, so be it.” So when Leah offered her handmaid, Jacob went for broke. Nine months later Zilpah delivered a son. Score: Leah-5; Rachel-2 (plus possibly a girl from Bilhah). Elapsed time: 72 months or six years ($57+6+9=72$).

Six months after the birth of Zilpah’s first son, Jacob came again and Zilpah became pregnant with a second son. When she delivered him nine months later, Leah named him Asher which

connotes happiness. This indicates Leah was not displeased that her husband had fathered two sons through her handmaid. Score: Leah-6; Rachel-2. Elapsed time: 87 months or 7 years and three months (72+15=87).

Genesis 30:14 reports that little Reuben came in from the field with mandrakes (love apples—thought to help in conceiving). Rachel asked Leah for some. Apparently Jacob had given up on Rachel conceiving even though he still shared her bed. As for Leah, Jacob hadn't come to her tent for nearly a year and a half (the last time was six months after the birth of her fourth son when she did not conceive). Leah struck the following bargain:

¹⁵But she [Leah] said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes." ¹⁶When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. ¹⁷And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Genesis 30:15-17.

Here we read that Leah had to hire her husband for a single night some seven years and four sons after they were married! Clearly, Jacob did not divide his time between Leah and Rachel. Leah who hoped for the attention of her husband came to derive happiness from her sons and from the Lord who answered her prayer for a fifth son. Maybe Jacob was still blind to her worth, but who cared when the hugs of little boys never ceased, and grandfather Laban swelled with pride.

Note that Scripture does not indicate that Leah's fifth pregnancy followed Zilpah's second pregnancy. Rather, Scripture groups Zilpah's two pregnancies together just as it grouped Bilhah's two pregnancies together. We suggest that Leah rested for two years after the birth of Judah and then became pregnant for the fifth time when Jacob visited her tent for a single night six and a half years after their marriage. Fifteen months later Jacob visited again and Leah became pregnant with her sixth son. Fifteen months later Jacob visited again and Leah became pregnant with her first daughter.

To summarize, Rachel's handmaid carried sons during Leah's 3rd and 4th pregnancies while Leah's handmaid carried pregnancies towards the end of Leah's 24 month resting period and again during her fifth pregnancy. Rachel delivered Joseph shortly before Leah's first daughter was born, maybe three months before. By this scenario, the total time involved from Jacob's week-long marriage celebration to Leah to the birth of Dinah was 117 months (9+3*15+24+9+2*15=117)¹³. 117 months is nine years and nine months. Final score: eight sons and one daughter for Leah's team; three sons and an unreported number of daughters for Rachel's team.

Rachel also learned to look to God rather than Jacob during this time:

¹³ This scenario suggests all twelve children were born within Leah's birthing history of resting six months after pregnancies #1, #2, #3, #5, #6 and resting 24 months after pregnancy #4. The total time elapsed is nine months for each of her seven pregnancies (six sons and a daughter) for a total of 63 months, five rests of six months each for a total of 30 months, and the long 24-month rest between her 4th and 5th pregnancies. Thus, her total birthing history was 63 months of pregnancies, 30 months of short resting periods and 24 months of the one long resting period. Total elapsed time: 63+ 30 + 24 or 117 months.

²²Then God remembered Rachel and God listened to her and opened her womb. ²³She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” ²⁴And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!” Genesis 30:22-24.

The paragraph before the birth of Joseph concludes with “Afterward she (Leah) bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.” (Genesis 30:21). The writer grouped Leah’s last three births together, but indicated that Joseph’s birth came before Dinah’s birth. In this way all of the children were born within the birthing years of Leah. This is not the only scenario that could be devised, but whichever one it was, Scripture says it was successful. Who is man to change what God said happened?

The scenario we use places Joseph’s birth at 114 months (9.5 years) after Jacob received his two wives. When Joseph was born is the key to the age of Jacob and his children. He was 130 when he appeared before Pharaoh (Genesis 47:9) and Joseph was 39. [Joseph was elevated at the age of 30 (Genesis 41:46) and officiated over seven years of plenty and two years of famine when he stood with his father before pharaoh (30+7+2=39)]. Therefore, Joseph was born when Jacob was 91 (130-39=91). We suggest that about three and a half years later Jacob returned to Canaan and was 94.5 years old. Thus, he arrived in Haran at the age of 74 and was married at the age of 81 (74+7=81). Since Scripture doesn’t work with fractions of a year, we need to work with the whole number of departing Haran at the age of 94.

In summary, this is our view: Jacob served Laban seven years, then married Leah and Rachel and fathered twelve children in the next ten years. Sadly, the numbers-over-words approach is that more years were needed and concluded Laban gave his two daughters to Jacob shortly after he first arrived. Thus, by silence in the case of Ussher in *The Annals of the World*, and through explaining Scripture away in the case of his modern counterparts, inerrancy is violated. Where is faith in all this? Inerrancy requires us to accept what God has clearly said, not follow our own reasoning. Unfortunately, the inerrancy view continues to be rejected to this day.

However, first an observation is in order. Early Bible history emphasizes sons. The genealogies from Adam to Noah and from Seth to Abraham are records of sons begetting sons. Some fathers had multiple wives. No lines are recorded in terms of daughters begetting daughters; wives having multiple husbands is likewise unrecorded. When Jacob fled from Laban, Genesis 31:17 reports, “So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels.” Yet when Jacob moved his people to Egypt, Genesis 46:5-7 says, “Then Jacob set out from Beersheba... and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters....”

“Daughters” is plural, yet only Dinah is said to have been born to him in all his years. Because of the emphasis on “sons,” it is possible that the handmaids of Leah and Rachel bore unnamed daughters to Jacob either before or after he left Haran. Since the Scripture is silent about when one or more other daughters were born to Jacob, we need to be aware that possibly during the birth of the eleven sons in Haran, one or more other daughters were also born to him. We make this point because sometimes interpreters state dogmatically what Scripture does not actually say. In honoring the principle of inerrancy, we must diligently stand where Scripture stands and be tentative where Scripture is silent. This principle will become particularly important as we look at individual genealogies later on.

Problem of the Timing of Jacob's Contract

The 215-year people also say Jacob's wages supports their view, with the following line of thinking. Jacob requested being sent away as soon as his eleventh son, Joseph, was born. Laban urged Jacob to stay with him and offered to let him name his wages. Since Jacob later said he served 14 years for Laban's two daughters and six years for Laban's flock, the standard approach jumps to the conclusion that this request and Joseph's birth occurred 14 years after Jacob joined Laban and six years before he departed from Laban. We will show that there were multiple wage contracts and clearly, this was not the one that began the final six years, thus invalidating their argument.

The relevant Scripture is found in Genesis 30-31:

²⁵As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. ²⁶Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you. ²⁷But Laban said to him, "[stay with me] ²⁸Name your wages..." Genesis 30:25-28.

[Jacob said] "These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times." Genesis 31:41.

While their logic seems plausible, nowhere does Scripture say Joseph was born at the end of the fourteen years. Neither does it say that this labor contract began the six years for the flock. But it does quote Jacob twice saying that Laban changed his wages ten times (to his wives in 31:7 and to Laban in 31:41). Eleven contracts? Once a search is made for evidence of changed wages and Jacob's claim is justified, we will realize that Ussher and followers commit the logical fallacies of jumping to conclusions and arguing from silence. So, when was the first agreement made? The last? And what about the one that is recorded?

We suggest that various informal arrangements were made and then broken by Laban before the most important one, the one that is recorded. Some were made even before the fourteen years were completed. This is suggested by Jacob's later angry response to Laban:

³⁸These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you. I bore the loss of it myself. From my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰There I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. Genesis 31:38-40.

How could Jacob bear the loss? How could it be required of his hand if he had no sheep or goats of his own to pay with before those final six years? Females were kept to multiply the flock while males were eaten, but Jacob, in spite of having a growing household, ate none of Laban's goats. Only if Laban paid Jacob with animals or allowed Jacob to begin building a flock of his own during those fourteen years could he feed his family and repay Laban for animals that had been torn or stolen.

At the fourteen-year mile stone a more formal arrangement was made so he could begin to acquire camels and cows as well as flocks. While Scripture does not record this agreement, it alludes to such an arrangement with the words about serving six years for the flocks. But when

Laban saw Jacob truly prospering, he would have repeated his practice of changing Jacob's wages time and again.

Wage Agreement Reported in Scripture

Finally when Joseph was born, Jacob became very assertive and said to Laban "Send me away." This time Laban, fearing he was about to lose Jacob, let Jacob name his wages and Jacob stayed on. This is the wage arrangement reported in Genesis 30: 25-28. It happened just after the birth of Joseph. Dinah was born several months later. If the final six years were a rounded number and the actual duration were six years and three months, Jacob would have left Laban three and a half years after Dinah's birth (according to our proposed scenario). When Jacob did leave, he left with an enormous number of healthy, young animals. Jacob's practices did not produce this bounty. It came from God who provided both his enormous herds and his sons.

Why was Laban desperate to retain Jacob's services? He himself said, "The LORD has blessed me because of you" (30:27). Jacob states this even more strongly: "For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned" (30:30). Jacob's service increased Laban's wealth from "little" to "abundant."

This recorded agreement was to begin by Jacob passing through all Laban's flock and removing "every speckled, and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats" (Genesis 30:32) for himself. What actually happened? Somehow Laban distracted Jacob or took advantage of Jacob's work schedule and while Jacob was busy with other things, Laban with his sons rushed out and removed all such sheep and goats and sent them far away with his sons so Jacob would never get any of them back. Laban violated that contract before the ink was dry.

On average sheep produce lambs once a year although they can bear in both the spring and fall. Three years is about the minimum time to replace most of Laban's black and white animals with striped and spotted animals by normal births, but with the hand of God guiding the genetics the process was miraculously shrunk into the available time.

God Overrides Laban's Wage Changes

Jacob tells Rachel and Leah about two other changes to his wages after the agreement recorded in Scripture: "If he (Laban) said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted" (31:8). In other words, when Laban saw that all (or most of) of the kids were striped, mottled or spotted which he originally said would be Jacob's wages, he reneged, limiting Jacob's wages to just those with spots. Jacob continued: "if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages', then all the flock bore striped." In other words, when Laban saw all the kids were spotted, he changed the wages to those kids with stripes and the next time around, all the kids were striped. Every time Laban changed Jacob's wages, the flocks bred in Jacob's favor! Jacob realized that God was doing this: "But God did not permit him to harm me" (31:7). God was overruling Laban's changes. "Thus" (Jacob concluded) "God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me." (31:8-9).

Even more evidence for the wage changing game comes in the form of a dream God gave Jacob. He told Rachel and Leah, "The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you'" (31:11-12). What was God's point? In the field all mating goats that were not completely black had been removed and set aside. But in

the dream, all the remaining mating goats, the ones belonging to Laban, were also multicolored, thus insuring their kids would be multicolored and thus belong to Jacob. Jacob would understand the same thing to be true of the flocks of sheep.

Laban should have known that he couldn't cheat God. God would simply have all the kids and lambs marked with Laban's most recent wage change. When Jacob told Rachel and Leah his dream, they agreed with Jacob that they should move to Canaan, concluding that their father was cheating them out of what was rightfully theirs:

¹⁴Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? ¹⁵Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money. ¹⁶All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Genesis 31:14-16.

Time for Jacob to Leave

Sheep were sheared before the hot summer but after spring lambing. It could be this master contract was negotiated before spring birthing and shearing, allowing Jacob to accumulate his animals over four birthing seasons, even though only 3 ½ years passed. Thus when he left, most of his oldest animals were just over three years old and the youngest had been born within the previous three months.

Maybe this is why Laban removed the multicolored animals for himself once he realized that the animals had already mated the previous fall. The possibility of four birthing seasons would answer any who might maintain that Laban's flocks couldn't be transferred to Jacob in just three birthing seasons. As previously pointed out, the six years and twenty years are round numbers. The six years could be 6 ¼ years. The twenty years could be 20 ¼ years. Leah's daughter could have been born 9 ¾ years after Jacob received his wives. These number would provide 3 ½ years from this master contract until Jacob departed. In that case it could have involved four mating seasons and four birthing seasons.

As God increased Jacob's wealth, Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's" (Genesis 31:1). Further, Jacob saw "that Laban did not regard him with favor as before" (Genesis 31:2). An alarming number of Laban's animals had become Jacob's. He was no longer their workhorse, multiplying their wealth. Jacob attributed the deed to God: "God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me" (Genesis 31:9). But jealousy was replacing their approval of Jacob. Jealousy can be deadly. Jacob was in danger. At this point God told Jacob to return to his homeland (Genesis 31:3).

But how could he leave? For twenty years Jacob had seen Laban's highhandedness. He believed Laban would never let him return to Canaan with his family and wealth. Both he and Laban said as much. Laban later said, "You have driven away my daughters like captives..." Laban called Jacob's children "my sons and my daughters..." (Genesis 31:26, 28). They didn't belong to Jacob, they belonged to him and as head of the household, he intended to keep what was his. Further, he would threaten, "It is in my power to do you harm" (Genesis 31:29). Jacob would reply, "If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed" (Genesis 31:42). This was the power of the patriarch. Laban could allow Jacob to go out with his family and wealth or let him leave empty-handed. Jacob

had no choice but to flee secretly. Laban pursued and overtook Jacob. God intervened. Jacob was able to keep his family and newly formed wealth.

Counting Jacob's Wealth

How much had God given Jacob? How many animals did Jacob have to move? Genesis 30:43 reports that Jacob "increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys." In Genesis 32:5 he sent the following word to Esau: "I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants and female servants." He gave the following present to his brother Esau:

**¹⁴two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,
¹⁵thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. Genesis 32:14-15.**

Jacob's gift amounted to 550 animals plus calves. At Bethel twenty years before, Jacob had promised God a tenth if God brought him back home (Genesis 28:22-22). If this was that tenth, he possessed over 5000 animals which was nearly half as many animals as Job had before Satan's attack. Yet most of Jacob's were acquired in just six years! Indeed, only God could have provided such increase.

Jacob's Escape: How Do the Numbers Work Out?

Multiplying Jacob's livestock was one thing. Returning them to the home of his father was another. How did Jacob do it? Here is a possible scenario: Jacob's nursing flocks could cover ten miles at most in a day without injury. It was about 500 land miles to his father in Hebron and almost 400 miles to the hill country of Gilead where Jacob thought he might be safe. Yet it was there that Laban and his kinsmen overtook Jacob. How could Jacob have gotten so far in such a short time? Or did he have more time? Scripture sometimes summarizes an event that involved much more than is stated as we shall shortly see.

But first, Jacob's escape and Laban's pursuit:

**¹⁷So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels. ¹⁸He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.... ²¹He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.
²²When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³He took his kinsmen with him and pursued him [Jacob] for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. Genesis 31:17-18, 21-23.**

Three critical details are disclosed in these verses. First, he had camels for transportation which meant speed and endurance. Second, he had to cross the Euphrates which was the major barrier between Haran and Hebron. Third, his goal was to reach the hill country of Gilead.

The Route to Home

The standard trade route from Haran to Egypt involved crossing the Euphrates River at the last down river place it could be forded on foot—the ancient city of Carchemish, 65 miles due west of Haran. From the story of Joseph being sold by his brothers, we learn that shepherds took their flocks many miles to find pasture. Jacob would surely have located his flocks in the direction of the escape route. From Carchemish the trade route went southwest for 80 miles to Aleppo and then

south another 35 to Ebla. The trade route continued directly south for another 170 miles to Damascus. Seventy-five miles beyond Damascus one reached the hill country of Gilead which was directly east of the Sea of Galilee in the Jordan Rift Valley.

However, determining specifics are difficult since at least three unknowns are involved in Jacob's return home. First, we only know the general area of Laban's ranch—Paddan-aram and Haran. Paddan-aram was a region while Haran was the major supply center on the trade route. The ranch could have been 20-30 miles from Haran. Second, we do not know for sure that Jacob crossed at the common fording of Carchemish. While that was the normal fording point a millennium later, the river could have changed much between Jacob's day and when better records were kept later. Third, we do not know where along the hills of Gilead Laban finally overtook Jacob. Four hundred years later that area was given to two and a half of Israel's twelve tribes. At that time, it was generally to the east of the Sea of Galilee. But it is possible that in Jacob's day the area nominally extended north for a distance. Thus, our best effort is an estimated 400 miles from Laban's ranch to the point where he overtook Jacob.

When God told Jacob to return home He added, "I will be with you" (Genesis 31:3). Jacob would have divine protection. Nevertheless, Jacob had to plan his escape carefully. He waited until Laban would be shearing his sheep several days journey away from the ranch. He sent for his wives (possibly as Laban was setting out) to join him for a secret meeting in the fields. Laban's household must not know. Jacob made his case for fleeing. Once his wives consented each began the extensive preparations for the journey (keeping their secret from Laban's people).

Moving Sheep and Goats

Jacob's first concern would be to get the sheep and goats moving because with nursing young they could hardly do ten miles a day. Cattle are good for twice that while camels can be used for rapid travel. Since Scripture states that Laban overtook Jacob in the hills of Gilead after a seven-day pursuit and this appears to have been nearly 400 miles, the flocks must have been on the road at least 40 days. So how does this work?

Once Jacob secured his wives agreement to leave Laban, he would have worked at getting the flocks across the Euphrates. This means he would have accompanied the shepherds for this most difficult task. If his flocks were already grazing a three days' journey west of Laban's ranch, he would have spent most of a week getting them to and safely across the Euphrates. He would not be missed at the ranch as he was often in the fields with the flocks for periods of time.

Today, for several miles near Carchemish the Euphrates divides into two channels with an island between the channels. Possibly at one place one could wade across the first channel, then find a shallow part of the second channel somewhere else to wade across. We don't know. Only the Scripture makes a point of saying that Jacob got all he had across the Euphrates.

Then he would cover the distance back to the ranch in two days to get his herds on the trail. This may have taken another week. By then the sheep and goats, divided into many flocks, would be 160 miles from the ranch ($7 + 2 + 7 = 16$ days). Then Jacob would continue his plans to flee with his remaining household—wives, children, kindred and servants—closing out their lives in Haran and preparing for the long, perilous journey ahead. Possibly a trusted servant had been moving back and forth between the flocks, herds and ranch (on camel back) while Jacob's household prepared. By one excuse or another to Laban's people he may have been able to send off donkey trains of possessions during that week. When they were ready, possibly a week or so after the

cattle left, Jacob's wives must have said their goodbyes. With that Jacob put his family on camels and his household moved out. Laban's people sent a runner to tell Laban. By this time the sheep would be 230 miles away ($16 + 7 = 23$ days).

Camels were the finest all-around transportation in this part of the ancient world. In a caravan with heavy loads, they typically covered 25 miles a day or three miles an hour. They actually could walk all day at four miles an hour, but to conserve their energy, the drivers walked rather than rode. This slowed the caravan down to the pace and endurance of the drivers. Camels had been known to travel a hundred miles a day when employed for military purposes.

Laban's Pursuit

On the third day Laban received word that Jacob had fled. Laban was shearing sheep. For Laban to take action, he first arranged care for the sheep being sheared, then made the three-day journey back to the ranch and then organized an armed pursuit party on camels. Jacob would have about a ten-day head start but that would not alarm Laban since the sheep with recently born lambs could only travel ten miles a day at most. What Laban had not counted on was that Jacob had sent the sheep ahead before returning to the ranch. By the time Laban was ready to pursue, the sheep were on the trail the equivalent of 33 days, 330 miles from Haran ($23 + 3 + 2 + 3 + 2 = 33$ days). Meanwhile the herds had been on the trail 17 days so they would soon catch up with the flocks. Jacob and family had been on the trail ten days and were a good 250-300 miles from Haran. With camels they would soon catch up with the flocks, herds and donkey trains.

Scripture says it took Laban seven days to overtake Jacob. Just days before, Jacob's cattle, donkeys and camels had all caught up with his flocks and they were now in the hill country of Gilead, 400 miles from Haran. Just as Jacob thought he was safe, Laban and his band appeared. While Laban had expected to find them just 170 miles from his ranch, it probably did not take him long to learn they were a great distance ahead of him so he would have gone into a forced day and night march. Even so for Laban to cover 400 miles in seven days, his camel army would have had to cover a punishing 55 miles a day. What an amazing flight on Jacob's part. What an amazing pursuit on Laban's part.

Nevertheless, it was not that Jacob had reached familiar ground that protected him but none other than God Himself who appeared to Laban in a dream and warned him not to harm Jacob. In the end Laban and Jacob covenanted not to cross into each other's lands for harm. Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters and returned home. Again, the angels of God appeared to Jacob. (Genesis 32:1). God was doing as He had originally promised at Bethel.

Esau Advances with 400 Men

Then Jacob learned that his twin brother Esau was coming with a small army. He sent everyone ahead and was left alone. Yet he was not alone. He wrestled all night. The struggle was both spiritual and physical. "Wrestling" suggests a night of fervent prayer. Yet he sustained a lifetime physical injury. In the end his opponent said "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." (Genesis 32:28). The new name has the connotation of power with God. Following this Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face and yet my life has been delivered" (Genesis 32:30). Jacob had encountered the preincarnate Christ.

Esau and his 400 men arrived. It looked like the end. Instead, "Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept" (Genesis 33:4). Of this Jacob

said: "I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me" (Genesis 33:10). Each visitation from God strengthened Jacob's faith.

Dinah's Humiliation

Instead of returning to his father in Hebron, for some unexplained reason over the next 12 years Jacob first built a house in Succoth, then bought land and settled in Shechem. There his daughter Dinah "went out to see the women of the land" (Genesis 34:1). Dinah was now old enough to socialize with the village women. The text does not mention an escort. Genesis 34:2 continues: "When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her." Having eleven older brothers she was used to receiving a lot of attention from boys and undoubtedly knew how to give and take a lot of innocent playfulness. Whatever he saw attracted him like a fly to flypaper. Then he lost control.

At the least we can observe that Dinah acted indiscreetly. "Going out to see the women" suggests inexperience, an enlarging of her world. In all this visiting she must have met Shechem. She was poised, self-confident, a talker and playful. Maybe Shechem misinterpreted her innocent fun for something more. We have suggested she was fifteen years old. If she were older, she would know more about men outside of her family and be more careful. If she were much younger, she would be less desired as his wife. At fifteen she was a grown woman capable of marriage and suitable as a mate for the young prince. Fifteen fits the Scriptural chronology.

Dinah had six natural older brothers while Jacob's other five sons were her step-brothers. Her oldest natural brother and Jacob's first was Reuben. He was ten years older than her. Her brothers were beyond indignant. Shechem loved Dinah and asked his father to get her for his wife. When Shechem's father asked Jacob to let his daughter marry his son, he said the two peoples could become one. Jacob's sons said the Hivites would have to be circumcised first. So, all the men of the village were circumcised. Then two of Dinah's natural brothers came and murdered all the men when they were in the most pain. These brothers, Simeon and Levi, were 23 and 22, eight and seven years older than Dinah.

Thinking the sons had to be older people ask, "How could two young men kill all the men in an entire village?" First, they came on the third day when the men were sore. Intense pain can incapacitate. The village men had no strength to fight back. Second, this question reinforces an earlier suggestion in this paper, that Abraham had gained military training in Ur. When he left Ur, he trained every able-bodied male in his household in the art of defense. When the Jordan Valley was invaded and Lot was taken prisoner, Abraham "led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them..." and with allies, completely vanquished an experienced, professional army (Genesis 14:14). That a 23- and 22-year-old could put an entire village to the sword suggests Jacob also trained his sons in the use of the sword. Today 23- and 22-year-old college football players display the kind of strength and determination that Jacob's sons displayed. The other side sees the need for the sons to be seven years older, but they didn't need to be 30 and 29 to wreak this havoc on the village.

While the slaughter at Shechem possibly doubled Jacob's wealth, his focus was on his and his family's survival. He was angry and terrified expecting revenge from the Shechemites' fellow Canaanites. Little did he know that God would command Israel to destroy the Canaanite population five hundred years later. Could it be that the act of Simeon and Levi was divine judgment to break

the hold of paganism on its surviving residents (over half of its population) and give them the opportunity to meet the true God and receive eternal life?

Returning to Bethel, the “House of God”

After Simeon and Levi slaughtering the adult males of the village, all of his sons plundered what was left and took the wives and children. Jacob was appalled at his sons’ action. He said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household” (Genesis 34:30). Jacob must have cried out to God because we next read “God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel [Hebrew: beth-house; el-God; thus “house of God”] and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau” (Genesis 35:1). God said to “dwell there,” not “stop there” or “visit there.” *HB* finds he lived there for at least two years, until Joseph reached the age of 17, and possibly as many as three.

Bethel would be a place of refreshment after years of stress and trouble. Jacob would find peace and quiet in the House of God. He told his household and all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone” (Genesis 35:2-3). With him were his household plus many new faces--all those in the plunder of Shechem for Scripture previously reported: “They (Jacob’s sons) took their (Shechem’s) flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and plundered” (34:28-29).

Everyone with him was to put away their false gods, follow rites of cleansing and change their clothes in preparation for meeting the LORD. Jacob buried these instruments of idolatry near Shechem and left for Bethel (Genesis 35:4). Along the way the Canaanites did not attack them. Instead “a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob” (Genesis 35:6). At Bethel he built an altar which indicates animal sacrifice and worship. The women and children of Shechem had been the pitiful victims of idolatry. Here they learned about the true God. He must be approached through the blood of a sacrifice as man had done since the time of Abel. Each Old Testament sacrifice anticipated the ultimate and final sacrifice, that of Jesus Christ on the cross. Certainly, many of these newcomers believed in the true God and entered His Kingdom that day.

Bethel was where God had first repeated to Jacob the promises of people and land He had given to Abraham and Isaac. In addition, God had promised that Jacob would return to this place. Now Jacob was again in this place. God had kept His promise. But not only had Jacob returned to this place, he had returned with a vast household and great wealth.

For the sake of continuity, Scripture next records God’s second appearance to Jacob at Bethel. Then it continues with his journey back to Isaac, relating the death of Rachel near Bethlehem. Finally, Jacob reaches Hebron. Scripture closes this portion with the death of Isaac. In the next section Scripture tells about Joseph’s rise in Egypt and Judah’s family, both essential to Israel’s becoming a nation and continuing the line of Christ. But *HB* seeks to show that the dates of Scripture provide a sound chronology without changing what it says. For this reason, the events that happened in Bethel are grouped together before the journey to Hebron. Scripture gives at

least three clues: Joseph was 17 when his brothers sold him; Judah's marriage occurred "at this time" and Jacob built a pillar, not an altar when God appeared to him the second time. Each of these clues could consume considerable space, but *HB* will give them briefly and let the reader fill in the details.

Joseph-17 years old. He and Dinah were 15 when Dinah was violated and God told Jacob to go to Bethel and live there. Joseph was brilliant. Because Jacob was worn out, he began using Joseph to report on his brothers' management of Jacob's vast flocks and herds. He reported his brother's incompetence. They hated him, sold him into slavery and dipped his clothing in blood. Jacob concluded his son was killed by wild beasts and was crushed with grief. Since only two years is available after Shechem, Joseph's apparent death had to have happened at Bethel. His mother was still alive and Benjamin had not yet been born. Joseph saw Benjamin for the first time when his brothers brought him to Egypt. Scripture says Jacob grieved over Joseph and would not be comforted. This event broke Jacob and caused him to return to Hebron and the consolation his home would provide.

"At that time" (Genesis 38:1) begins the story of Judah's marriage and family. It happened during the days Joseph was dreaming of dominance over his brothers and parents, during those two years when Joseph was Jacob's eyes and ears. Joseph was 15 when they arrived at Bethel and 17 when his brothers sold him. Judah being six years older than Joseph was 21-23 during the Bethel years. It couldn't have happened much earlier because it happened around the time that tragedy befell Joseph. It couldn't have happened much later because Egypt was just 22-23 years off and Judah would raise and marry off two sons during those 22-23 years.

God's second appearance. God had confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant to him at this very place when he left home for Haran (Genesis 28:10-22). Now 32 plus years later God repeated those promises:

¹¹I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. ¹²The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you. Genesis 35:11-12.

God identified Himself as "El Shaddai," the all-powerful God. No less than the One who created all things in six days stood behind these promises to Abraham, Isaac and now Jacob. Further, God confirmed his new name "Israel" first given over 12 years before when he had wrestled with God all night. He hadn't been living up to his new name in Shechem. Now that he was living in Bethel, he was finally being "Israel" and God acknowledged that. This divine appearance happened after Jacob built the altar and offered sacrifice on it when his troop first arrived. This is clear because in response to this appearance, Jacob set up a pillar of stone and poured out both a drink offering and oil on it.

But there were tears even at Bethel. There Deborah, Rebekah's nurse died and was buried under an oak. The place was named "Allon-bacuth" (oak of weeping; Genesis 35:8). Possibly this woman had cared for Jacob in his infancy and his mother as she aged. It is likely that when Rebekah died, her nurse came to help with all the children born to Jacob. In Jacob's household she became a pleasant reminder of his years in his parent's home.

From Bethel to Hebron and finally to Egypt

Crushed by the loss of Joseph Jacob headed for home. More grief visited the disheartened band. Jacob's beloved Rachel went into labor near Bethlehem which was then called Ephrath. Rachel had prayed for another son (Genesis 30:24) and now God answered. The child Benjamin lived, but his mother died in childbirth. This was Jacob's twelfth and last son. Over a thousand years later Micah would prophecy that the most significant son in all human history would be born there. The second person of the godhead, God the Son, would become clothed with humanity in that very place.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Micah 5:2.

In a single verse (Genesis 35:22) Scripture reports another disheartening event. His oldest son committed fornication with his beloved wife's handmaid, Bilhah. It was like violating the memory of Rachel. Scripture calls her "his father's concubine." Most likely, Bilhah bore some of Jacob's daughters. We don't hear any more of this until Jacob blesses his sons on his death bed. There he says to Reuben,

³Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch! Genesis 49:2-3.

Finally, Jacob arrived "at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned" (Genesis 35:27). He had been away for 34 years, the 20 with Laban plus the 14 in Shechem and Bethel. He had left home at the age of 74. Now he returned at the age of 108. During his absence Esau lived for a time with his parents, Isaac and Rebekah, who must have harbored a deep, quiet grief for Jacob. Esau no longer had to compete with Jacob who seemed unmatched. As he became the sole heir of all his father had, he mellowed. Apparently, he eventually showed interest in the stories of God's appearances to his father and grandfather and finally believed. When Jacob returned from Haran, Esau had welcomed him home with tears, forgiving his brother who had purchased his birthright and stolen his father's blessing. God honored Esau with an entire chapter of the Bible, a long one at that, devoted to a 500-year record of his descendants (Genesis 36).

Jacob enjoyed his father's company for just 12 years (1898-1886 BC). Genesis 35:28-29 report, "Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." Jacob was 120. Eight years later famine struck. Jacob was infirm but still surrounded by his family and still in control. What happened next requires the context that follows.

The Ishmaelites had sold the slave Joseph to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. Potiphar quickly realized Joseph was a good administrator and put him in charge of all he possessed. His wife found Joseph handsome. When Joseph refused her overtures, she falsely accused him and Potiphar placed him in the special prison where Pharaoh's prisoners were kept. Again, his genius was apparent and he came to be in charge of the prisoners. Then Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and was made the governor of Egypt. Over the next seven years of plenty, due to his administrative skills the storage facilities of Egypt came to overflow with grain. Then began the seven years of famine and the arrival of his brothers. After shrewd testing, disclosed himself to them with tears.

Since five years of famine remained, Joseph invited his family to move to Egypt. Pharaoh gave Jacob prized land in the Nile Delta (Goshen) nearest Canaan. Jacob appeared before Pharaoh and said he was 130 years old. Scripture identifies all his descendants who ended up in Egypt. Counting Jacob the party numbered 70 (Genesis 46:8-27). The Book of Exodus opens by repeating the names of Jacob's sons in Egypt and giving the same number for his party found in Genesis 46:27 (70). Jacob died 17 years later at the age of 147 (Genesis 47:28).

Lessons from Jacob's Genealogy

1. Use of the term "son." In totaling the sons of each of Jacob's four wives, Scripture says "these are the sons of... Leah" (v15), "Zilpah" (v18), "Rachel (v22) and "Bilhah" (v24). In the list are sons, grandsons and even great grandsons. Also included in the count of sons borne by Leah is her husband, Jacob. Obviously, "son" can have a wider meaning than in typical genealogies. The various uses of kinship terms is the subject of the next chapter.
2. Focus on sons. Of the 69 named individuals who descended from Jacob and comprised his household in Egypt, 67 were sons and just two were daughters. Specifically, it says that Leah bore 33 sons and daughters, even though it lists only one, Dinah. Seriah in verse 17 is the only other daughter found in the list. In using "daughter" in the plural, Scripture indicates that other daughters were born but are not listed. Since over time the number of sons and daughters balance out, several dozen daughters could have been omitted for this supposedly complete list.
3. Focus on the future. In two clear cases unborn sons are listed. Perez's sons, Hezron and Hamul, were born years after the move to Egypt since Perez himself was born at the time of the move. Benjamin was just 22 at the time of the move, yet ten sons are listed for him. Most would have been born after the move. Why would a genealogy list unborn sons? This list shows that God is beginning the fulfillment of his promise to make Abraham's descendants without number.

Because of these obvious differences from typical genealogies, unless the Bible interpreter thinks of genealogies as Hebrews did, he will make incorrect interpretations.

Appendix Tables 4.1 and 4.2 compile Jacob's genealogy. A highly accurate list is possibly because Scripture gives so much detail to Jacob's life. Table 4.1 points out that whereas 38 specific dates or details are recorded concerning Isaac, 80 are found for Abraham and 158 relate to Jacob. Table 4.2 dates with a high degree of reliability 30 specific details or events in his life producing an extremely accurate chronology.

With *HB's* study of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a reliable historical chronology can be established back to the birth of Abraham's father, Terah. Working backwards from the construction of Solomon's temple in 966 BC, the Exodus occurred 480 years before (1446 BC). Jacob moved his family to Egypt 430 years before that (1876). He was born 130 years before (2006 BC). Isaac was born 60 years before that in 2066 BC and Abraham was born 100 years before Isaac (2166 BC). Finally, Terah was born 130 years before Abraham (2296 BC). These numbers are found in Table 3.1. Tables B.1 and B.2 use *HB's* findings of 35-55 generations missing between Eber and Peleg to produce historical chronologies both forwards and backwards between creation and the present.

PART II - FOUNDATION FOR ABBREVIATING GENEALOGIES

Chapter Five

Elasticity of Hebrew Genealogical Terms

Moving on from the errors that make genealogies obscure, hidden by layers of misinterpretation, we now arrive at the heart of this work: how God used genealogies to raise up a nation to give mankind a Savior.

Nature and Function of Biblical Genealogies

The biblical genealogies are elegant, profound, mysterious, practical, personal and flexible in nature. Most importantly, God himself established them.

In elegance they can be a long list of immediate father-son relationships or as brief as “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1).

Profound—they identify the fathers of post-Flood people groups that repopulated the world.

Mysterious—they speak of ten sons accompanying 24-year-old Benjamin to Egypt (a 24-year-old with ten sons?). Further, they include the two unborn sons of baby Perez among the 66 descendants of Jacob who went down to Egypt.

Flexible—they are not always a record of immediate father-son relationships; rather, they are elastic enough to include future descendants under the concept that all future generations are in the loins of their forefathers. In this way the record could be particularly tailored to meet the author’s purpose with remarkable efficiency.

In purpose and function they provide identity and explanation—who am I? Where do I belong? How did it happen? With brevity they record: 1) the spread of man after the Flood; 2) Abraham’s ancestors; 3) Israel’s organization.

A three-tier division of Jacob’s descendants (tribe/clan/household) insured brilliant organization and maximum security in the wilderness and fair division of the land in Canaan. In effect, the genealogies told each family where to pitch its tent in a camp of 2.5 million people and where to settle down in the spacious Promised Land. They especially confirm that Jesus was truly human. While biblical genealogies have similarities to the genealogies of monarchical societies through the ages, they also have significant differences and must be explained in a way consistent with biblical use.

Genealogies Organized Israel

Free at last; no longer slaves under the yoke of Egypt. But what would keep these former slaves from exploiting each other as they had been exploited? In a word, genealogies. The ex-slaves had to think and act like free people and stand together as a nation. To keep them from destroying each other before they learned those new ways, genealogies helped organize them so they would live together in a civilized way.

When God delivered Israel from Egypt, He gave Moses an amazingly simple yet efficient way to organize the people. He grouped them by tribe, clan, and households that contained even smaller divisions. At the center of the camp in the wilderness was the Tabernacle. Surround it was an open

area large enough to assemble the nation. Beyond that the three clans of Levi camped on three sides of the Tabernacle while the families of Moses and Aaron camped in front. Beyond the Levites was an assembly area for common activities. Beyond this, possibly a mile from the Tabernacle, began the camps of the people. Three tribes camped side by side on each of the four sides, radiating out like wedges. Each tribe was divided into three to six clans, approximately 50-60 clans in all. Clans ranged from 10,000 to 50,000 members. Divisions further extended to thousands, hundreds and tens. Adult males provided the basis for population counts.

Each person living in his own unit restrained theft and promoted acceptable behavior. Everyone knew the people around them. Their neighbors were their relatives. Each witnessed the other's actions. Due to distances, people in one tribe had little association with people in another tribe. The life of each person centered around where his genealogy put him. Those Levites over the age of 50 were spared transporting the Tabernacle and became the guards at the heart of the nation. If an unauthorized person entered that inner circle, he was to be executed—except on those occasions where individuals or the entire nation were summoned to join Moses at the Tabernacle which was also called “The Tent of Meeting.” One didn't just wander anywhere through the camp. People were born, married and died in their own organizational unit.

So, a person's genealogy told him who he was, where he belonged, where he placed his tent and who his neighbors would be. Slaves could be ornery, stubborn. Sometimes it took a whip to keep them in line. Now the whip was gone. Genealogies were doing what the whip had done. Yes, the people were free from servitude in Egypt, but their freedom had limits. They didn't have to work for others twelve hours a day and they didn't have to spend their days confined to the work area of a slave gang, but God put an impressive amount of structure in their lives. Can we picture it?

When this sea of people arrived at a new location, they set up their unit in relation to the whole. Tribal and clan leaders designated areas for tents, established corridors, marked and cleared open spaces for manna, designated the special places outside the camp and set up necessary services for the function of each unit. With practice they became efficient. The Tabernacle, first assembly space, Levite tent area and second open area must have stretched a mile in every direction from the center, the Tabernacle. Then came the tribes divided into clans and clans divided into households radiating out for another three miles or so.

To be sure, there was more desirable real estate. The tribal and clan heads pitched their tents nearest the Tabernacle. Those of lesser position tented further out in their clan's living space. If the farthest tents were four miles from the Tabernacle, all people could collect at the Tabernacle and return to their tents the same day. This walk probably motivated families to earn the right to camp closer to the front of their tribe's wedge. This densely packed part of the camp would cover an area of over 50 square miles ($4^2 \times 3.14$).

Joshua 7:24 says Achan had “oxen, donkeys and sheep.” If these animals were kept in the camp their manure would foul the manna and the camp would be hopelessly spread out. More likely the herds and flocks were kept in specially designated areas outside the camp proper. Other specially designated areas would have been used for temporarily unclean individuals, for lepers, for burying the dead or disposing of waste, among others. These specially designated areas could have occupied a band three miles wide outside the living area. A camp 14 miles in diameter would have an area of 150 square miles, the inner 50 for living and the outer 100 for specially designated functions. This vast distance explains why people mostly lived and mixed within their designated areas—tribes, clans, households, etc.

Daily Life in the Wilderness

Picture the people rising early to gather their daily portion of manna. Their desire for manna that was still fresh before the heat of the day spoiled it would have been adequate motivation to brave the nippy early morning desert cold. Perhaps each person spent the first hour or more gathering a day's worth. In this way God saw to it that each individual received sufficient daily exercise. If one area was gathered clean, people would have to search for areas that still had a supply. Manna was a perfect food but the effort required to gather it most likely limited over eating and thus becoming overweight.

Then people would relax while they enjoyed the first meal of the day and chatted about the daily tasks needing attention. Young children would require the attention of mothers. Just carrying water might occupy a teens morning. Waste had to be carried to designated areas and buried. Others gathered wood, bartered and traded services and cooked meals while the 600,000 men of the camp conducted their morning military drills. Herds and flocks were cared for. Professions and specialties were developed. Maybe all this was done before the sun was high in the sky and it was time for a long afternoon nap. There were many special days, days for instruction, days for their religious life and plenty of time to get into trouble for those so inclined. So went life for that vast multitude, thankfully protected by cloud from the burning daytime sun and by the pillar of fire during the cold desert night.

Moses had an army to train and command. Like all generals he needed to know how many troops were available for the day. Most likely it was a day for training, but it might be a day for action. He must have taken a "morning report" as military commanders generally do. How would it work? Possibly at a certain time the horns were blown at headquarters for the morning report. The horns at each tribe a mile from the Tent of Meeting would repeat the call. Those in charge of ten had already made the rounds to determine the able bodied. When the horns sounded, each sprinted off to his captain of 100 with his report.

The captain of 100 made a quick tabulation and hurried to the next level, the captain of a thousand. Those reports went to the clan leaders who most likely were near the tents of the tribal leaders. The tribal leaders made their tallies and sent them with runners to the Tent of Meeting. Possibly this was all accomplished in just half an hour. The officials at the Tent of Meeting tabulated the twelve tribal reports. Moses and his staff determined the training activities for the day. The trumpets sounded a second time and the available men, usually over 600,000, did as the trumpet calls directed. Most likely, they assembled in front of their tribe, in the space between the Levites and the general body of people. There they carried out the orders of the day.

God began this consciousness of being a nation with His original call to Abraham when He told him he would become a nation. God repeated this idea to Isaac and again to Jacob: "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation." Genesis 46:3. A record of those who went down to Egypt with Jacob is preserved in Genesis 46:8. Jacob's sons became the tribes of Israel. Clans and households arose from their descendants. Through the growth of a family, a nation was developing.

Difficulties in Following Genealogical Lists

Untangling Hebrew genealogies is challenging. The challenge begins with the person's name. Generally, just one name is given for a particular Hebrew in any given passage. Imagine how difficult it would be to keep people straight if everyone was "David" or "Mary" or "Bill" in today's

society. One helpful device was naming certain people along with their father's name ("Joshua the son of Nun;" "Caleb the son of Jephthunnah"). Some names were quite popular even then so various people answered to the same name. In fact, more than one person answered to many of the names found in the Old Testament and in one case twenty-three people found in Scripture bore the same name. Families gave their sons the name of a beloved grandfather or famous ancestor. Abraham's grandfather and brother both bear the name "Nahor." Sometimes people were named after places special to families. Terah named Abraham's oldest brother, Haran, after the city by that name. To further complicate matters, some Hebrews were known by several names, so various authors used different names for the same person.

Perhaps writing material was scarce or expensive, so Hebrew authors practiced brevity and efficiency in listing descendants. Because relational words (father, son, daughter, brother, sister) could be used narrowly or broadly, when we read "son of," for instance, it is often impossible to know if a particular list is condensed or complete. Thus, one cannot assume that the same name in two different places is the same individual or that a list of names is always inclusive. This is the most difficult challenge in sorting out Hebrew genealogies and the one that has led to the most distorted notions that claim to be based on the Word of God. This book would not be written if well-meaning, inerrancy-believing rank-and-file Christians had discerned that Hebrew genealogies were more often abbreviated than not.

Having seen how, on the one hand, genealogies provided identification, but on the other hand are difficult to sort out, we will now turn to their use. First, we will look at the use of basic relational terms—father, son, etc. Immediately we are in for a shock until we learn to think the way Hebrews used those words. There was no word for "grandson" so the single word "son" covered all possibilities. A normal reaction will be skepticism, so numerous examples follow. Then we will proceed to more difficult (and more unbelievable) ways Hebrews rendered lists of their descendants. For instance, the total number of those going down to Egypt with Jacob included unborn sons on the one hand and omits most of the daughters on the other hand, even though we read, "All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives were sixty-six persons in all" (Genesis 46:26).

Building on this foundation, we take up case after case of abbreviated genealogies in chapter six. Wouldn't two or three examples do? Few are iron-clad. While this author has rendered his best judgment, some examples may be legitimately questioned. But with a preponderance of examples, the case becomes overwhelming.

The light is coming. We have been encouraged by recently printed statements in standard young earth creation periodicals like "OK, maybe Israel was in Egypt 430-years, not 215," and "yes, perhaps, on occasion, Hebrew genealogies are abbreviated." The thinking of young earth creationists is going in the right direction. But we believe ample evidence exists that Shem's list in Genesis 11 also is condensed. Finally, with great reverence, we must realize that our Savior's genealogy is a Hebrew genealogy and it, too, is a matter of identity, not completeness.

Simple Hebrew Vocabulary

Biblical Hebrew had no words for relationships like grandfather, grandson, uncle, cousin, etc. The standard relationship words were words father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister. So, when the word father was used, it might mean immediate father, but it also might mean grandfather or more distant ancestor. In the same way when the word son was used, it might mean

immediate son, grandson or more remote descendant. The women said, “Naomi has a son,” when in fact Ruth’s baby was Naomi’s grandson (Ruth 4:17). The first verse of the New Testament says “Jesus, son of David, son of Abraham,” when later verses show that Jesus lived many generations after David and David lived many generations after Abraham.

The verb “to bear/to beget” (Hebrew-YLD) was used in the same general way. The one born might be the immediate offspring or a more distant offspring. But we only had four examples of YLD referring to a more distant offspring, so we sent an email to the Biblical Hebrew Dictionary asking if they could give further examples. We asked, “How could we be sure that YLD was used in the broad sense?”

Arie Uittenbogaard of Abarim Publications wrote, “Common knowledge. In Hebrew father- and motherhood extend beyond the primary biological generation.”¹⁴ In effect this man was saying that examples are unnecessary. Among users of Hebrew, it is common knowledge that the verb “to bear/to beget” can be used for both immediate and later generations. As previously stated, the Hebrew concept is that all future generations are in the loins of the present generation and therefore the present generation produces all future generations. Thus, the Hebrews used these basic relational terms in both narrow and broad senses while more specific relationship terms are used in most other languages.

Flexible/elastic. A Hebrew genealogy could (and often did) contain both immediate descendants and more distant descendants without any indication that some intermediate generations were omitted. We can conclude this because of what we have already seen as well as what we are about to see again and again. Our original example was that of Kohath-Amram-Aaron which reads like they were immediate father-son relationships. While Amram was the immediate son of Kohath, a number of unnamed sons stood between Amram and Aaron.

Moses wrote his older brother’s genealogy in Exodus six. He knew who their parents were and most likely every forefather back to Levi. But he did not name them all. There was no need. An abbreviated list adequately showed Aaron’s roots and thus where he belonged in the organization of Israel. So, Moses named their forefather who was a grandson of Levi and their foremother who was a daughter of Levi. Amram and Jochebed were highly visible ancestors among Jacob’s descendants. That connection made Moses and Aaron legitimate descendants of noted stock in Israel. Their lineage was beyond any challenge.

No one disputes that relational words are used in the Bible in a general sense such as “the sons of Israel” where all the descendants of Jacob are called “sons.” But it is less well known that they are also used widely in a broad sense when individuals are spoken of. Such misunderstanding leads to grave misinterpretations of Scripture. Thus, there is a great need to see numerous examples of this use of relational words.

The following section provides such examples. While those familiar with the Bible will immediately understand many of the examples, explanation is given so that all may understand. First a simple example is given of each relational category used in a broad sense; then more complex examples are provided. Further insights will be developed as examples are explored.

¹⁴ Abarim Publications online Biblical Hebrew Dictionary. Email exchange on 4/9/2019.

Example of Each Kinship Term Used in a Broad Sense

To Beget/To Bear. Use of the Hebrew verb *beget/bear* (YLD) in a broad sense:

Jochebed bore [YLD] to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam. Numbers 26:59.

The three children Jochebed bore to Amram were actually descendants born eight to twelve generations later. The Hebrew concept was that all descendants were in the loins of their forefathers. Statements of specific acts such as “to beget/to bear” are used accurately and literally to describe such distant relationships.

Father used for both a father and grandfather in the same verse:

And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you [Mephibosheth] kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.” II Samuel 9:7.

Mephibosheth was the son of David’s dear friend Jonathan and the grandson of Saul, the first king of Israel. Yet David calls both men Mephibosheth’s father, showing how Hebrews easily used the term “father” for immediate and more distant direct forefathers.

Mother. Use of the concept of *mother* in a broad sense:

He [Asa] also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother.... I Kings 15:13.

Maacah was the mother of King Asa’s father and the grandmother of King Asa. However, of all the various filial terms, “mother” is seldom used broadly.

Son. Use of the noun *son* in a broad sense:

[Jacob asked,] “Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?” Genesis 29:5.

Actually, Laban was the son of Bethuel and grandson of Nahor. Most likely Jacob mentioned Nahor rather than Bethuel because Nahor was the forefather of many people in the area and would be well known. In case the shepherds did not know Laban, they could at least point Jacob in the right direction to where Nahor’s people lived.

Daughter. Use of the noun *daughter* in a broad sense:

But Naomi said, “Turn back my daughters, why will you go with me?” Ruth 1:11.

Naomi was speaking to her two daughters-in-law. They were not her children. This is the use of daughter in a wider sense than being the mother of these two women.

Brother/Sister. Use of the nouns *brother* and *sister* in a broad sense:

Say to your brothers, ‘You are my people,’ and to your sisters, ‘You have received mercy.’” Hosea 2:1.

In the anticipation of fulfilled prophecy, Hosea foresaw that the people would call the men of the nation *brothers* and the women of the nation *sisters*. This is the same type of broad sense of *sister* as is found in Sons of Israel using *son* in a broad sense.

The above verses illustrate seven relational concepts used in a broad sense in biblical Hebrew—to *beget/to bear*, *father*, *mother*, *son*, *daughter*, *brother* and *sister*. Next we will examine more complex examples of the broad use of these relational words.

Examples with More Complexity

To Beget/To Bear (YLD). This common Hebrew verb is used for a mother's bearing of both a son, four grandchildren and even a granddaughter.

¹⁷The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, with Serah their sister. ¹⁸These are the sons of Zilpah, ...and these she bore to Jacob. Genesis 46:17-18.

The list of Jacob's family going down to Egypt is arranged according to his four wives. Asher was a son of Jacob sired through Zilpah, Leah's handmaid. The list names four sons and a daughter for Asher but then summarizes by saying Zilpah bore these children to Jacob when actually the only child born by Zilpah in this list was Asher. The passage also calls all five grandchildren sons when one was a granddaughter.

The idea of bearing a child who is actually a grandchild or more distant descendant is foreign to western thinking and therefore shocking to modern readers. Our first such example was that of Amram and Jochebed begetting Miriam, Aaron and Moses. Here is a second instance of bearing referring to someone other than an immediate offspring.

While this broad use of the concept of "to bear, to beget" is unfamiliar to most, Hebrew language scholars such as noted scholar and commentator C.F. Keil acknowledged it many years ago. He wrote of the high priestly line of Aaron, "[YLD, the Hebrew word for "beget/bear" in the genealogical lists may express mediate [in contrast to immediate] procreation, and the grandson may be introduced as begotten by the grandfather."¹⁵

To Beget/To Bear-other examples: Deuteronomy 4:25 and Isaiah 39:7 quoted in II Kings 20:18 (speaks of sons born to Hezekiah but these sons were born generations later, not the immediate sons born to him or even his grandsons or great grandsons).

Father. Use of the noun *father* in a broad sense:

You shall...[say], "A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Deuteronomy 26:5.

Moses was speaking of Jacob when he told the 2.5 million people who lived half a millennium after Jacob to say "A wandering Aramean was my father." He was teaching the Israelites to be humble about their roots, that it was God and not their forefather who was the source of all their blessings, making them a nation and giving them the Promised Land. In the broad sense of the word "father," every descendant of Jacob could call him "father."

Father used for the ancestor of various later descendants:

³The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David; ²[Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done; ⁷Do not be like your fathers.... ⁸Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were.... II Chron. 17:3; 29:2; 30:7-8. (Underlining ours.)

¹⁵C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (25 Volumes), C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Chronicles*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co, Undated), 113.

David was the forefather of kings Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah who lived many generations later. Nevertheless, David is called their father. King Hezekiah urged his subjects to turn from the wicked deeds of their fathers which included generations of departure from the feasts prescribed in the Law of Moses. Four times the term “father” refers either in part or entirely to those who were separated by at least one generation from their immediate father.

Father referring to the original patriarchs of the Jewish people:

See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them. Deuteronomy 1:8.

Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Joshua 1:6.

²Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, and they served other gods. ³Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River....” ¹⁴Put away the gods your fathers served..., ¹⁵Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River.... Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15.

In each of these three examples the people being spoken to are the generation that occupied the Promised Land. They are reminded that God had promised the land to the Patriarchs of Israel—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who lived 500-600 years before—and their descendants. These Patriarchs are called the peoples’ fathers. In the strict sense, a person can have only one father. Yet here even Abraham’s idolatrous father Terah is called their father. Clearly “father” is used in the broad sense here. As in the case of “son” referring to the entire nation, no one questions this use of “father” as it occurs so frequently. Why then should it be surprising that “father” when applied to a single “son” could also be used in a broad sense?

Father used in a broad sense even for non-Jewish peoples:

¹King Belshazzar.... ²Nebuchadnezzar his father.... Daniel 5:1-2.

Belshazzar was actually the son or son-in-law of Nabonidus who was the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Critics have used this verse to claim the Bible is in error. But obviously Daniel was using “father” in the typical Hebrew broad sense. Inerrancy-minded Christians are not the only ones who have not understood the Hebrew practice of using filial terms in a broad sense.

Father-further examples of the broad use: Genesis 31:3; Deuteronomy 1:8; II Kings 18:3; 22:4; I Chronicles 24:19; II Chronicles 28:27, 29:2, 34:3; Nehemiah 2:8.

Son used for both an immediate son and a distant male descendant:

And Shebuel the son of Gershom, son of Moses, was chief officer in charge of the treasuries. I Chronicles 26:24.

While Gershom truly was the son of Moses, born about 1450 BC, Shebuel, treasury official of David, was born over 400 years later yet is said to be the son of Gershom.

Son used for various generations after the father without distinction:

The sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobal. I Chron. 4:1.

In this verse all five individuals are said to be sons of Judah, yet only one, Perez, was the immediate offspring of Judah. Hezron was a son of Perez and therefore a grandson of Judah. Perez's twin brother, Zerah, had a distant descendant name Carmi, the father of Achan who troubled Israel in the time of Joshua. Hur and Shobal were sons of Hezron and thus great grandsons of Judah. Yet all are listed as sons of Judah. Clearly, the term "son" was very flexible in Hebrew genealogies.

Son used for a specific distant descendant:

And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. Nehemiah 10:38.

The priesthood in Israel came from just one of the many families of the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron. Aaron, the founder of this family, was born around 1500 BC. This example comes from the time of Nehemiah, about 500 BC where the priest is called "the son of Aaron." Obviously, the priest was a distant descendant of Aaron. The term "son" does not convey an immediate father-son relationship in Nehemiah 10:38.

Son used in the broad sense of a distant descendant of a clan leader:

And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold.... Joshua 7:24. (Underlining ours.)

When Israel defeated Jericho, a soldier named Achan from the tribe of Judah took booty God marked for destruction. In judgment Israel lost its next battle. "Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel" (Joshua 7:6). God said Israel had sinned; they had transgressed His covenant. The guilty party was to be found and executed. God gave three levels of search: tribe, clan and household. In the morning each tribe was to be presented. The tribe that was taken would come by clan. The clan that was taken would come by household. The household that was taken would come by individual soldier (Joshua 7:14-ESV).

Joshua did as God commanded. When the tribes passed, Judah was taken. When the four clans of Judah passed, the clan of Zerah was taken. When the households of that clan passed, the household of Zabdi was taken. Eventually the soldier named Achan was taken. He confessed and was executed. Altogether the clans of Judah numbered 76,500 soldiers according to Numbers 26:22. Yet the passage calls Achan the son of Zerah even though he was just one of thousands of soldiers in that clan. The writer knew this. He did not make a mistake. He clearly gave the basic descent of Achan, beginning with his tribe, clan, and household as was the custom before skipping down to his father and him saying, "Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken" (Joshua 7:18).

Son-other examples of the broad use: Exodus 12:35, 37 ("son" translated "people"); Numbers 26:5-40, 32:40, 41; Joshua 5:3, 17:6; II Samuel 9:9-10 (twice); I Chronicles 6:44, 50; II Chronicles 29:12-14, 29:21, 31:19, 35:14-15-3x; Ezra 2:1-14, 3:10; Nehemiah 10:39; 11:4-9, 22-24; 12:23, 47.

Daughter. Use of the noun *daughter* in a broad sense:

None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute. Deuteronomy 23:17.

This verse goes on with “and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute.” Obviously, the verse is using both terms in the broad sense of all the females and all the males who descended from Jacob.

Daughter used for a single distant descendant:

The daughter of Caleb was Achsah. I Chronicles 2:49.

Two prominent Calebs descended from Judah. One lived early in the Egyptian sojourn while the other lived during the conquest of Canaan, about 300 years later. I Chronicles 2:42-50 lists descendants of the first Caleb, a celebrated great grandson of Judah. Last of all it lists Achsah as his daughter when actually she was a distant female ancestor, a granddaughter many times removed.

Achsah is mentioned in this list because she was famous in the history of Israel. The second Caleb offered Achsah, his immediate daughter as a wife to the warrior who could capture the city of Debir. So Achsah was the immediate daughter of Caleb the spy who lived at the time of the conquest of Canaan, but a distant descendant of the first Caleb, the one in I Chron. 2:49, who lived early in the Egyptian captivity.

Daughter-further examples of the broad sense: Genesis 24:48; 29:12; Joshua 17:6.

Brother used in the broad sense of a close friend:

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan.... II Samuel 1:26.

David in a eulogy to Jonathan calls him his brother. Actually, they were not even from the same tribe, let alone clan or household. This is a very broad use of the term *brother*.

Brother used in the broad sense of fellow male Jews:

Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. Nehemiah 5:1.

After the return from Babylon a famine struck. Impoverished Jews exploited by wealthy Jews raised a great outcry. Nehemiah reasoned that the wealthy Jews should not exploit the impoverished Jews since all Jews were brothers. In the strict sense “brothers” are sons of the same immediate father, but in the broad sense all males who descended from Jacob were “brothers.”

Brother used in the broad sense of uncle:

³Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher... had no sons, but only [five] daughters. ⁴[They said] “The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brothers.” So according to the mouth of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. Joshua 17:3-4.

Hephher had at least three sons. The one named Zelophehad had only daughters. His five daughters went to Moses (Numbers 27:1-10) requesting the inheritance of their father to memorialize his name in Israel. Moses inquired of the LORD and was told to establish a law to the effect that if a family only had daughters, for the sake of the man’s name, his inheritance would go his daughters. In the verse they refer to their father’s brothers as their brothers. In reality their father’s brothers were their uncles. This is another example of brother in a broad sense beyond one’s immediate male sibling.

Brother-further examples of the broad sense: Joshua 1:14-15; I Chronicles 6:39, 44; II Chronicles 29:15, 34; 30:7; Nehemiah 3:1; 5:14; 11:8-9.

Sister used in the broad sense of one intimately close to the speaker:

My Sister, my bride. Song of Solomon 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1.

Solomon used the term sister in the broad sense of the intimacy he felt towards his beloved. Clearly he would treat her as more than a sister. Because this is figurative, it is somewhat of a borderline example of *sister* in a broad sense but it is far more than the blood daughter of Solomon's mother.

Sister used in the broad sense of a female belonging to a particular people group:

For they [the Midianites] have harassed you with their wives, with which they beguiled you...in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the chief of Midian, their sister.... Numbers 25:18.

Israel went to war with the Midianites because their women had led Israelite men away from God. The woman Cozbi is mentioned by name and called their sister even though in a narrow sense Cozbi could not be the sister of all the women of Midian.

Unique Features of Hebrew Genealogies

Unborn sons:

⁵The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. ⁸Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt.... ¹²The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ²¹And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppin, Huppin, and Ard. ²⁶All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. Genesis 46:5-8, 12, 21, 26.

Genesis 46:7 states that Jacob "brought all his offspring with him into Egypt." Each offspring is named and counted. Yet some were not yet born. These unborn offspring could have been born up to 40 years after the move. They were grandsons and possibly even great grandsons. The list includes not only Perez but his two sons—Hezron and Hamul (Genesis 46:20). Since Perez himself was just born or maybe not yet quite born when they moved, his two sons would not be born until Jacob's family had been living in Egypt 20-30 years. We might think the writer was deceptive to include unborn children in the list, but that is because we are judging by the way we look at genealogies. What was important to God was to establish the forefathers of the sons of Israel in the minds of the Jewish people.

Benjamin was born after Simeon and Levi massacred the men of Shechem. God told Jacob to move his family to Bethel. From there they moved to Isaac at Mamre (Hebron) and along the way, near Bethlehem, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. Twenty-four years later Jacob moved his family to Egypt, and in the Genesis 46:21 list of those who moved to Egypt are ten sons for Benjamin. While some may have been a scribal error, the rest most likely were still in

the loins of their father. We must conclude that some were Benjamin's grandsons, even though they are found in that list of Jacob's offspring that he took to Egypt.

Naming and counting unborn children seems strange to us until we realize that the primary purpose of the genealogies was to bind a nation together by blood. Genealogies identified the members of the nation and gave them a powerful glue that is the marvel of the world to this day. No other nation ceased to exist for two millennia and then came back to life as Israel did in 1948. Naming both born and unborn descendants provided a registry from which the clans of Israel developed. Apparently, it was important to have a foundation of names in the registry from the beginning of the sojourn in Egypt. Only God could devise a system that would last nearly four millennia.

Undercounting of daughters:

The passage says Jacob took "his daughters" to Egypt. Yet only one immediate daughter, Dinah, is listed and counted in the offspring total of 66. On the other hand, neither Jacob's four wives nor any of his sons' wives and only one granddaughter are counted in the family total of 70 that ended up in Egypt. Stephen has been faulted for saying that "Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all" (Acts 7:14). Since the party included his four wives, his unnamed daughters and his sons' unnamed daughters, who is to condemn some Rabbi whose Bible study Stephen attended who counted Jacob's party using different criteria and found the total to be 75, not the 66 number of Genesis 46:26?

Ancestors participating in the actions of descendants:

¹⁷So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave...was made over ¹⁸to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites... Genesis 23:17-18.

And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, [Jacob] bought...the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. Genesis 33:19.

They were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. Acts 7:16.

Abraham purchased the field of Machpelah with its double cave where the three patriarchs and their wives were buried whereas Jacob purchased the land in Shechem where Joseph was buried. So, it was Jacob, not Abraham who purchased the field in Shechem. Stephen's words in Acts 7:16 appears to be a direct contradiction of these facts except for the Hebrew practice of associating ancestors with the actions of their descendants. In effect, through Jacob Abraham purchased the Shechem property.¹⁶

Complete Genealogies

Before examining many abbreviated or condensed genealogies, let's examine two apparently complete genealogies. From the tribe of Judah is Jerahmeel's list of twenty-three generations beginning with Perez and ending sometime in the Period of the Judges. Judah

¹⁶Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts, 2019 Edition, 166-167.*
<https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf>

raised two successive families. The second was by his Canaanite daughter-in-law Tamar who bore him the twins, Zerah and Perez. The only noted descendant of Zerah was Achan, the trouble maker of Israel. But many famous descendants came from the other twin, Perez, including King David, Caleb the believing spy, Bezelel who was the chief artisan on the Tabernacle and the Lord Jesus Christ. Perez also had two sons, Hezron and Hamul. The famous people mentioned above all came through Hezron who fathered three sons: Jerahmeel, Ram and Chelubai (Caleb). Jerahmeel's list records 23 consecutive generations extending from the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn until about 200 years before David.

Complete genealogy of Jerahmeel (23 consecutive generations-numbering in brackets):

²⁵[Perez-1; Hezron-2] The sons of Jerahmeel [3], the firstborn of Hezron.... ²⁶Jerameel also had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam [4]. ²⁸The sons of Onam: Shammai [5] and Jada. The sons of Shammai: Nadab [6] and Abishur. ³⁰The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim [7]. ³¹The son of Appaim: Ishi [8]. The son of Ishi: Sheshan [9]. The son of Sheshan: Ahlai [10-actually Ahlai is Sheshan's daughter]. ³⁴Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters, but Sheshan had an Egyptian slave whose name was Jarha. ³⁵So Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to Jarha his slave, and she bore him Attai [11]. ³⁶Attai fathered Nathan [12], and Nathan fathered Zabad [13]. ³⁷Zabad fathered Ephlal [14], and Ephlal fathered Obed [15]. ³⁸Obed fathered Jehu [16], and Jehu fathered Azariah [17]. ³⁹Azariah fathered Helez [18], and Helez fathered Eleasah [19]. ⁴⁰Eleasah fathered Sismai [20], and Sismai fathered Shallum [21]. ⁴¹Shallum fathered Jekamiah [22], and Jekamiah fathered Elishama [23]. I Chron. 2:25-26, 31, 34-37, 39-41.

Although Jerahmeel had no significant descendants, no less than seventeen verses of Scripture are devoted to them. Why? He was Hezron's firstborn. Time and again the firstborn is featured in the Old Testament merely because he was the firstborn. Apparently because so many famous people came from Hezron, the historian felt obligated to give all the information he had on Hezron's firstborn even though he had no famous descendants.

Jerahmeel's longest string has 23 descendants, finally concluding well into the period of the Judges. By comparison, the line of Ram, Hezron's second eldest, reaches all the way from Perez to King David with just ten names. Because Jerahmeel's line ends somewhere in the middle of the Judges, about eight more names would need to be added to reach to David's birth. Clearly, many individuals are left out in the Perez-Ram-David line which will be examined in the next chapter.

About 40 names are found in Jerahmeel's listing (I Chronicles 2:25-41). Because it takes some doing to separate out the 23 generations that appear to be continuous, the following commentary is provided. Jacob fathered Judah, his fourth son, who fathered Perez. Judah was about 45 years old when his father moved the family to Egypt (1876 BC). Perez could not have been born much before this date since he and his twin brother Zerah were born after Judah had grown from birth in Haran to adulthood in Shechem, had fathered three sons who also grew to adulthood and two had died by the judgment of God, all in those 45 years. Thus, the birth of Tamar's twins, Zerah and Perez, had to have occurred very close to the move to Egypt. For sake of convenience, HB reckons their birth to be in the year of the move, i.e., 1876 BC. This starts the generational count not only of Jerahmeel's line, but also that of Perez's other lines leading to Caleb, David, Bezelel and Christ. For convenience the 23 generations are listed below without verse notations:

1-Perez; 2-Hezron; 3-Jerahmeel; 4-Onam; 5-Shammai; 6-Nadab; 7-Appaim; 8-Ishi; 9-Sheshan who had no sons, only daughters, one of whom he gave to his Egyptian slave Jarha; 10-Ahlai, daughter of Sheshan first called his son then explained that she was really his daughter but that he had no sons; 11-Attai; 12-Nathan; 13-Zabad; 14-Ephlal; 15-Obed; 16-Jehu (whom we suggest was in the Exodus generation); 17-Azariah; 18-Helez; 19-Eleasah; 20-Sismai; 21-Shallum; 22-Jekamiah; 23-Elishama. I Chronicles 2:25-41.

Most lists have difficulties and Jerahmeel's is no exception. The greatest difficulty here is determining when it ends historically. Scripturally, the list ends with "and Jekamiah fathered Elishama" (I Chronicles 2:41) before moving on to "The sons of Caleb the younger brother of Jerahmeel..." in the next verse. Does this list extend through the Judges or even through the kings to the Captivity? The text doesn't say.

One observation is that the genealogies coming at the beginning of Chronicles seem to focus on Israel's earlier history. The strongest clue is that of the ninth name, Sheshan. He had an Egyptian slave whom he gave to his daughter to carry on his name since he had no sons. A Hebrew owning an Egyptian slave? When during the 430-year Egyptian sojourn might the Israelites have been so prosperous and free as to own slaves who were Egyptian in nationality before the Hebrews themselves were reduced to slavery? It needed to be during a time when they enjoyed much freedom and especially before they became so numerous as to be a threat to Egypt.

During the years of famine Joseph managed the transfer of the land to Pharaoh, thereby greatly strengthening Pharaoh's office. Pharaoh showed his gratitude by favoring Joseph and his family with some of Egypt's best grazing land in the northeast of the Nile delta. Gradually Egypt declined and eventually the northern portion was overrun by the famous Hyksos people. They, like the Hebrews, were of Semitic stock. The Hyksos needed allies among the defeated Egyptians, so Israel most likely enjoyed a large amount of freedom under them. This would have been a favorable period for Sheshan to give his daughter Ahlai, who is called "his son" in verse 31, to his Egyptian slave Jarha. This marriage occurs in the tenth generation of Perez through Jerahmeel. At this point in history, we estimate that new generations were beginning about every 28 years so the daughter Ahlai would have been born about 280 years into the Egyptian sojourn or 150 years before the Exodus.

Sometime later stronger Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty arose who drove out the Hyksos. At that point the Hebrews would have been deemed a threat so they were put to servitude. Shortly thereafter Princess Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I, found and adopted Moses. Hatshepsut went on to control or rule Egypt for nearly a quarter of a century, first on behalf of her sickly husband, Thutmose II, and then on behalf of his infant son, Thutmose III, borne by a court woman. Thutmose III is said to have been about twenty-two when his step-mother died and for the next 30 years he ruled Egypt in his own right. He proved to be a powerful Pharaoh who extended the rule of Egypt all the way to the Euphrates.

At the age of 40 Moses had to flee when he killed the Egyptian because Thutmose III would use this crime as a way of removing his rival Moses. Dr. Merrill points out that this Pharaoh is the only one to rule Egypt for forty years until Ramses II who ruled 200 years later and therefore

the only Pharaoh to fit the timeline of Moses during a considerable stretch of Egyptian history.¹⁷ God kept Moses in the wilderness forty years until the next pharaoh, Amenhotep II, succeeded Thutmose III.

Returning to our timeline, if Sheshan's slave is correctly dated, the 16th generation of Jerahmeel would be the generation that left Egypt in the Exodus. That leaves the final seven generations for the first half of the 480 period from the Exodus until Solomon's Temple. Thus, Jarehmeel's line falls about ten generations short of Solomon's reign or nine of David's. Dr. Keil generally supports this view, being of the opinion that Jerahmeel's line ended somewhere near the end of the period of the Judges.¹⁸

In conclusion the line of Jerahmeel seems to indicate that about 33 generations are involved in the time from the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn and the birth of Perez until the beginning of Solomon's reign. These 33 generations cover a period of some 906 years (1876-970=906).

Complete genealogy of Heman (19 consecutive generations-numbering in brackets):

³¹These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the LORD after the ark rested there. ³³Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman [1] the singer the son of Joel [2], son of Samuel [3], ³⁴son of Elkanah [4], son of Jeroham [5], son of Eliel [6], son of Toah [7], ³⁵son of Zuph [8], son of Elkanah [9], son of Mahath [10], son of Amasai [11], ³⁶son of Elkanah [12], son of Joel [13], son of Azariah [14], son of Zephaniah [15], ³⁷son of Tahath [16], son of Assir [17], son of Ebiasaph [18], son of Korah [19], ³⁸son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Israel. I Chron. 6:31, 33-38.

Our second example of a complete genealogy provides what the first did not—a precise ending point as well as a precise starting point. When Jacob took his family to Egypt, his third son Levi came with his three sons Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Eventually they multiplied into a large tribe. Each of the sons formed a clan. God gave the clans of Levi to assist Aaron for the ministry of the Tabernacle. Seven hundred years later Samuel and even later David organized the Levites for ministry. After bringing the Ark to Jerusalem David appointed one person from each clan to be a worship leader at the Tabernacle. In the center Heman was to lead the Kohathite singers. On his right Asaph would lead the Gershonite singers. On his left hand Ethan was to direct the Merari singers.

To have had this heavy responsibility Heman needed to be a mature man at the time of his appointment. In fact, his own family all but filled the choir loft. I Chronicles 25:5 reports that God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters who were all under the direction of their father's musical work in the house of the LORD. Yet he not only served in David's day but lived to serve in Solomon's day as well. David brought the Ark to Jerusalem after his first seven years of rule in Hebron which began about 1010 BC. So Heman was maybe slightly older than David; 1000 BC is certainly a ballpark ending point for Heman's genealogy. But where did it begin? Actually it began with Jacob but what grabs our attention is the name Korah. Korah was the

¹⁷Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2015), 105.

¹⁸Keil, *Chronicles*, 67.

leader of the rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron and becomes the reason the story of Heman is so touching.

The story begins shortly after that first year of law-giving in the wilderness so it could be dated to about 1444 BC. God strongly guarded both the spiritual things of Israel under Aaron and the civil authority under Moses. The severity of punishment for violating those institutions is well known. A well-meaning man steadied the Ark during transport and God struck him dead. Anyone without authorization within the tabernacle grounds was to be put to death. Levites of the clan of Kohath and sons of Reuben found 250 princes of Israel to join them to challenge the authority of Moses and Aaron and God struck them all dead (Numbers 16). The camp took the side of those slain so God sent a plague that consumed thousands. Only the intercession of Moses and Aaron stopped the plague. Eighteen generations later a descendant of this wicked man Korah became worship leader of the entire nation. What a story of mercy and grace.

The dates are known: the rebellion of Korah about 1444 BC and the Ark carried to Jerusalem about 1000 BC, a time span of nearly 450 years. The number of generations identified in the Heman list for this period is 19. But Aaron and Korah were in their 80's while David and Heman were in their 40's, so one generation must be subtracted from Heman's list. That leaves 18 names. In counting the time from one generation to the next, begin counting with the second person. That leaves 17 names or 26.5 years per generation which is well in the ballpark for generations.

Now we must return to David's list which will be discussed in chapter seven. It is found four times in the Bible, beginning with Ruth 4:18-22. That list gives ten names starting with the move to Egypt in 1876 BC. The first three names are those who lived at the beginning of the 430-years in Egypt-Perez, Hezron and Ram. Then it skips down 300 years to the time of the Exodus with three more names: Amminadab, Nahshon and Salmon. Amminadab was the elderly patriarch of Judah. His son, Nahshon was the Prince of Judah whom Moses asked to conduct the second census for Judah. Salmon married Rahab after the fall of Jericho. From that point to David is 400 years yet only four names remain in David's genealogy—Boaz, Obed, Jesse and David. If there were no omitted generations, that list would represent 100 years per generation. The Heman list not only shows us what a complete genealogy would look like from the Exodus to the time of worship in Jerusalem but it also shows that the David list is abbreviated.

Finally, the Heman list omits 8-12 generations during the Egyptian sojourn just like the Aaron list did. After beginning with Jacob, it lists Levi-Kohath-Izhar-Korah. Aaron's list follows the same pattern: Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron. The first three names in each list are consecutive. The difference comes with Kohath's sons. Aaron descended from Amram, the first of Kohath's sons while Korah descended from Izhar, the second of Kohath's four sons. Kohath and his sons Amram and Izhar lived at the beginning of the sojourn in Egypt. Aaron and Korah were born 300 years later near the end of the Egyptian sojourn. The Heman list follows the pattern of Aaron's list and therefore confirms Aaron's list by skipping 8-12 generations between Izhar and Korah just like the Aaron list skipped 8-12 generations between Amram and Aaron.

Heman's list is ascending, moving back through time from son to father. We will reverse it to view it the usual way (descending from father to son). We have removed Heman's three forefathers (Levi-Kohath-Izhar) which we just covered above:

1-Korah; 2-Ebiasaph; 3-Assir; 4-Tahath; 5-Zephaniah; 6-Azariah; 7-Joel; 8-Elkanah; 9-Amasai; 10-Mahath; 11-Elkanah; 12-Zuph; 13-Toah; 14-Eliel; 15-Jeroham; 16-Elkanah; 17-Samuel; 18-Joel; 19-Heman.

Defenders of the 215-year view see such numbers and are forced to devise a scheme that harmonizes the numbers, oblivious to the nature and purpose of Hebrew genealogies. For example, one book says that Judah's first two sons had children when they were 14 or 15 years old and Judah's twins, Zerah and Perez, likewise had sons when they were still teenagers. Then to bridge the huge time span from that son to Bezalel, it suggests that each of the next fathers, Hezron, Caleb and Hur had their firstborns when they were in their sixties. Then to bridge the next brief time span, with a straight face this interpreter says the next generations had their sons when they were 20 years old. The Korah-Heman list assures us that the Hebrew generations during those centuries were within the range of reason, in this case averaging 26 years per generation.

Along the line of developing a story to fit misinterpreted numbers, another writer explained how four generations produced the six hundred thousand men found in the first census after the Exodus. The writer said it was simple. Each father had many sons, an average of like six sons per father per generation. In contrast with this speculation the record tells a different story. For every male that had six or more sons there was one that died early or didn't even marry or didn't have children or had just one or two sons.

The other two lines of temple musicians are listed in I Chronicles 6 as well. However, they do not provide the same measure of certainty as the line of Heman. His line parallels Aaron's line for both his and Aaron's line give the first three generations living in Egypt, then skip down to the individual in their line who was an older adult at the time of the Exodus—Aaron and Korah. But in the case of Asaph and Ethan, we cannot identify the individual in their line who was contemporary with Aaron and Korah and thus their lines have no clear starting point. Both Ethan's and Asaph's lines become suspect to abbreviation.

In summary this chapter uncovered the following characteristics of Hebrew lines:

1. The biblical genealogies are elegant, profound, mysterious, practical, personal and flexible in nature.
2. Genealogies told the Hebrew who he was and where he belonged. They were a major element in organizing Israel both in the wilderness camp and in settling Canaan.
3. The simplicity of Hebrew names requires great care in tracing lists. For the most part only a single name is given for an individual though several different names might be used for the same individual in different places. Some names were very popular so many people were known by the same name. People were given the names of famous ancestors. (In the translation to English it is sometimes even hard to tell if a name is male or female.)
4. Biblical Hebrew contains only basic relational terms such as father, son, daughter, brother and beget. The same word could be used for immediate connections such as a father and his immediate son or more distant connections from ancestor to descendant or from descendant to ancestor.
5. When the biblical text is read these elements appear in all their complexity. The company of people who moved to Egypt included the names of unborn sons. A daughter is even called a

son. In the same verse a man is called the son of both his father and grandfather. I Chronicles 4:1 speaks of the sons of Judah then gives five names—one was a son, one was a grandson, two were great grandsons and one was a descendant who lived 400 years later.

6. Scripture provides two apparently complete and lengthy lists—those of Jerahmeel and Heman. When David's list is compared with those lists, it is found to be greatly abbreviated. For instance, during the same time frame that Jerahmeel's list contains twenty-three names and Heman's list contains 19 names, David's list contains six names. These comparisons help us to see that David's genealogy is greatly condensed. Our next chapter will present 14 examples of abbreviated genealogies including several already introduced. The chapter after that will address the most contentious of all genealogies, that of Shem.
7. All these examples were correct uses of the Hebrew in the day they were recorded. They all reflect the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. However, they require that the student of Scripture be sensitive to the language in which Scripture was written and understand these lists in terms of the language of that day, not the language of our day.

Chapter Six

Abbreviated/Condensed Genealogies

Having seen numerous biblical examples of the broad use of kinship terms, we are now prepared to observe how they are used in genealogical lists to skip generations. At first this idea is unsettling, but as we set aside the typical idea of how genealogical lists should work and allow our minds to interact with Scripture itself, we will conclude that, indeed, Hebrew genealogies often left out unnecessary or unknown names. Abbreviating genealogies made them more efficient and decidedly less tedious. Many examples follow. See the Appendix for a table to illustrate each example.

All Hebrews descended from one of Jacob's twelve sons. The name of each son became a tribe so all descendants of Jacob were members of one of the tribes. Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons so when Joseph's name is removed and his two sons replace him, Israel had 13 tribes, not 12. But God assigned the tribe of Levi to minister to the spiritual needs of Israel. That tribe did not fight in the army and it did not have its own portion of the land. Rather it was scattered throughout the other twelve tribes and supported by those twelve tribes. As a result, one might think of Israel as having twelve normal tribes and one special tribe.

Each of the 13 "tribes" was further broken down into "clans" as the tribe's population grew. In time each "clan" was further broken down into "households." Population counts usually involved only adult males. Tribes numbered from 25,000-75,000 adult males; clans numbered from thousands to tens of thousands; households numbered from hundreds to thousands. The genealogies of those who descended from Jacob usually began with those three levels of division—tribe, clan and household. At times, the fourth name would be that of the individual to whom the genealogy belonged if the individual was well known.

This chapter comes in two versions. First, it summarize each example. Then it will present the list of examples with all their details which include important stories.

Example 1 — Aaron, Israel's First High Priest. Since Aaron was well known just four names expressed his genealogy: Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron (Exodus 6:16-20). Levi was his tribal ancestor; Kohath was his clan ancestor and Amram was his household ancestor. In this way his genealogy names three immediate individuals that began his line and lived at the beginning of the 430-year sojourn in Egypt then skips down about 300 years or 8-12 generations to him. Thus, the four names represent 12-16 successive fathers.

Examples 2-7 — Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On, Achan and Zelophehad's daughters. Each follows the pattern of Aaron's genealogy with minor exceptions when needed. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were well known so their list follows the pattern of Aaron's list: tribe, clan, household and individual. On was apparently less important among the rebels so only his tribe, clan and himself are given. Achan was not widely known so his father, Carmi, is added. The daughters of Zelophehad were also not widely known, so their grandfather as well as their father were added.

When stories are included, we can see that genealogies are far more than lists of names. They are historical references to key events and individuals in the life of the nation divided by timelines and circumstances. We learn of its struggles, heroes and villains. We learn how God worked through His people in relationship to their calling as a nation with its tribes, clans and households. He blessed them; but held them responsible for their disobedience.

Examples 8-9 –Sheerah and Joshua. (I Chronicles 7:20-27). These lists are among the most complicated lists to unscramble that can be unscrambled. Expositors see this list of names as one continuous line when it actually consists of two lines. Generally unseen, these verses commemorate the lives of two outstanding individuals in the tribe that otherwise was notorious for dividing Israel, the tribe of Ephraim. The problem is that a descendant was named Ephraim after the tribal father whose name was Ephraim. The first list contains nine names beginning with Ephraim number one who was born shortly before 1876 BC and ends with the daughter of the Ephraim number two. She was famous for founding or developing two major towns in Ephraim possibly 500 years after Ephraim number one. In verse 25 the writer goes back to pick up another son of Ephraim number one and goes down to Joshua. It also contains nine generations. While listing nine generations, each of these lists still omits many generations.

Example 10 — Caleb, the Believing Spy. He was so famous that Scripture does not give his genealogy so some may object that the Bible does not abbreviate his list. The objection is sound, but research gives so many names in his line that much of it can be reconstructed. However, because it still omits names it stands abbreviated as it is given piecemeal in the Pentateuch and Joshua.

Example 11 – King David. This is almost like presenting four examples because David's line is found four times in the Old and New Testaments. It is first found at the end of Ruth when she bears a son to Boaz. It begins with Perez who was one of the twins born to Judah about the time Jacob moved his family to Egypt (1876 BC) and concludes with David who died about 970 BC. If this list were complete each son would be born when his father was 90. Fortunately, the names are familiar. In looking at it the first three lived early in the Egyptian sojourn. The next three lived over 300 years later at the time of the Exodus and conquest of Canaan. Then the list moves down to the end of the Judges to name three immediate forefathers of David and finally David himself.

Example 12 — Israel's Priesthood. As with most other genealogical lists, even the priesthood of Israel omitted names at times. This fact emphasizes how Hebrew genealogies were mostly about identity, not about complete lists establishing legal descent. In contrast historical genealogies in Western societies were precise records of descent. While the following example records the genealogy of a priest that omits generations and was presumably written by that priest, Scripture contains other examples of omitted names in priesthood records.

Example 13 -- Ezra the Priest and Scribe. Ezra (7:1-5) omits six consecutive generations in his list when compared to the official list of priests in Chronicles. He had his reasons and they probably were not associated with efficiency or avoiding tediousness, but his list clearly omits six names and shows that skipping names in a genealogy was acceptable in Israel.

Examples 14-16 – The Three Leaders of the Temple Singers. David appointed Heman as the senior choir director. Heman had both outstanding and shady ancestors. His grandfather was the prophet and judge, Samuel, but the infamous Korah was also in Heman's line. His line follows the pattern of Aaron's line during the 430-year Egyptian sojourn, omitting 8-12 generations. then, from Korah to his own day, it contains 19 names and is complete. It spans the years from the birth of Levi about 1891 BC to his appointment by David about 1000 BC. However, it is complete from the rebellion of Korah about 1444 BC to David. That complete portion contains 19 names. On the other hand, the genealogies of the two other choirmasters, Asaph and Ethan, are examples of incomplete lists during that period. Asaph's line contains 12 names and Ethan's line contains 10.

Details to the 16 Examples Above

Introduction. Nearly half of all the Old Testament verses containing genealogies relate to the tribes of Levi and Judah. This makes sense since God chose the tribe of Levi to minister to Israel's spiritual life and the tribe of Judah to supply its rulers and the Savior. In Example #1 (Levi-Aaron) three generations were used to establish a line from the tribal founder, Levi, to the individual under consideration, Aaron. The organizational plan Moses followed was: first level, the tribe of Levi; second level, the clan of Kohath (Levi's son); third level, the household of Amram (Kohath's son).

Level two, the clan level, is identified by several different titles in various parts of the Old Testament. Consequently, some modern authors refer to it as the division level. Scripture also uses several terms interchangeably for the third level so some authors call this third level the clan level. For sake of clarity, we will call the first level the tribe level, the second level the clan level and the third level the household level.

A refinement that might be overlooked involves counting generations. In a list each person represents a generation. But when determining changes between generations, it takes two generations to produce a change. Thus, one must count from the birth of the first to the birth of the second as one generation. When working with averages, the average number of years in a generation must be determined. Because the length of generations varied, *Hidden Beauty* visits this subject multiple times.

One cannot presume that the firstborn is always the chosen successor. Judah was the fourth born of Jacob yet the royal line of Israel was established through him, not Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. Aaron's third born, Eleazar, carried on the line of the high priesthood. Even further, one's firstborn might be a female as in the case of Mariam being the oldest child of the unnamed parents of Mariam, Aaron and Moses. In counting Aaron's children only four males are named. The law of averages would suggest he had daughters as well. If he had four daughters and four sons and they alternated—female, male—his designated heir, Eleazar, would have been his fifth child. Thus, we estimate Aaron's age as 30 when Eleazar was born rather than 25 when he would have begun fathering children.

As to the length of a generation, 25 is used for an average during this period. It began when Jacob's sons started to have children. Chapter seven explains that human longevity declined 2-8 years per generation from the Flood to the death of Moses. Paralleling this decline, the start of new generations declined. In the list of Genesis 11 new generations began every 29-35 years. By the time Jacob's sons began having families, new generations were starting every 19-28 years. Unusual circumstances, such as Joseph's imprisonment resulting in his first son arriving when he was about 36, are noted but not considered average.

Example 1 Details—Aaron.

⁵⁷This was the list of the Levites according to their clans:... of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites;... ⁵⁸And Kohath was the father of Amram. ⁵⁹The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. Numbers 26:57-59.

Chapter one demonstrated beyond doubt that the Levi-Aaron genealogy of Exodus six and Numbers 26 is an abbreviated or condensed genealogy. It lists only Levi, his son Kohath and his grandson Amram before skipping down to Aaron. The list appears four times (Exodus 6:16-20;

Numbers 26:57-59; I Chronicles 6:1-3; I Chronicles 23:6, 12-13), always with the same fathers and sons—Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron. Levi was the immediate father of Kohath, so Kohath was the immediate son of Levi; Kohath was the immediate father of Amram, so Amram was the immediate son of Kohath; however, Amram was not the immediate father of Aaron and Aaron was not the immediate son of Amram. Up to twelve generations are omitted between Amram and Aaron.

The text also adds numerous details about individuals in the list. Among them, the Exodus passage relates that Amram married a woman called Jochebed and that this woman was his father's sister and she bore him Moses as well as Aaron. The Numbers passage adds that she was the daughter of Levi born in Egypt and she bore him Miriam as well as Aaron and Moses. Since Amram was born in Egypt, he married an aunt who was about his age. His descendants, Aaron, Moses and Miriam would become central figures in the wilderness wanderings some four hundred years later. Lesson: many details can be added to an apparent immediate father-son listing even though numerous intermediate generations are skipped. The details relate to the first unborn son, not the named son/offspring.

From the text alone the reader would never guess that Aaron, Moses and Miriam were separated from Amram and Jochebed by many generations. Moses, the writer, had no intention of deceiving his audience. People of that day knew their national history, so they knew he skipped generations. Moses correctly used Hebrew genealogies because their purpose was to knit a nation together. These three descendants of Levi had to be tightly bound to Jacob's lineage.

Example 2 Details—Korah.

¹Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth [Pallu], sons of Reuben, took men. ²And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. Numbers 16:1-2.

Numbers 16:1-2 contains four examples of abbreviated genealogies—Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. Korah was of the tribe of Levi while Dathan, Abiram and On were of the tribe of Reuben. The lists of Korah and of Dathan and Abiram will be examined next. The writer gave the tribe, clan and household identities of the first three, but omitted the household to which On belonged. In this way the On listing is the shortest list on record.

The genealogy of Korah follows the basic pattern of tribe, clan and household. Numbers 16:1 tells that Korah, like Aaron, was a descendant of Levi. Further, like Aaron he was from the Levite clan of Kohath. But whereas Aaron traced his line through Kohath's oldest son Amram, Korah traced his line through Kohath's second son Izhar. However, merely discussing names without faces and actions doesn't grasp the mind like associating names with specific events. So here is the background.

Korah got others to join him in challenging the leadership of Aaron and Moses. He envied the honor and privileges of Aaron's position as high priest. He found sons of Reuben who were equally envious of Moses (tribe of Levi) who exercised supreme authority in civil affairs. After all, Reuben was the oldest son of Jacob, not Levi. Traditionally, family leadership was the right of the firstborn. Two brothers controlling the entire nation had to be changed. They found 250 princes of Israel to join their uprising. This delegation marched on the Tent of Meeting to confront Aaron and Moses, undoubtedly accompanied by an unruly mob of supporters.

With indignation this horde threw down their challenge: “Why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” (Numbers 16:3). What they forgot was that God had chosen the nation’s leaders. In the end God opened up the earth to swallow the rebel instigators and fire consumed the 250 princes. Those 250 princes ranked among the celebrities of the nation. The next day the entire congregation grumbled against Aaron and Moses, blaming them for getting their princes killed. God sent a plague. Only the quick intervention of Aaron and Moses prevented the loss of the entire nation. As it was, the plague took the lives of 14,700 people in just hours. The divinely sent plague abruptly ended the rebellion.

Numbers 16:1 abbreviates Korah’s genealogy. It lists the first three generations of the Patriarch Jacob’s third son—Levi, Kohath and Izhar—and then skips down 300 years to Korah. When Jacob moved his family to Egypt (1876 BC), Levi was about 46 years old while his son Kohath’s was an estimated 20. Thus, Kohath’s sons, Amram and Izhar, belonged to the first generation born in Egypt. Like Aaron and Moses, Korah was born over 300 years and up to 12 generations later.

Examples 3-5 Details—Dathan, Abiram, On.

⁵Reuben, the firstborn of Israel; the sons of Reuben: of Hanoch, the clan of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites; ⁶of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. ⁷These are the clans of the Reubenites, and those listed were 43,730. ⁸And the sons of Pallu: Eliab. ⁹The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD, ¹⁰and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a warning. Numbers 26:5-10.

The genealogies of Dathan and Abiram are further identified in Numbers 16 because of their part in the Korah rebellion. These men were born in the tribe of Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn. Due to their role of leaders in the notorious attack on Moses they are also singled out in the second census of Israel found in Numbers 26 (above). Whereas the Numbers 26 census mostly lists tribes and clans, in the case of the tribe of Reuben, the census includes four verses on one household of the Pallu clan, the household of Elias (verses 8-11). Then the census tells that Dathan and Abiram were sons of Elias, ie, were descendants of the household of Elias. Without the identification of their household, we would only know their tribe and clan.

Reuben was about 48 when they moved to Egypt. Pallu would have been about 20 since he is listed second among Reuben’s four sons. Elias is not listed among those who went down to Egypt, so he would have been the first of his line born in Egypt. Dathan and Abiram were born over 350 years after the birth of Elias. This notice follows the pattern of listing three consecutive generations then skipping down to the individual under discussion. In doing so it passes over up to 13 generations in the same way the genealogies of Aaron and Korah passed over up to 12 generations.

On is only named in Numbers 16 which records this dangerous rebellion against Aaron and Moses. Like Dathan and Abiram, he was a member of the tribe of Reuben. His line is similar to theirs with one exception. Even his household is not given. This is probably due to the other two playing a greater role in attacking the leadership of Moses. The remaining names are simply Reuben (tribe)-Peleth/Pallau (clan)-On (individual). His list is abbreviated indeed.

Before tackling more complicated condensed or abbreviated genealogies, Scripture gives four other genealogies that occur during this period—those of Achan, the daughters of Zelophehad,

Joshua and Caleb. Each generally follows the pattern established above: tribe, clan and household. But further names are added to those who were unknown.

Example 6 Details--Achan.

But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel. Joshua 7:1.

Achan descended from Judah who raised twins after his first three sons were grown. Their names were well known; they formed two large clans in Israel. The more prominent twin, Perez, became the forefather of Caleb the spy, David and Jesus Christ. We will learn much of Perez's descendants. The lesser known twin was Zerah and from this son of Judah Achan descended. One of Zerah's sons was named Zabdi. He represents level three, the household level, in the organization of Israel.

The twins (Zerah and Perez) were born about the time Jacob moved his large family to Egypt so Zabdi would have been born 25-30 years later, say about 1850 BC. Achan served with over 600,000 other sons of Israel in Joshua's army that destroyed Jericho. Thus, Achan would have been military age (between the ages of 20 and 50) at the time of Jericho's fall in 1406 BC. Because he had considerable livestock and a considerable family, he was more likely nearer 50 than 20, so he would have been born about 1450 BC or 400 years after Zabdi was born (1850-1450=400).

Achan possessed oxen, donkeys and sheep as well as sons and daughters (Joshua 7:24). Possibly his lack of honesty had infected his entire household and had contributed to his prosperity. While the sons of Israel did not have first and last names, their father's name was sometimes given to help identify them. Since Achan was an obscure thief his immediate father, Carmi, was named. Carmi did not pass before Joshua and the priest, so most likely he belonged to the generation that died in the wilderness. If typical he would have been born 25-30 years (1480-1475 BC) before Achan.

To summarize, three generations are used to locate Achan's place in Israel. They are immediate father-son generations (Judah-Zerah-Zabdi). Judah fathered Zerah who fathered Zabdi. Judah was the tribal father; Zerah formed one of the clans of Judah; Zabdi formed one of the households of Zerah. So Achan belonged to the tribe of Judah, the clan of Zerah and the household of Zabdi. About 400 years after the birth of Zabdi, Achan was born. Obviously, many generations came between Zabdi and Achan. We suggest 12-16. Only one is mentioned, that of Carmi, Achan's immediate father. Due to the efficiency of Hebrew genealogies Achan's list is shortened by about two-thirds.

It might be helpful at this point to make some observations about Old Testament names. Two men named Carmi are found during this period of Israel's history. The first was Reuben's fourth son, Carmi, who formed one of the four clans of the tribe that Dathan and Abiram belonged to. The second Carmi was Achan's father who lived four hundred years after the first Carmi and belonged to a different tribe. He is the Carmi in Joshua 7:1 and is otherwise unknown.

Names were used over and over in Israel and are easy to confuse. The two famous Calebs in the line of Judah are a well-known example. There are three Elkinah's in the line of Heman. Fathers

named sons after an admired brother or ancestor. Abraham's brother Nahor was named after their grandfather Nahor. Unger's Bible Dictionary lists 23 different Azariah's in the Old Testament.¹⁹

Adding to the challenge of matching the right person with the right name, some people were known by two or even three different names and sometimes the spelling is rendered several different ways. (The same is true of place names which are commonly rendered by different spellings.) Sometimes it is impossible to tell if the same name found in different places is the same individual or a different individual. The careful student will keep all this in mind as he identifies the people in the OT, distinguishing between tentative and positive identifications.

Example 7 Details—The Daughters of Zelophehad.

Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, from the clans of Manasseh the son of Joseph. Numbers 27:1 (cf. Numbers 26:28-33.)

Zelophehad had five daughters but no sons. His daughters came to Moses asking for the inheritance of their father so that his name would continue in Israel. The LORD said that if a man had no sons, his daughters could preserve his name by receiving his portion of land. Their father belonged to the family of Hepher the son of Gilead, the son of Machir of the tribe of Manasseh. Their recorded line is Manasseh-Machir-Gilead-Hepher-Zelophehad-his five daughters—seven generations. This follows the pattern we have seen—tribe, Manasseh; clan-Machir; household-Gilead—the typical three level identification telling an Israelite who he was and with whom he belonged. An additional level is included in the daughters of Zelophehad, the family of Hepher. This event as we shall see set a precedent.

Now, what are the times involved? Manassah was born shortly before 1876 BC while the daughters brought their request to Moses just before his death at the end of the 40 years in the wilderness. Most likely they had a range of ages from 25 to 40 so they were born shortly after the Exodus. Thus the time span is approximately 430-years. At the rate of 25 years per generation their list should contain 17 names. It only contains 6. It skips about 11. We must conclude that the genealogy of these daughters follows the standard practice of naming tribe-clan-household and then skipping down to their father, adding only the family of Hepher and that up to 11 generations are omitted.

Examples 8 and 9 Overview—Sheerah and Joshua, I Chronicles 7:20-27. Interpreters are all over the map in their explanations of these verses due to duplication of names, the brevity of the list and the grammatical construction. While they are examples of abbreviated genealogies, they also reveal practices previously pointed out—the naming of descendants after forefathers and the compactness of lists. There is yet another reason for including this complicated passage: failure to do so allows it to be used to argue against our position. We do not claim to have the final answer, but the following interpretation makes far better sense than any other we have seen.

First, we must suggest why the Sheerah and Joshua lists are found in Chronicles. Two reasons stand out: first, nine chapters record genealogical records that established Israel as a nation and second, each tribe had notable achievers. Whereas half of the verses in the nine chapters are

¹⁹Unger, *Dictionary*, 110.

devoted to just two tribes, those of Judah and Levi, only ten verses (7:20-29) are devoted to the tribe of Ephraim, one of the smallest but most troublesome of all the tribes of Israel.

While Ephraim would later divide the nation and later yet adopt idolatry wholesale, in the early days it had its proud moments. Sheerah, for instance, was a famous Ephraimite woman who lived after the conquest of Canaan when Israel was beginning to build a nation. She established significant Ephraimite settlements and is listed in vv20-24. Joshua is much better known. He succeeded Moses to command the victorious forces of Israel in subduing the Canaanites and is featured in verses 25-27.

Example 8 Details—Sheerah, I Chronicles 7:20-24.

²⁰The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, ²¹Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath who were born in the land killed, because they came down to raid their livestock. ²²And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. ²³And Ephraim went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son. And he called his name Beriah, because disaster had befallen his house. ²⁴His daughter was Sheerah, who built both Lower and Upper Beth-horon, and Uzzen-sheerah. I Chron. 7:20-24.

Scripture frankly states that Sheerah's two brothers were killed stealing Philistine cattle. Israel lived in the hills; the Philistines lived on the coastal plain. The brothers, Ezer and Elead, showed stealth and initiative but they violated the territory of Gath, one of the five Philistine city-states adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea and paid for it with their lives. This theft and their resulting deaths could only have happened after Israel had invaded Canaan and captured the land God had promised. Israel began the campaign for Canaan with the destruction of Jericho in 1406 BC. The campaign for the land took the next ten or twenty years.

What confuses the reader is that Sheerah's father was named Ephraim after the founder of the tribe of Ephraim who lived 500 years before. This second Ephraim was crushed. He had great plans for the land he received in Canaan and his sons were obviously very motivated. Now his plans were shattered because he had lost them. Only a daughter remained. His brothers tried to comfort him but his mourning lasted many days. Maybe he was already an old man with little hope for having another son. Sometime later he saw possibilities in his daughter and made her his heir. Such an action had not been possible until the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses just before his death about 1406 BC and God revealed that if a man had no sons, only daughters, he could designate a daughter as his heir. The death of Ephraim number two's sons and his subsequent act of making Sheerah, his daughter, his heir could not have happened until Israel began settling in Canaan.

The error of interpretation comes when commentators confuse Ephraim, the tribal chief who was Jacob's grandson, with his distant descendant by the same name who came along 500 years later. They see a long list of names in verses twenty through twenty-seven which ends with Joshua and craft a story about how sons of Ephraim, the tribal chief, went up from Goshen to loot cattle at Gath early in the Egyptian sojourn and eventually Joshua ends this long list of descendants. They overlook the fact that Scripture says the two brothers went down, not up to steal the cattle.

Instead they conclude that here is a complete list from the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn until the conquest of Canaan 500 years later—up to eighteen generations (depending on how they are counted). They conclude that Scripture does not abbreviate genealogies; families simply had traditions of marrying early or late and this accounts for the wide variation in the number of people

in different lines. Their explanation overlooks the entire point of the list—that this second Ephraim’s daughter pioneered two well-known settlements in Canaan after the Exodus and Israel’s conquest of Canaan.

The standard interpretation is based on a poor understanding of these eight verses. Hebrew scholar C. F. Keil states that seeing but one Ephraim in the passage makes it incomprehensible²⁰. But even two lists, one ending with Sheerah and a second ending with Joshua, though abbreviated, offer far more names than just the two names between Levi and Aaron. These two lists provide two more arguments that the Levi-Aaron list is extremely condensed and at the same time are themselves examples of abbreviated genealogies.

The portion of Sheerah’s line recorded here is: Ephraim-Shuthelah/Bered-Tahath-Eleadah-Tahath-Zabad-Shuthelah-Ephraim and his children—Ezer, Elead, Sheerah and Beriah (three brothers and a sister), nine generations. Where the text reads, “Shuthelah and Bered his son,” because it does not say “Shuthelah his son, Bered his son,” it is commonly understood that Shuthelah and Bered were brothers, so these two names represent one generation, not two. The text does not identify which brother the line passed through.

But most amazing of all, the list is not connected to the second Ephraim. You read correctly. The list concludes, “Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath...killed.” The last name in this unbroken line is Shuthelah, the son of Zabad. The text does not connect the brothers to the second Shuthelah. Apparently, the story of the brothers being killed while attempting to take Philistine cattle was well known, but the biographer did not have the remaining names in the list to link the second Shuthelah with the second Ephraim and his family. How many generations are missing? Our standard of 25 years per generation suggests eleven generations are omitted.

If all the biographer knew was that this second Ephraim was a distant descendant of the tribal chief named Ephraim, why mention this list at all? It seems that it is introduced to help the reader place the deaths of the second Ephraim’s sons in the time of the settlement of Canaan. The point is to get to his daughter who did the notable deed of building those famous Ephraimite settlements. She could only become the heiress if his only sons were dead and God was yet to give him another son.

We suggest that with the death of her two brothers, her father mourned. Losing both sons was a great loss. Eventually he made his daughter his heir after the pattern of the daughters of Zelophehad. Sometime later God gave him another son of whom nothing more is said. But the daughter made a name for her father. She was a firebrand in the building of those two Ephraimite settlements and thus became a legend in the tribe of Ephraim.

While an unknown number of generations are missing between Shuthelah #2 and the second Ephraim (we suggest eleven), the writer does give us seven generations between Ephraim and Sheerah, which is 3.5 times as many generations as the two between Levi and Aaron. This genealogy testifies to the Levi-Aaron line being extremely abbreviated, but illustrates another reason for abbreviating a line—the writer did not have the names that tied the second Shuthelah to the second Ephraim.

²⁰Keil, *Chronicles*, 141.

Example 9 Details—Joshua.

²⁵Rephah was his son, Resheph his son [“his son” not found in the Hebrew], Telah his son, Tahan his son, ²⁶Ladan his son, Amminhud his son, Elishama his son, ²⁷Nun his son, Joshua his son. 1 Chronicles 7:25-27.

Continuing to unravel the complex record of the tribe of Ephraim, “Rephah was his son” (verse 25) has no connection with verses 23-24 which talks about a man named Ephraim who lost two sons. Rather, it resumes listing further lines from those first introduced in verse twenty. It lists many generations and concludes with Joshua who lived in the generation of the man who lost his sons. Thus, “Rephah was his son” is not a continuation of verse twenty-four but is starting over from verse twenty.

Verse 25 reads, “Rephah was his son, Resheph his son” in the English text. “His son” is missing after “Resheph,” in the Hebrew text. C. F. Keil notes that such a construction usually indicates the two were brothers.²¹ The Hebrews frequently named children with pleasant rhyming sounds. “Rephah” and “Resheph” answer to that practice which further strengthens the idea that they were brothers. The historian is starting over with a new line from Ephraim in verse 20 to show Joshua’s lineage. Neither Rephah or Resheph are listed in Numbers 26 as clans of Ephraim; but, in this list is Tahan and a Tahan is listed in Numbers 26 as the head of an Ephramite clan. Therefore, the second Tahan is most likely named after his clan’s founder and identifies Joshua’s clan. This list then is as follows: Joseph-Ephraim-Tahan-either Rephah or Resheph-Telah-Tahan-Ladan-Ammihud-Elishma-Nun-Joshua, eleven generations in all.

Let us compare the generations in Joshua’s line to those in Aaron’s line. Levi is about seven years older than his brother Joseph. Levi began the Aaron line while Joseph-Ephraim began the Joshua line. Aaron was 83 at the time of the Exodus while Joshua was about 40; so, Joshua’s father, Nun, would be about Aaron’s age. Only two names come between Levi and Aaron while eight names come between Joseph and Nun. Each name represents a new generation. By this measure 3/4ths of the names are omitted between Levi and Aaron.

Concerning the integrity of Joshua’s list, while Scripture does not tell his clan, it repeatedly identifies him as the son of Nun. We also know beyond doubt that at the time of the Exodus the chief of Joshua’s tribe, the tribe of Ephraim, was Elishama and five times in the book of Numbers he is said to be the son of Amminhud. The only time these two sets of names (Nun-Joshua and Amminhud-Elishama) come together is in the passage before us, thus adding further certainty to the names in Joshua’s line.

Now an estimate of missing generations in Joshua’s line can be made. Ephraim was born about 1878 BC while Joshua was born about 1470 BC or 408 years later. At the rate of 25 years per generation, Joshua was born about 16 generations after Joseph. Since only eight generations are named, eight are omitted.

Example 10 Details—Caleb.

We have examined the genealogy of Joshua, the spy who represented the tribe of Ephraim. Now we tackle the genealogy of the spy who represented the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. But alas, Caleb’s genealogy is nowhere to be found! He was so famous in his day that

²¹Keil, *Chronicles*, 142.

apparently no one needed his genealogy. Here is the primary record. Combined with other passages they clearly identified him in Israel without requiring a comprehensive list.

⁶Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. ⁷I was forty years old [Joshua was 39] when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land... ⁹And Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.’” ¹³Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. Joshua 14:6-7, 9, 13-14.

After God gave Israel the Law at Mount Sinai, Israel moved to the edge of the Promised Land where Moses sent twelve men to spy out Canaan. Each of the twelve was a chief from his respective tribe. At the end of 40 days these leaders returned with their findings. Ten said the land flowed with milk and honey; but, it was occupied by giants. In comparison, the Hebrews seemed like grasshoppers. They concluded, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are” (Numbers 13:31). Two, disagreed saying, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it” (Numbers 13:30).

The congregation raised a loud cry and wept that night, saying “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt...Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?...Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt...Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt” (Numbers 14:1-4). The two spies with the favorable report, Joshua representing the tribe of Ephraim and Caleb representing the tribe of Judah, said, “If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us...only do not rebel against the LORD and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us...their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us, do not fear them” (Numbers 14:8-9).

With that the congregation prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting, saying,

How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹²I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they. Numbers 14:11-12.

In the face of impending doom Moses pleaded with God, arguing that “If you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them, that he has killed them in the wilderness” (Numbers 14:15-16). Moses prevailed. God relented on destroying the nation but pronounced judgment: none of the men who saw the signs in Egypt would see the Promised Land, except for the faithful spies. The congregation would spend one year in the wilderness for each day the spies saw the goodness of the Promised Land. Then God sent a plague that took the lives of the ten unbelieving spies.

At this point we must recall the importance of Perez. Perez represented the powerful impact of the tribe of Judah on Israel’s history. Perez is made famous by his son Hezron who fathered Jerahmeel, Ram and Caleb. Their lines is the subject of I Chronicles 2. The chapter lists 23 generations of Hezron’s firstborn Jerahmeel (Table 5. 1). It gives the genealogy of Ram his second

son all the way down to David. Other lists continue that line to Christ. Of particular interest to us is Hezron's third son Caleb (also called Chelubai).

Again, Perez was born about the time God directed Jacob to relocate to Egypt (1876 BC). Hezron would have been born about 25 years later and Caleb, as Hezron's third son, would have been born about 33 years after his father's birth (boy, girl, boy, girl, boy; spaced two years apart). The key that seems to unlock the door to there being two Calebs is the concluding statement in the extensive genealogical information about the first Caleb in 1 Chronicles 2. Verse 49 says, "And the daughter of Caleb was Achsah."

Just one person bears the name "Achsa" in the Old Testament and her story is most unusual. The second Caleb was 85 when Canaan was conquered and Joshua was parceling it out to the tribes. This Caleb was promised Hebron because he followed the Lord fully. Now he was requesting his inheritance and Joshua granted his request. Caleb drove out the giants in one area of Hebron, but those in nearby Debir were too strong for him. He promised his daughter Achsa's hand in marriage to the warrior that conquered Debir. His cousin Othneil was successful and received Achsa.

When 1 Chronicles 2:49 says "the daughter of Caleb [Caleb #1] was Achsa," it is using the word "daughter" in the broad sense of a distant granddaughter. Since she was in the first Caleb's line, her immediate father, the second Caleb, would obviously also be in this line. Clearly, this second Caleb was named after his famous ancestor, the first Caleb. Thus, his line begins: Judah-Perez-Hezron-Caleb and ends with Jephunneh-Caleb-Achsa, giving seven names in a period that encompasses about 20 generations. Perez was a part of Judah's second family, born after Judah's three sons had grown up and two had married. We must count these as two successive generations, not one. Now we have identified eight generations in the line of Caleb the spy.

Numbers 32:12 and Joshua 14:6 speak of "Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite." The Kenizzites were an extended family in the tribe of Judah. "Son of Kenaz" means a descendant of the father of this household, not particularly an immediate son. All of this suggests more generations, anywhere from one to six or even more. Now we are up to nine to fourteen generations in the family of Caleb of the tribe of Judah.

But we are not done. This first Caleb had a son named Mareshah who named a son Hebron (1 Chronicles 2:42). The town of Hebron was extremely important in Jewish history, being Abraham's home after he and Lot separated. It remains to this day the site where he, Isaac, Jacob and their wives were buried. There Abraham enjoyed great favor with God. Apparently, Mareshah told the story of Abraham's years at Hebron so many times that he ended up naming a son after that place of great blessing.

This line of Judah retold the story again and again. When the spy assignments were given out, Caleb who was raised on those stories, managed to be assigned to spying out Hebron. After he gave the good report, the LORD promised that his inheritance would be everywhere he walked in the Hebron area. When Joshua divided up the land, he upheld God's promise by assigning the Hebron area to Caleb. If our conjecture is correct, we can add the names of Mareshah and Hebron to his line: 1-Judah; 2-Judah's first family; 3-Perez, part of Judah's second family; 4-Hezron; 5-the first Caleb; 6-Mareshah; 7-Hebron plus Kenaz and five to nine generations surrounding him and finally, Jephunneh-Caleb-Achsa, a minimum of eleven generations and up to twenty generations.

This list shows us how to take Aaron's list. Between Levi and Aaron are just two names, Kohath and Amram. Here, between Judah, who was born one year after Levi, and Caleb's father, who was

the same age as Aaron, are seven known generations and an undetermined number of missing generations before and after Kenaz. If we assume just five generations are unnamed, we have twelve versus the two in Aaron's line. Aaron's line seems to be condensed by at least 5/6^{ths} when compared to Caleb's line.

Imagine the strain in viewing but one Caleb to uphold a 215-year Egyptian sojourn. Somehow the first Caleb is the only Caleb. He is both the son of Hezron and the son of Jephunneh. He lived early in the Egyptian sojourn and he lived after the Exodus, the 40 years in the desert and the conquest of Canaan. What a difficult position! But a 430-year Egyptian sojourn fully accommodates the spy's line.

Tripping up Bible Students

As we have seen the Hebrews often named sons after famous forefathers or beloved relatives. In Sheerah's list are three such examples: a first and second Ephraim, a first and second Shuthelah and a first and second Tahath. In Joshua's list someone named a son after the famous Ephraimite clan leader, Tahan, so when reconstructing Joshua's list, both Tahans must be included. The Caleb list contains two famous Calebs born 400 years apart. Published lists that fail to recognize any one of these five duplications raise questions about the inerrancy of Scripture. So these lists are very important, not only for the historical data they preserve, but also for their contribution to the integrity of Scripture.

David, the Bridge (1876-1000 BC), and Remaining Examples (1446-950 BC)

Example 11 Details—David.

¹⁸Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, ²²Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. Ruth 4:18-22.

⁵The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. ⁹The sons of Hezron that were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai [Caleb]. ¹⁰Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah. ¹¹Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, ¹²Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse. ¹³Jesse fathered...¹⁵David.... I Chronicles 2:5, 9-15. (Underlining ours.)

David's list spans both the Egyptian sojourn and period of the Judges. Because of the familiarity of certain names in David's ancestry, Hebrew practice could reduce it to just a handful. Of all the names in this list, the most familiar was that of David himself, Israel's most famous and beloved king, born about 1040 BC. Another was Nahshon, Prince of Judah, at the time of the Exodus. Yet another was Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, who brought the Moabitess Ruth into the line of Christ, a story celebrated in the book bearing her name. Perez, the first in David's list, was founder of the most illustrious clan of Judah. He was born about the time Israel moved to Egypt—1876 BC.

These are four of the ten names in David's line. The ten span an astounding 836 years (1876-1040 BC). At the rate of four generations per century a complete list might contain as many as 33 names! Due to adjustments for known circumstances, we reduce this number to 30, of which 20 are omitted. This list of exactly ten names is found in Ruth chapter four. It can be followed within

the longer list of I Chronicles two. The names in these two lists leading to David are identical and in the same order, starting with Perez and concluding with David. They are repeated without change in the lists of Matthew and Luke. This highly abbreviated list was efficient. It produced a pleasing effect and it made the story flow. It was characteristically Hebrew.

Three Groups Separated by Hundreds of Years

Upon examining David's list more carefully it is grouped around three periods of Hebrew history—three names at the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn, three names at the time of the Exodus 430-years later, and four names concluding with David, 400 years after that. Those three groups of names were commonly known to be in a single line of descent. There was no need to include all the omitted names since the purpose of Hebrew genealogies was identifying ancestry, not proving it.

The first group should have started with Judah, and the longer lists do include him. But in Ruth the list starts with Perez. The name "Perez", Judah's fourth son, was almost synonymous with the name "Judah." From Perez came not only the bulk of the tribe's population but its kings, Bezalel the chief Temple artist, Caleb the spy and, most importantly, the promised Messiah. By beginning with Perez, the list in Ruth contains exactly ten names, a special number in Hebrew culture. This detail further indicates that the list was abbreviated. From Perez the line went through his son Hezron and Hezron's second son Ram. Hezron was Perez's oldest son, so if average he would have been born 25 years after his father. In contrast, Hezron's second son, Ram would have been born about 29 years after his father (boy, girl, boy, girl; spaced two years apart). This places the births of Hezron and Ram at about 1851 BC and 1822 BC.

The second group (Amminadab-Nahshon-Salmon) centers around famous individuals in the line about the time of the Exodus. The key to their dating is the detail that Amminadab was Aaron's father-in-law. Aaron died at the age of 123 shortly before Israel entered the Promised Land. These numbers place his birth at roughly 1529 BC ($1406+123=1529$). Amminadab would have belonged to the previous generation although he most likely was older than 25 when he fathered his daughter whom Aaron married.

Nahshon, the immediate son of Amminadab, was the famous Prince of Judah who supervised the census for his tribe at the time of the Exodus (Numbers 1) and was presumably Aaron's peer. Aaron was 84 at the time, so Nahshon would also be viewed as about that old except for the fact that he was the immediate father of Salmon, the third name in this set. The OT does not give details about Salmon, but Matthew identifies Salmon as "the father of Boaz by Rahab..." (Matthew 1:5). Rahab was the famous resident of Jericho who hid the two spies at the time of the Hebrew invasion in 1406 BC. As a reward they promised that her family would be spared in the coming Hebrew conquest. A son of Nahshon by the name of Salmon married her, continuing the line of Perez to David. Many commentators conclude Salmon was one of the two unnamed spies. If Nahshon were Aaron's age and he fathered Salmon when he was 25 or 30, Salmon would be very old when he fathered his son, so adjustments must be made.

The 1446 BC Exodus date affords an ideal point to estimate Salmon's age. Ten of the 12 spies returned a bad report shortly after the Exodus. God sentenced Israel to a year in the wilderness for every day the spies searched Canaan. Those spies were around the age of 40. Apparently, Joshua decided to send more mature spies in 1406 BC—those around 50 or 55. This would place Salmon's

birth about 1456-1461 BC, ten or fifteen years before the Exodus. Since he was below military age at that point, he did not die during the 40 years of wilderness wandering.

As to Rahab's age when she hid the spies, she had a considerable reputation and an extensive family as well; so she also must have been older, possibly even in her forties, maybe ten years younger than Salmon.

In summary, about 275 years passed between the birth of Ram, the last person in the first group, and the birth of Amminadab, the first person in the second group ($1822-1547=275$). Ram is the only person available to span these nearly three centuries. On the basis of four generations per century, ten generations are missing between Ram and Amminadab. Next, we will see that over 300 years passed between the birth of Salmon, the last person in the second group, and the birth of Boaz, the first person in the third group ($1462-1153=309$). About ten more generations are omitted between these two groups.

The third group begins with Boaz. Scripture says Salmon fathered Boaz. Since he was born over 300 years after the birth of Salmon, it is using the term "fathered" in the broad sense of being the forefather of Boaz. The final group in this list contains four generations (Boaz-Obed-Jesse-David). These are immediate father-son relationships.

The women of the neighborhood gave him [the child of Boaz and Ruth] a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.' They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Ruth 4:17.

David was born about 1040 BC. Since he was the youngest of eight sons, his father would have been born about 1080 BC. The birth of Obed would have been c. 25 years earlier, about 1105 BC. Boaz was older when he married Ruth, possibly 60, so c. 1165 B.C. would mark his birth. Salmon, the last father in the previous group, was born about 1461-1456 BC; so, 300 years passed between the births of Salmon and Boaz. Our standard rate for new generations suggests twelve generations should have occurred during this period. Adjusting for the late start of families can account for several of these generations, but at least nine are omitted. Added to the eleven generations omitted between the first and second group, about 20 generations are omitted in this list from Perez to David. Each of the ten names in the list had an important place in Hebrew history. Most likely the other 20 were relatively unknown. This is classic Hebrew genealogy. It appears without alteration in Matthew and Luke.

Since some may suggest that Scripture gives many examples of starting generations late, we would be the first to acknowledge such examples. However, they are exceptions, not the rule. As soon as the difficulty was removed, the normal pattern took over. Jacob delayed taking a wife when he saw the distress of his parents over Esau's two Canaanite wives. He was 81 when God gave him a wife, and in the next ten years he had twelve children (by four wives). On the other hand Arphachshad, the first named person after the Flood, and the next six generations each started having sons between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-five. That was normal then.

Abraham's father began his family at the age of 70, but we know the reason—infertility. Infertility was an intermittent problem in Terah's line. His daughter, Sarah, was infertile, having a child by the direct intervention of God at the age of ninety. Rebekah, granddaughter of Terah, was infertile and had twins by the direct intervention of God when Isaac was sixty. All of this was abnormal. When Jacob moved his family to Egypt, his twelve sons were between the ages of 48 and

24. All of them had sons. Some even appear to have had grandsons. Joseph, who died at the age of 110, saw his descendants to the fourth generation (Genesis 50:23). Starting families between the ages of 18 and early thirties was typical of Hebrew culture after Jacob.

Example 12 Details—The Priesthood of Israel.

The priesthood upheld the heart of the nation. God called it to a unique and formidable mission. Unique—tasked to teach the nation God’s holiness, the essence and acts of sin and sin’s necessary absolution through sacrifice. Formidable—the nation’s very relationship with God depended upon keeping His laws. Underlying that relationship were promises within a covenant which were repeated and enhanced. Thus, the genealogies of the Priesthood were foundational to the very survival of the nation.

God chose this special line when the Hebrews numbered several million and the adult males among them numbered about eight hundred thousand. From them God chose just one man, Aaron, and his four sons to become the officials assigned with keeping the nation true to God. His two oldest sons taught, by bad example, that to violate God’s instructions for worship could be lethal. They offered strange fire and God slew them. The two remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar and their descendants alone would be the nation’s priests.

Numbers 18:7 cites the divine authorization for this hereditary priesthood. To Aaron God said: “You and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” Encroaching on the priesthood was no small offense. It triggered a death penalty. The priesthood particularly involved “the altar and what was within the veil.” To assist Aaron in all the work associated with the exacting demands of the Tabernacle operations, all the rest of the tribe of Levi, some 22,000 males, was a gift to him “to do the service of the tent of meeting” (Numbers 18:6). In the beginning the priesthood of Israel was indeed selective.

Levi’s three sons—Gershon, Kohath and Merari—gave the tribe its three clans. They camped on three sides of the Tabernacle while Moses and Aaron tented on the entrance side which faced east. Levites of retirement age were to guard the Tabernacle, forbidding unauthorized access and putting to death any who violated its sacredness. Whether they ever executed anyone or not, their very presence assured a proper respect for the Tabernacle. This institution (priest, Tabernacle, sacrifice and Ark) enforced God’s rule as He dwelt at the very center of the nation. He was the very cause and reason for Israel’s existence. To weaken this institution was like making war on God who uniquely established the nation. Therefore, trifling with the Tabernacle would be a most capital offense.

Numbers 3:4 relates that “Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.” Just before Aaron died God told Moses, ²⁵“Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. ²⁶And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. ²⁷And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there” (Numbers 20:25-27). While all the descendants of Aaron who met the qualifications could serve as priests, only one would wear the special garment of high priest.

A short time later Israel began whoring with the daughters of Moab (Numbers 25:1). God said to hang the chiefs of the people to stop the plague He had sent. Moses ordered the judges to slay the guilty under them. Phinehas, grandson of Aaron and son of Eleazar, took a spear and plunged it through a prominent Israelite man and noted Moabite woman in the man’s bedchamber. God said

the zeal of Phinehas had turned back His anger from consuming the nation even though the plague took 24,000. As a reward God said:

¹²Behold, I give to him [Phinehas] my covenant of peace, ¹³and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel. Numbers 25:12-13.

This event further refined the official line of high priests in Israel. While all of Aaron's descendants qualified genealogically as priests, God appointed Aaron's older surviving son Eleazar to be Aaron's successor; and, this verse arranged that the position of chief priest would be given to Eleazar's son Phinehas and his line. The next chief priests were all direct descendants of Phinehas.

Switching from the Line of Eleazar to the Line of Ithamar: Meet the High Priest Eli

Then for some unexplained reason the work of high priest switched from a descendant of Aaron's older son Eleazar to a descendant of his younger son Ithamar. How strange, in view of the covenant given to Phinehas. Since service at the Tabernacle was essential for the accomplishment of God's purpose with Israel, commentators have surmised that some unusual circumstance led to the necessity of calling on Ithamar's line, such as the existing chief priest becoming incapacitated, or the next in line being just an infant, or the demands of being both a chief priest and judge being too great for the next priest in line at that time.

Whatever circumstance led to calling on the line of Ithamar, the elders of Israel must have sought the LORD, and He designated Eli of the line of Ithamar. Almost unanimously commentators agree that Eli was the legitimate acting chief priest. However, the official record of I Chronicles six does not mention him. As far as can be determined it only lists direct descendants of Eleazar through Phinehas. The equivalent of five generations from the line of Eli served as high priest for well over a century. After that the position reverted to the descendants of Aaron's older son Eleazar. While this switch was strange, the overriding principle was that God needed faithful priests. In His sovereign choice, He raised up the line of Eli who filled that need for a time. Although his two sons were worthless men, without question, his grandson Ahitub, and the following two generations were godly men and faithful chief priests.

Saul wiped out 84 priests of Eli's descendants wearing the ephod at Nob (I Samuel 22:6-23). One alone, Abiathar, escaped to David and served under him as David continued to elude Saul. Abiathar came with an ephod (I Samuel 23:6) which allowed David to inquire of the LORD. Through Abiathar and his ephod the LORD gave specific instructions concerning David's efforts to avoid being killed by Saul (I Samuel 23:2, 4, 9-12). With all but one of the priests who descended from Eli dead and that sole surviving priest being with the fugitive David, Israel had no functioning priesthood. Scripture does not tell how, but descendants of Eleazar again began serving as priests for the rest of the nation. So, for a period, two high priests served, one with David from the family of Ithamar and one with the nation at Gibeon from the family of Eleazar.

Near the end of David's life, the priest with David (Abiathar of the Ithamar line) supported Adonijah, David's son who was born next after Absalom and unwisely declared himself as David's successor when David was bedridden. By that time Zadok of the line of Eleazar was backing David. After David made Solomon king, Solomon retired Abiathar; but his son Jonathan, and later grandson Ahimelech served as head of the eight courses of priests made up from the Ithamar line.

Why Didn't Samuel Succeed Eli as High Priest?

If the case of Eli was unusual, the case of Samuel was doubly so. Most Bible students know that Eli's sons were wicked, even fornicating with female servants at the Tabernacle. Scripture calls them worthless and said they blasphemed the sacrifices of the LORD. Their debauchery was a national scandal. Samuel's mother, who was barren, saw the need for a faithful priest at Shiloh and vowed that if the LORD gave her a son, she would dedicate him to serve God all his life. Hannah and her husband Elkanah were descendants of Levi, serving the tribe of Ephraim and thus called "Ephrathites" (I Samuel 1:1). As Levites they were very concerned for the spiritual welfare of Israel. But Elkanah was not a descendant of Aaron so he was not a priest. God gave Hannah the son she prayed for; and, once he was weaned she left him with Eli. Her prayer of praise in I Samuel 2 contains images of her expectations that God would triumph over evil through righteous servants.

Through the years Eli found Samuel to be all that his sons were not and trained Samuel to perform the duties of a priest. Meanwhile God began to give visions to Samuel so that in time all Israel knew that God spoke through him. Then came the day when Eli's sons carried the ark into battle against the Philistines who defeated the Israelites, captured the ark and killed Eli's two sons. When the news reached Eli he fell over backwards and died of a broken neck. He was 98 years old. His two wicked sons were most likely in their sixties and his oldest grandchildren could have been over 30. One was actually born that day.

We might expect Samuel, who by this time was about 30, to step into the role of chief priest but he did not. In fact, he did not call himself a priest and Scripture never calls him a priest. This is amazing since he wore the ephod, the priests' garment, and Scripture says repeatedly that he "ministered unto the LORD under Eli." How can this be explained? The answer is twofold—first his genealogy but second God's purposes. Samuel was not a descendant of Aaron. While he was a Levite, he could never be the high priest or even hold the office of priest because he was not a son of Aaron. As a Levite he could assist Eli in any way Eli asked, but on his own authority, he could not offer sacrifice at the Tabernacle. He knew his genealogy and honored God by somehow avoiding the designation of priest. In fact he must have made this clear to his contemporaries because the title "priest" is never given to him in Scripture. This remarkable dedication in itself is an evidence of the inerrancy of Scripture.

But secondly, a man of God came to Eli even before Samuel's call when he was still very young. After rehearsing the wickedness of Eli's sons, he said, ³⁰"The God of Israel declares 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house" (I Samuel 2:31-32). Then comes the principle basic to any blessing from God: "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind" (I Samuel 2:35). Implicit in enjoying any promised blessing of God is a heart submitted to His will.

This explains how Samuel could "minister unto the LORD" yet not officially be a priest. Above all, God honors and receives the service of faithful servants. But the story is not done. I Chronicles 9:22 gives Samuel credit along with David for organizing activities at the Tabernacle. Apparently when Eli and his sons died on the same day, the fear of the LORD gripped Eli's remaining descendants and, if not before, they became very humble and teachable. Samuel began a training program for Eli's grandsons and over the years both organized and standardized the priestly services

at the Tabernacle so that Eli's next three generations all served faithfully as priests. Possibly Samuel did this through his office as the last judge of Israel. Regardless, the intent of his mother's prayer, that righteousness would prevail, was answered.

We know Samuel's genealogy because David appointed his grandson, Heman, to be the chief choirmaster at the Tabernacle. His apparently complete genealogy beginning with Korah (Table 5.2) is given in the Chronicles chapter (I Chronicles 6) devoted to Levi's descendants. Genealogies were an essential feature to the success of Israel in accomplishing God's purposes with the nation. Godly Israelites such as Samuel held the genealogies as the very word and will of God.

Other Characteristics of Israel's High Priests

The succession of high priests is not a reliable way to measure the passing of time. Whereas generations were measured from the birth of the father to the birth of his first son, the office of high priest was just the opposite. When the high priest died or became extremely disabled, his son assumed the office. (The same was true for Israel's kings.) So in the case of the chief priest, time would be measured from the death of one to the death of the next.

While on first glance this seems reliable; in fact, it is not. In the case of Eli, when he died at the age of 98 he was blind (I Samuel 4:15). His sons (and Samuel) had been doing the work of the high priest but neither of them held the office. Eli's sons actually died before their father died and Eli's grandson succeeded Eli as the next chief priest. In the case of Israel's first high priest, Aaron, it seems that his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were doing most of the work in Aaron's later years. In the next generation Phinehas was very active while his father Eleazar was still alive and held the office.

The practice of naming sons after famous forefathers was commonly practiced by Israel's later high priests. In the list of 23 names of I Chronicles 6, there are three duplicates (Amariah, Ahitub and Zadak) and one triplicate (Azariah). Eli also followed this practice by naming his second son after Aaron's famous grandson Phinehas. His line also first used the name Ahitub which the official line would later use twice. The Chronicles list also begins with Jacob, Levi, Kohath and Amram before naming Aaron, Israel's first high priest. That mentioning is an example of condensing because there are up to twelve unnamed generations between Amram and Aaron.

As to the completeness of the Chronicles list, Dr. Keil writes: "We find too few names for the time from the death of Aaron to the death of Uzzi (Ozi), when Eli became high priest—a period of 299 years [by the Keil/Delitzsche chronology].... Five high priests—Eleazar, Phinehas, Abishua, Bukki and Uzzi—are too few; for in that case each one of them must have discharged the office for 60 years, and have begotten the son who succeeded him in the office only in his 60th year, or the grandson must have regularly succeeded the grandfather in the office—all of which suppositions appear somewhat incredible. Clearly, therefore, intermediate names must have been omitted in our register."

Dr. Keil finds the second and third periods (Eli-Solomon and Solomon to the Captivity) to have about the right number of names, serving an average of 25-35 years. He adds that notable names such as Jehoiada and Urijah "who was certainly high priest (2 Kings 16:10 ff)" are omitted, but that

some like Jehoiada might have been known by another name in the Chronicles list and that Urijah was too unimportant to be included.²²

Remarkably, in the days of King Joash, Jehoiada was the only priest mentioned from the time he and his wife hid baby Joash until his death late in Joash's reign. Jehoiada died at the remarkable age of 130 (2 Chronicles 24:15). His career was so distinguished that he was buried among the kings of Israel. The period from the birth of Joash until the death of Jehoiada late in the king's career suggests he was about 90 years old when he is first mentioned in Scripture. Certainly, his outstanding service to the LORD had gone on for many years before Joash. He was the face of the priesthood for 50-60 years, yet his name is not found in either the I Chronicles 6 or Ezra lists. Either his name was dropped from the list by scribal error or he was such an effective priest that even if one or more chief priests in the list ruled during his years of stellar service, they let him represent them.

With a few exceptions, the abbreviation of genealogies during the period following David is beyond the scope of this study. This survey of the high priestly line is for the purpose of exploring the possibility of omitted chief priests while guiding readers away from unfounded interpretations. On the other hand, Table 6.14 shows a definite gap in the line of Ezra the priest when placed side by side with the Chronicles list of high priests. The observations of Dr. Keil together with our comments on Jehoiada seem to establish a reasonable possibility that even the line of high priests followed the principle of selectivity in the records when it could. On the basis of 30 year tenures we have entered five successive omissions in the first period as well as several individuals during the second period. But, most importantly, the high priestly office was a matter of heredity; so, where the correct name was essential there would be no condensing.

Example 13 Details—Ezra the Priest.

¹Now after this in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, ²son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, ³son of Amariah, son of Azariah, [I Chronicles 6:9-7 adds "Johanah, Azariah, Ahimaaz, Zadok, Ahitub and Amariah"], son of Meraioth, ⁴son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest.... Ezra 7:1-5.

Spanning from Aaron to the post-Exile period, Ezra's genealogy, like David's, is clearly abbreviated. It omits six consecutive chief priests that are found in the primary record of Aaron's line (I Chronicles 6:1-15). The omission occurred around the transition from the Judges to the monarchy. Many think Ezra compiled I Chronicles. Whether or not he did the fact that he is closely identified with I Chronicles shows he was very familiar with that record so his omission was clearly intentional.

In Ezra 7:1-5 Ezra listed his descent all the way back to Aaron, Israel's first chief priest. He began, "Ezra the son of Seraiah" and used the same phrase "the son of" or "son of" with each head priest until he reached Aaron. From Seraiah to Aaron he listed 16 forefathers. One has no clue that his genealogy is condensed except that in I Chronicles 6:1-15 the same list is given in the opposite order and contains 22 names from Aaron to Seraiah. The six names Ezra omits are not an occasional omission here and there, which might then be the result of scribal error, but are the six consecutive high priests that are named between Azariah and Meraioth. The six omitted priests

²²Keil, *Chronicles*, 115-116.

working back from Azariah are 1-Johannan, 2-Azariah, 3- Ahimaaz, 4-Zadok, 5-Ahitub and 6-Amariah. After passing over those six consecutive high priests, Ezra continued with “son of Meraioth, son of Zerahiah” etc. (See both lists side by side in Table 6.13.)

Viewing the list of high priests found in I Chronicles 6:1-15 in descending order (beginning with Aaron), the six missing priests are the 9th through the 14th (Amariah-Ahitub-Zadok-Ahimaaz-Azariah-Johanan). Ezra may have abbreviated the list of 22 into 16 for sake of brevity, but then again, there may have been a deeper reason for omitting the six names.

If Ezra were uncertain about who was really the chief priest during that time of two chief priests, perhaps he bypassed the problem by condensing his genealogy to avoid stating chief priests who functioned as chief priests but did not officially hold the office of chief priest. Then when the list in Chronicles was put together, the author(s) decided on recording a clear line from Eleazar. While this explanation is tentative and does not explain why those omitted extended beyond the end of Eli’s line, whatever was the reason for omitting six consecutive priests, it is clear that Ezra did omit them and that this instance adds to the many examples showing that abbreviating lists was acceptable in Hebrew thinking.

Ezra also omitted the generations between Seraiah and him. Nebuchadnezzar slew his elderly forefather Seraiah. Seraiah’s successor, Jehozadak, was the high priest during the captivity and presumably Seraiah’s oldest son. Jehozadak was followed by his son Jeshua who was the first high priest when Cyrus the Great decreed that captives could return to their land. Then, Scripture names six succeeding high priests. Possibly Ezra does not name them because he was a descendant of one of the other sons of Seraiah. All he needed to do was show that he descended from Aaron which qualified him as a priest so he omits the obscure names between Seraiah and himself. Table 13 shows Ezra’s list side by side with Aaron’s.

Examples 14-16 Details—The Temple Singers. King David appointed a descendant from each Levite clan to lead worship—Heman from the clan of Kohath (but not a son of Amram-I Chronicles 6:33 with 6:38), Asaph from the clan of Gershon (I Chronicles 6:39, 43) and Ethan from the clan of Merari (I Chronicles 6:44). None of these men were descendants of Aaron so none qualified for the office of priest. But all the descendants of Levi were given to Aaron to assist him in leading Israel in worship and all three were Levites. Samuel’s grandson Heman, the chief choirmaster, descended from Izhar through Korah the rebel (Tables 5.1 and 6.14).

Nineteen generations are found beginning with Korah and ending with Heman. In the same time period the line of Aaron, contemporary with Korah, names but eleven. We suggest about 26 years per generation in Heman’s line, but 30 years per generation in Aaron’s line and include nine omissions to make the dates work for Aaron. Heman had 14 sons in his choir (maybe sons and grandsons) so he was most likely older than David. Like Aaron’s line Asaph’s line is also condensed. It has twelve names, skipping about seven. Ethan’s line is even more condensed, containing just ten, thus skipping about nine generations.

These three lines span the very important years of Israel’s early history, about 500 years from Aaron to David. To picture the distribution of these generations Table 6.11b shows them side by side with David and Table 6.15a shows them side by side with Aaron.

Final example of abbreviated genealogies, example 16 Details-Heman. David appointed this grandson of Samuel to the position of chief Tabernacle choir master. His list is recorded in the chapter on Levite genealogies, I Chronicles 6. It begins with him in verse 33 and goes all the way

back to the Patriarch Israel in verse 39. In a way it follows the pattern of the first seven examples, giving tribe, clan, household and individual, adding only the name Israel. The individual following an approximately 12 generation gap is Korah (Table 6.02). But from Korah to Heman are 19 names. That calculates to 26+ year generations so that part of the list is most likely complete.

The remarkable genealogy of Samuel (Table 6.17) concludes this series of lists. Words fail to describe the ministry of this godly man in the spiritual life of Israel. Following his genealogy is a supporting chronology (Table 6.17a) while Table 17b places his list side by side with that of Aaron and Eli. Because of so many ties with other lists, his list is a delightful conclusion to this very detailed chapter on lists. While many of the date assignments are estimates, they must be close to the true dates because of so many complementary lists.

Summary on Condensed Genealogies

This chapter has presented a case for the condensing of numerous genealogies—those of Aaron, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On, Achan, the daughters of Zelophehad, Sheerah, Joshua, Caleb the spy, David, the priesthood of Israel, Ezra, two Temple singers and Heman. Among the most obvious are Aaron (Table 6.01), Ezra (Table 6.14) and David (Table 6.11). The case of Ezra is both straight forward and simple because when comparing his list with the official list in Chronicles, he omits six consecutive names. Since it is understood that Ezra the Scribe was heavily involved in editing books of the Old Testament and he wrote the book of Ezra, he was at the least very familiar with I Chronicles. This seems to be another iron-clad example of an abbreviated genealogy.

The case of Aaron is the iron-clad example we used to unlock this subject in chapter one; however, it requires far more detail to establish than the block of omissions in Ezra's line. But numerous other examples have been presented. While a few may legitimately be dismissed through alternative interpretations, most will remain. Consequently, those of faith have two duties—both to receive the text of Scripture as the very word of God and to understand it in the light of how words were used when the text was written. The great encouragement section of Isaiah begins with a reminder that while all flesh is grass, “the word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:6, 8). Our poor minds must defer to that which stands throughout eternity.

While recognizing that the above abbreviated genealogies, at most, make only a difference of 215-years in the date of creation, they do establish a precedent for Hebrew genealogies commonly being condensed. If the genealogies of Genesis 5 and/or 11 bear evidence of condensing, they could change the date of the Flood by much more than 215-years. They will be looked at in the next chapter.

Confirmation of the biblical use of genealogies

In the summer of 2021, I stumbled across an article on the Internet that contained the same information I had discovered from Scripture over the preceding decade and have written in this chapter and the last. The article WAs entitled “The Genesis Genealogies” and first appeared in the 1/1/2001 newsletter of *Reasons to Believe*. It was comprehensive, well-organized and the writer, Dr. John M. Millam, was a chemist in his mid-thirties. Thus, two individuals of totally different backgrounds but the same love for Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of Scripture conclude that Scripture uses family terms in the broad sense as well as the immediate sense and that it often abbreviates OT genealogies. The agreement of such diverse researchers surely argues for the soundness of this view.

In 2011 Dr. Millam updated his article. Now as a 38-page pdf file, it answers to an Internet search for “The Genesis Genealogies.” In personal correspondence he told me the biblical history bug bit him and it has become his passion. Over the last 20 years he has written about 19 articles for the bimonthly newsletter. He is especially precise in showing how many of those who argue for the young earth position are inexact in their research. We agree with him on this point and seek to approach Scripture with all the integrity we can muster. In chapter eight we will answer his position on the extent of the Flood and duration of the days of creation but these different views must not divide the body of Christ.

Secular History of the Ancient Near East Confirm Biblical Records

Chapters 1-6 of *HB* discuss the biblical records from Abraham to Moses. By giving many numbers including the years of the Patriarchs and the life of Moses, Bible students can date the birth of Abraham to 2166 BC, the beginning of the sojourn in Egypt to 1876 BC and the Exodus to 1446 BC. These dates fit well with secular history, thus adding confirmation to the validity of Scripture. Abraham left Ur and entered Canaan at exactly the only time when Southern Persia briefly dominated Mesopotamia until 1500 years later. During this stretch of history Moses lived precisely when Egyptian history could allow it even though all traces of Israel’s time in Egypt have been erased.

The Pharaoh of Joseph’s day gave Jacob’s family choice land in the Nile Delta. Later, Hyksos invaders overcame weak pharaohs and gained control of parts of Lower Egypt. This allowed the Hebrews considerable freedom since both peoples were semitic. Some Egyptologist go so far as to say that the Hebrews were allies of the Hyksos. Scripture doesn’t speak of the Hyksos but does report that Jacob’s descendants multiplied until “the land was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7). Verse eleven reports that a pharaoh set task masters over them to afflict them “lest they join our enemies...and escape from the land”.

Even slavery did not stop Hebrew population growth. So a new policy was issued: the Hebrew midwives were instructed to kill Hebrew boy babies. When that didn’t work Pharaoh gave the order to cast Hebrew boy babies into the Nile River. Moses was born at this time. His mother hid him as long as she could (three months; Exodus 2:2), then cleverly prepared a floating basket, put her baby inside and placed the basket where Pharaoh’s daughter bathed each day. Pharaoh’s daughter spotted the basket, looked inside and saw a baby boy crying. Scripture says she took pity on him even though she recognized immediately that the baby was a Hebrew.

The baby’s sister had been stationed to watch. She offered to get a Hebrew nurse. Pharaoh’s daughter agreed, the baby’s mother came and Pharaoh’s daughter said “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages” (Exodus 2:9). When the child grew older, his mother brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter. Because of this remarkable window of opportunity, one can only imagine how intensely his family worked to prepare him to live as one of their own in Pharaoh’s palace. Also of importance, Thutmose I would have had to give his daughter permission to adopt a Hebrew as her own son so he had reasons for giving this permission and they are open to no end of speculation.

As to Egyptian history, Amenhotep I was the first pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty and is credited with driving out the Hyksos so he would have been the pharaoh who enslaved the Hebrews. The next Pharaoh, Thutmose I, followed the policies of his predecessor, oppressing the Hebrews. He also expanded the empire into Nubia and penetrated deep into Syria. He fathered a daughter

named Hatshepsut by his royal wife and later a son, Thutmose II, by a secondary wife. Thutmose II married his older half-sister and they had one child, a daughter named Neferure. Thutmose II also fathered a son, Thutmose III, by a lesser wife. Then he died, leaving Egypt with a two-year-old pharaoh.

Historians use an astronomical event to date the years of Thutmose III. But it has a major problem. Where it was observed was unrecorded, so it varies by 20 years depending on whether it was observed from the Delta or up the Nile at Thebes. Instead of Thutmose III ruling Egypt through an appointed stand in, Hatshepsut, his aunt, governed the country on her own. Thutmose III did not take the reins of power until Hatshepsut died 20 years later. History has concluded he hated her and, in his resentment, did all in his power to erase her name once he was in charge. In the last few years Egyptologists have changed this view. They have enough reasons to write a book but we only have a page to pass on their thinking.

Amenhotep II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, not his father Thutmose III, was the Pharaoh who took credit for some of Hatshepsut's accomplishments. It is speculated that he did this to strengthen his claim to the throne. This indicates that he was a weak pharaoh. He was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Thutmose III actually built his tomb adjacent to that of Hatshepsut who ruled for him until he was 22. Most likely, she did all she could to prepare him for a successful life as Pharaoh when he was ready. He certainly moved forward, building on her prosperous reign, not complaining about the past once he was in charge.

History regards Thutmose II as an insignificant pharaoh. Only a small number of documents exist for his reign. Relief scenes during his reign depict both him with his wife and his wife alone. Only one major monument is credited to Thutmose II and that one was completed by his son. Unique scarab seals were used by each Pharaoh on official documents and other important works. Because they were extremely small, they were hard to alter. The number for each Pharaoh is considered indicative of that Pharaoh's importance. Archaeologists have found 241 for Thutmose I, 65 for Thutmose II and 463 for Hatshepsut.

Hatshepsut was a prolific builder, commissioning hundreds of construction projects including the Twin Obelisks, the tallest in the world at the time. She employed the world-famous architect, Ineni. She produced prodigious amounts of statuary. She worked on increasing trade and generally conducted a peaceful rule. Egypt became prosperous under her hand. Whether it was a baby boy or a nation, her instinct was to nurture, to give the best care possible.

For years scholars debated whether she regarded herself as Pharaoh. Now they are certain she did, making her the 2nd confirmed female pharaoh in Egyptian history. In fact, she claimed her father intended that she should succeed him. It is thought that she even acted as her father's regent in his final years, was the power behind her husband's entire rule as well as those first 20 years of Thutmose III's rule. These years are characterized by consistent domestic and foreign policies. When she did die, due to the prosperity she left, Thutmose III could begin the first of 16 military campaigns that over 20 years would extend Egypt's power all the way to the Euphrates. He is considered a military genius and was one of the most militaristic of all the Pharaohs. One historian called him the Napoleon of Egypt.

Where is Moses in all this? Moses wrote in Exodus 2:10 that when the Hebrew nurse brought the child to "Pharaoh's daughter...he became her son. She named him Moses, 'Because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'" Thus, Moses himself claimed that he was both named and adopted by

Pharaoh's daughter. Stephen agrees, saying "Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son" (Acts 7:21). Then Stephen adds, "And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds" (Acts 7:22).

Moses had the best education available in one of the greatest dynasties ever to rule Egypt. His mind was filled with construction and statuary. He was trained as a military leader by a nation skilled in warfare. For most of 40 years he had seen his royal mother, Pharaoh Hatshepsut care for Egypt. He could appreciate freedom within limits, knowing that his people lived their own lives in a sense while also being used positively for Egypt's construction projects. But he had no idea how miserable they were, how mistreated they were. Then, for some unexplained reason, he visited his people when he was not expected and saw an Egyptian taskmaster unmercifully mistreating a Hebrew slave. In a fit of anger, he struck down the Egyptian and buried his body in the sand. When Pharaoh learned of this, he sought to kill Moses (Exodus 2:15). Moses fled.

The experiences in Egypt were essential elements in preparing him for leadership during the 40-years Israel was in the wilderness and God was unfolding an earth-shaking plan for the Hebrew people. But he would need other training as well. The next 40 years were spent in the family of a true servant of the living God coping with the harsh climate of the wilderness and caring for sheep. Until Moses completed this new education, he would not be ready to shepherd God's flock.

As to specific dates, Moses was born in 1526 BC. Most likely Pharaoh's daughter was younger rather than older at this time, maybe 15 years old. Possibly ten or fifteen years later she married her half-brother. Moses was 40 in 1486 BC when he slew the Egyptian and fled for his life from Pharaoh Thutmose III who was in his twenties. It is noteworthy that Moses successfully fled and covered the distance to Midian, apparently all on his own.

Egyptologists maintain a range of dates for the 18th Dynasty. They call the more recent dates the Low Chronology while the older dates are called the High Chronology. The biblical dates fall somewhere in the middle. Regarding the dates, Wikipedia includes an interesting caution: "These dates, just as all of the dates of the Eighteenth Dynasty, are open to dispute..."²³

²³ En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thutmose III.

PART III – THE ABBREVIATION OF SHEM’S GENEALOGY

Chapter Seven

Shem’s List: The Ultimate Example of Condensing

This chapter will show beyond reasonable doubt that Shem’s genealogy listed in Genesis 11:10-26 consisted of about 45-65 generations, but was condensed to ten by Moses the biblical author. Thus, it is not a chronology. This observation places the Flood 1300-1900 years earlier than Ussher’s date. Yet enormous obstacles hide this fact. For instance, unrecognized are two unmistakable kinds of change to human longevity following the Flood—the immediate and gradual declines of lifespans. These distinct kinds of longevity decline are further obscured by confusing those born before the Flood with those born after it. Maybe worst of all are the larger age numbers in the Septuagint which will take the entire next chapter to address.

Simple words, easy to understand, present ten fathers from Shem to Abraham in Shem’s Genesis 11 genealogy. After explaining that two years after the Flood Shem was 100 years old when he fathered Arpachshad, the passage continues the following pattern through Nahor without deviation:

¹²When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. ¹³And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. ¹⁵And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters. Genesis 11:12-15.

The biblical doctrine of inerrancy requires that all Scripture be taken literally according to its literary type. The literary type here is simple historical narrative. Thus, we must understand that Arpachshad was a real person, that at the age of 35 he fathered a son and that his remaining years were 403. Exact numbers are given for the names that follow as well—the father’s age when he fathered his son and the number of years he lived afterwards. These numbers are not fiction. They are facts and each fact is true. However, the verb “to father, to beget” can be understood narrowly meaning immediate son or broadly meaning someone down the line. Literally, Shelah can be Arpachshad’s immediate offspring or a descendant. The same is true for any of the other sons in the list. If “to father” is used anywhere in this list for a descendant down the line rather than an immediate son, adding the age when he fathered his son to the other numbers would give an incorrect date for the Flood.

Scripture gives no reason to suspect that a substantial gap exists between any of these people except between Eber and Peleg. But before getting into the subject we must strongly affirm that God intended that all down through history after the writing of Genesis, whenever someone would read the creation account, whether in the time of David, Jesus or Luther, he would sense that he was not far from when God created the heavens and the earth and thus not far from God Himself. In the light of eternity past, creation was just yesterday. The genealogies of Genesis five and eleven do not allow a sense of viewing God as acting so far in the past as to be irrelevant or merely a foggy memory. These two genealogies, rather, show God to be almighty and loving and that He is unfolding a plan to share Himself with whoever wants that relationship for all eternity. Any other reading of these genealogies misses their intent.

To place this chapter in context, here is the thread of our argument so far. Chapter one demonstrated that the Levi-Aaron genealogy is abbreviated unless Israel sojourned in Egypt just 215-years. Chapters two through four assemble conclusive evidence that Israel sojourned 430-years in Egypt. Therefore, the Levi-Aaron record is condensed. Chapter five discussed the convenient flexibility of Hebrew relational terms such as father and son. Chapter five concluded by recognizing the purpose of Hebrew genealogies: they connect people with their descendants and ancestors, but generally see no need for comprehensive lists of names as the secular world does. Chapter six gave sixteen examples of lineages that are abbreviated.

With this frame of reference, we can now look at the most obviously abbreviated genealogy of all, the line of Shem. The evidence is overwhelming, but is like the proverbial elephant in the room that nobody seems to notice. Poorly reasoned arguments explain this gap away. Some even elevate the idea that Shem's line is complete to the level of a doctrinal statement and make it a test of doctrinal correctness. Nevertheless, the facts point to Shem's line being shrunk by about four-fifths.

Unpacking the Confusion Surrounding Shem's List

The recorded decline of 225 years in life spans between Eber and Peleg is a clear sign that Shem's line is abbreviated. Since Hebrew genealogies (apart from certain lists of kings and priests) are about identifying ancestors with their descendants and visa-versa, not proving succession, Moses gave only ten critical names spanning the time from the Flood to Abraham: the Patriarch Shem, the first three generations born immediately after the Flood, the three names following the large gap of omitted names and the three names involving Abraham—his grandfather, his father and him. This efficiency saved Moses the trouble of recording the omitted 35-55 names.

By observing the recorded decline per generation just before and after the Eber-Peleg entry, the approximate number of missing generations can be estimated. While this approach is simple and straight-forward, much disinformation must be identified and answered. Before this chapter ends, we will also address unusual cases of shorter and longer lives as well as those of Noah and Shem who lived both before and after the Flood.

Recognizing Two Enormous Changes in Human Longevity

The first three generations born after the Flood—Arpachshad, Shelah and Eber—all lived about the same number of years (438, 433 and 464). This is remarkable in that all eight individuals who lived and died before the Flood each lived twice that long, about 900 years (Adam-930; Seth-912; Enosh-905; Kenan-910; Mahalalel-895; Jared-962; Methuselah-969; Lamech-777. Genesis 5:3-31). Then, immediately after the Flood human longevity changed drastically. It was reduced by half. This is a colossal change, from 900 to 450 years.

But the record gets even more remarkable because after three generations of living to the age of 450, man's years appear to decrease by half a second time. Eber lived 464 years while his son Peleg lived 239 years. Peleg's son, also lived 239 years while the sixth name, Peleg's grandson, lived 230 years. The first decrease in lifespans happened immediately after the greatest disaster ever to strike the earth since Creation, the Global Flood of Noah's day. But Scripture records no event whatsoever associated with this second halving. And this second halving is clear; it is not stated in obscure language; all can read it. The three named generations following Eber (Peleg-Reu-Serug) lived 239, 239 and 230 years. So, are these two halvings of longevity truly the biblical record? Yes,

the Adam group lived 930, 912, 905, 910, 895, 962, 969, and 777 years while the Arpachshad group lived just half of that—438, 433 and 464 years—and the Peleg group lived just 1/4th of the pre-Flood group—239, 239, 230 years.

How could there be such consistency in the midst of such change (900 to 450 to 236)? What could possibly have happened to cause such drastic and immediate changes in the midst of such similar lifespans? This certainly is the greatest question in the entire history of human longevity. Such a great mystery demands a solution. No end of explanations has been offered. The most common is that the numbers are wrong. Such an answer, however, raises the issue of the integrity of Scripture and is both unacceptable and unnecessary. A variation of this is that the numbers in the Masoretic Text are wrong. One must consult the Septuagint for the correct numbers. Yet even the LXX shows a 33% drop between them. The entire next chapter will be devoted to discussing the LXX numbers but in this chapter, we are using the Masoretic Text numbers.

So, two sudden drops in human longevity actually happened. Imagine seeing no problem with eight fathers living to the age of 900, the first three born after the Flood living only half that long and the next three living only one-quarter that long when there was no second event to rival the violence of the Flood. The nature and function of Hebrew genealogies in the context of the violence of the Flood supplies the answer.

Immediate and Long-Term Changes to Human Longevity

In order to solve the mystery of two halvings of human longevity in such a brief period one must understand that human longevity changed in two ways due to the Flood. First, it was immediately reset to half of what it was for those who lived and died before the Flood. In terms of numbers this reset was from 900 to 450 years. This was an immediate and drastic change in human longevity. The second change was gradual. Human longevity began to decrease after the Flood from generation to generation. It continued to decrease for over two millennia. By way of contrast, no such continual decrease is found before the Flood. This longevity reset was a new phenomenon that began with the Flood.

What was the cause of these two changes and more specifically, how did this author come to recognize them? As I listened to Creation scientists beginning in about 1996, I became more and more aware of the severity of the Flood. At some point this question surfaced: “What did such violence do to those on the Ark; do I find any hint in Scripture.” Eventually I realized I must look at longevity charts in terms of those who lived and died before the Flood versus those born after. Noah and Shem had to be separated out. They were in a category by themselves. This was a new approach to charting longevity. It showed that two kinds of changes to human longevity followed the Flood.

The immediate change to human longevity is clear. At the time of the Flood, human longevity was reset to half that before the Flood. The genes of those who boarded the Ark could produce offspring to live 900 years. But when they got off the ark a year later, their genes could only produce offspring to live 450 years, not 900. And those are the genes they gave to their offspring, 450-year genes, not 900-year genes.

We repeat: to recognize this change in the genes of mankind, one must compare those who lived and died before the Flood with those born after it. Eleven generations in the line leading to Christ began before the Flood. Enoch was translated directly to heaven so he did not see death. The 10th and 11th, Noah and Shem lived both before and after the Flood so they must be treated

separately. The remaining eight all died before the Flood and lived about the same number of years—900 years. Since they died before the Flood, their reproductive genes could not have been affected by the Flood. For them, whatever the Flood did to those on the Ark had no impact on their genetic makeup so they gave their offspring genes to live 900 years.

The very first generation born after the Flood lived only half as long. The same was true for the second and third generations that followed. They also lived only half as long as the pre-Flood individuals. There were no children on the Ark, only eight adults—Noah and his wife, their three sons and their sons' wives. Before the Flood the people who lived to 900 reached adulthood at about the age of 100, so that is when they started their families. Noah's three sons were all under the age of 100 although each had taken a wife. Each of Noah's sons began his recorded family after the Flood. Of Noah's three sons Scripture only gives the years for the line of one, Shem, but the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) indicates a similar and even parallel pattern of reproduction in the lines of his two brothers.

Shem begat Arpachshad, his first named son, two years after the Flood. Arpachshad lived 438 years. He begat Shelah who lived 433 years. Shelah fathered Eber who lived 464 years. In short, before the Flood people lived about 900 years; those born right after the Flood, about 450 years. For some reason not explained by Scripture man's new lifespan after the Flood was just half of what it was before. The Giver of Life no longer enabled anyone born after the Flood to live to the age of 900. Further, it wasn't just the first generation born after the Flood that lived only half as long. It was the first three consecutive generations. The first three generations in a row born after the Flood lived only half as long as the entire biblical history of those who lived and died before the Flood. This cutting of lifespans in half happened at the very time of the Flood.

But the Flood marked a second way that human longevity changed. This second change was an on-going change to human lifespans. It was primarily physical, something about genetic entropy, but environmental as well, such as the seasons being more harsh, etc. The causes for this second kind of change remain to be explored, but their effect is clear. These changes, whatever they were, slowly drained away much of man's vitality. This second impact could have taken some time to get started, but it continued to the end of Moses' days. It resulted in a gradual decline of longevity. It is reflected in many verses of Scripture which establish an undeniable pattern. The longest recorded lifespan of any born after the Flood was Eber who was a third generation post-Flood individual. He lived 464 years. Yet near the end of Moses' life (about 1410 BC), a man's typical full lifespan was 70 years (Psalm 90:10). While that decline from Eber (464 years) to Moses (70 years) was a huge decline, 394 years, it was nevertheless gradual, happening over the better part of three millennia.

Now we can see why there is such a drastic difference in the lifespans of Eber and Peleg. Their lifespans are simply the typical lifespans of those who lived before and after an omission of 35-55 consecutive generations. While Eber truly lived 464 years, his descendants may have lived more or fewer than 464 years but slowly their lifespans decreased so that 35-55 generations later people were only living to the age of 239. So, on one side of this enormous omission of generations Eber truly lived 464 years while on the other side of this huge gap Peleg truly lived 239 years. In reality, it was not a halving at all, but it can be mistaken for a halving. By recording the lifespan of Eber (464 years) immediately followed by the lifespan of Peleg (239), Moses was telling his audience that he was skipping the names of 35-55 generations worth of decline. Peleg was not Eber's immediate son. He was the son born in that line following all those missing names. Eber truly lived 464 years

and Peleg truly lived 239 years. But that 225 year decline between them was spread over 35-55 omitted generations.

Understanding the Immediate and Long-Term Impacts of the Flood

The immediate and long-term impacts of the Flood are not difficult concepts. But they are new, even radical. As I reviewed the thinking of inerrancy folks on the numbers in Shem's list, I found three general positions. For instance, after reading my Executive Summary a woman at church said her high school/college age kids accepted the biblical numbers as accurate, but were uncertain how to understand them--were they generalizations or precise; were they complete or not? Her young people probably represent the average inerrancy believer who does not understand that sometimes Hebrew genealogies intentionally omit generations.

At the opposite end of the scale Hebrew scholar Dr. Merrill F. Unger, a champion of inerrancy, did not hesitate to write clearly and adamantly that Shem's list omits names although he did not suggest where or how many. In between these poles is the word I received from Dr. William Barrick, religion editor for Creation Research Journal. He said that he does not hear the 2348 or 4004 BC dates in the creation meetings he attends in the Los Angeles area but on the other hand those speakers don't give earlier dates either. They simply avoid talking about the subject.

So, the general thinking among inerrancy believers ranges from uncertainty, to avoiding the subject, to certainty that the list is incomplete. Barrick, himself, like Unger feels Shem's list is incomplete. In my own research I have concluded that not one of the world's 100 leading evangelical, inerrancy, OT scholars believes Shem's list is complete. The question that kept troubling me as I began working on this subject twelve years ago was why none of these scholars had published a satisfactory scheme to account for the missing time.

In circulating this idea of an immediate and long-term impact of the Flood, I have found that about 90-95% of those who understand Scripture to be inerrant (the foundation of this book) say it makes sense. But the 5-10% of those who have spent years teaching the Ussher dates for the Flood and Creation find my ideas difficult to accept. Rather than giving them careful consideration, they typically go on the offensive. They repeat their arguments even though this book has systematically shown their arguments to be defective. In their zeal they don't even seem to understand the answers this book provides.

The situation is grave. Apart from accepting a biblical solution that reveals an earlier date for the Flood, the Ussher thinking creation scientists will continue to discredit the creation science they so self-sacrificially pursue, in effect, shooting themselves in the foot. I have been asked how they discredit the very science they use to dismiss evolution and recognize a Creator. Actually, it should be obvious. By giving a Flood date that is clearly too late, their critics leap for joy, announcing to all who will hear that since they are obviously wrong on the date of the Flood, their creation science surely must be equally flawed.

Credit to Creation Scientists

Maybe the following line of thinking will help creation scientists to understand how important their work has been in recognizing the gap in the Shem genealogy. It is not unreasonable to conclude that only because of their work could this solution be discovered. Creationists for some 50 years have been plumbing the violence of the Flood. Creation geologists have pointed to vast formations laid down quickly until they are blue in the face. Those formations give overwhelming

evidence for immediate, continuous deposition, not over long periods of time. The entire earth bears a consistent testimony to these formations being deposited rapidly, suddenly, indicating a steadily rising sea level as Genesis 7: 17-18 says. Now with this new information revealing the incredible violence of the Flood, Christians could make sense of these declines in human longevity.

Adding to the work of creation scientists, historical errors that obscured Shem's line are now corrected (see chapter 13). The recent clarification of Exodus 12:40 eliminated the 215-year Egyptian sojourn error. In addition, scholars have discovered how to translate millions of recently discovered documents written in cuneiform and hieroglyphics. And most recently, the Dead Sea Scrolls which show the care of copying Scripture and the various Hebrew textual families that existed between 50 BC and 70 AD were discovered and their secrets learned. (See chapter 8.) These findings have helped correct dozens of misinterpretations in the lives of Abraham and Jacob. (See chapter 14.) None of this information was available to Josephus, the church fathers or Ussher.

Those changes to human longevity may have been a direct act of God, a side effect of the Flood or a combination of the two. Whatever the cause it is worth pondering the forces the Flood released on the world. First, the Flood released 500 million years' worth of nuclear decay according to RATE findings published in 2005. It also released radon and chemicals which are harmful genetically. In addition, it caused rapid polar reverses. With thought many harmful forces could be listed. What did they do to the Ark passengers?

But one thing is certain. When Shem and his wife got off the Ark and parented their first son, Arpachshad, they gave him genes that only enabled him to live about 450 years, not 900. When that son and his wife procreated, they passed on the only genes they had, the ones they had received from their parents after the Flood. When Shem's grandson Shelah and his wife procreated, they likewise passed on the same reproductive genes that were somehow reset at the time of the Flood. That resetting now led to a new longevity for mankind—450 years instead of 900 years. The first halving of longevity began with the first generation born after the Flood.

While the immediate and long-term effects of the Flood were very different, a big stumbling block to distinguishing between them is the common practice of including the years of Noah and Shem on a continuous chart of lifespans. That practice is one of the causes of this 2000-year-old error and will always hide the correct answer. Noah and Shem must be viewed as special cases and treated separately. For this a careful explanation is coming up that will provide the reasons for keeping Noah and Shem from either Adam's or Shem's chart when viewed for the purpose of declining longevity.

More Considerations of the Long-Term Impacts of the Flood

Now for a more careful look at the second impact of the Flood which we call "The Long-Term Impact of the Flood." The second halving of human longevity could also have been a direct act of God or a long-term result of the violence of the Flood or a combination of the two. But Genesis 8:22 introduces a new possibility: "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night." While God promised not to send another global Flood and He promised to continue providing an earth that would sustain life, it seems that this verse is stating that making a living would take more effort and planning, and be more precarious. It seems to indicate some kind of change in the annual processes of nature. However, some commentators understand this to be a promise that, just as before, there would continue to be seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.

Still, creation scientists favor the view that pre-Flood man lived in a more predictable, semi-tropical climate unthreatened by natural disasters and very possibly shielded from solar radiation. Now he would experience crop failure, four definite seasons, powerful earthquakes, volcanic activity, violent weather and the Ice Age. Formerly food grew year around; now there would be seedtime and harvest. Whereas before a more uniform climate extended from pole-to-pole year around, now there would be cold and heat. Near the equator and in desert regions man would learn to survive during times of intense heat and unpredictable precipitation while near the poles he would learn to survive in times of intense cold.

Heat and cold would produce deadly storms and killing drought. Even more ominous, heat in the oceans (estimated as high as 86° in some areas) would produce an ice age while tectonic plate movement would produce earthquakes and lift mountain ranges into the clouds. Additionally, the human gene pool would acquire mutations that gradually reduced fitness and thus longevity. While the above view may be somewhat modified over the years by creation scientists, there currently is much to commend it.

These changes placed unique stresses on mankind. Scripture says the Ark landed in the mountains of Ararat, but that name was given after the mountains formed. Many of those mountains are volcanoes. Mount Ararat itself would eventually grow to 17,000 feet above sea level and the entire region would rise to become a plateau nearly 3000 feet high, much of it volcanic rock. Rising mountains and volcanism were happening worldwide. These volcanoes released ash that blanketed the earth for centuries and lowered summer surface temperatures significantly. Migration to Lower Mesopotamia and on to Arabia and the southern Mediterranean brought some relief from the volcanic activity and the growing cold.

If this view is correct the new world certainly contributed to the second effect of the Flood, although it may not have been the primary cause of this second effect. It seems that this second effect gradually wore away the vitality of mankind, producing a continuous decline of longevity. Because the decline was gradual and continued from the Flood until Moses, Shem's list must reflect it. The first records of decline between generations were five and 4.5 years. Such a small decline is only about a 1% difference in lifespans between generations. We are dealing with averages, but averages are made up of different numbers and each individual is different. So, in the midst of such small changes, one might not think of occasional variations of, say 25 (5%) or even 50 (10%) years as unusual and that is true. But the decline between Eber and Peleg was not the standard 4.5 or five years or even 25 or 50 years. It was an enormous 225 year decline, 61% of the entire decline from the Flood until Moses. To visualize all the average generations needed to produce a 225-year decline, the next paragraph explores such calculations.

The first six names in Shem's list provide differences over five generations. The difference between the first and second names, Arpachshad and Shelah, was just five years. The difference between the second and third names was 31 years but these 31 years were an increase in lifespans, not a decrease. But the increase was not 450 years (a 100% increase) so as to give Eber a lifespan like that of pre-Flood people, but simply an increase of 6.5% over that of his father and grandfather. The difference between the fourth and sixth names was nine years or an average of 4.5 years per generation. On this basis of 4.5-5 years of decline per generation, if one generation was omitted, on average the grandson would live nine or ten fewer years and this would be reflected in his reported lifespan. The son following an omission of four generations would live 18-20 fewer years. The son following an omission of eight generations would live 36-40 fewer years. The son following an

omission of 16 generations would live 72-80 fewer years. The son following an omission of 32 generations would live 144-160 fewer years. Now we get to the actual number given in Scripture, the 225 year decrease between Eber and Peleg: on the basis of a 4.5-5 year average generational decline, that son would follow the omission of 45-50 generations.

The first thought that comes to mind is that Peleg was an exception. But this cannot be, because his son Reu also lived to the same age. If Peleg died due to an accident or sickness, Reu would have lived 8-10 years fewer than Eber, but he also lived 225 fewer years than Eber. Even if both Peleg and Reu were exceptions, one would expect Reu's son Serug to have lived simply 13.5-15 fewer years than Eber, but he lived 234 fewer years than Eber. Peleg was not an exception. He lived a normal lifetime and no one born after him is recorded to have lived longer than he lived. His lifespan testifies to being born many generations after Eber. Thus, beget is used in the broad sense of Peleg being the son of Eber through many intermediate fathers. Modern terminology would call Peleg a descendant of Eber. Next, we must carefully document the gradual but continual decline of longevity between the Flood and Moses.

Specific Records of Longevity Decline

We previously saw that there was no decline of longevity over the generations that lived and died before the Flood. To repeat: on average each person in Adam's list (Genesis 5) who lived and died before the Flood lived about 900 years. Now we are ready to examine the post-Flood record which reflects a gradual but continuing decline of longevity in contrast to the pre-Flood record of no longevity decline at all. The decline from the first generation (Arpachshad-438 years) to second generation (Shelah-433 years) of those born after the Flood was five years. Shelah's son Eber lived longer than his father or grandfather and is an exception that we will deal with later.

The next three names in Shem's list are the fourth, fifth and six names. They come immediately after the gap between Eber and Peleg. Both Peleg and his son Reu lived 239 years while Reu's son Serug lived to the age of 230. Thus, there was no decline between the fourth and fifth names, but the sixth named person, Serug lived nine fewer years than either his father or grandfather. This nine year decline produces an average decline of 4.5 years per generation. Thus, the two periods record declines of five years from the first to the second names and nine years from the fourth to the sixth names. Apart from the 31-year increase from Shelah to Eber, these are the first specific records of lifespans after the Flood and they are nearly identical. Five to 4.5 years per generation is a change of a mere half year per generation in 35 to 55 generations.

Our third set of specific lifespans comes from Jacob's record which jumps down to the time in Canaan and Egypt, about 600 years after the second measure and two millennia after the first measure. Jacob lived to the age of 147. His son Levi lived to the age of 137. Levi's son Kohath lived to the age of 133 and Kohath's son Amram lived to the age of 137. A casual look finds the total decline from Jacob to Amram (four fathers or three generations) was 10 years ($147-137=10$) or 3.3 years per generation. A more careful look at this apparent decline will be offered later. At least on the surface we have a specific recorded decline of five years per generation immediately after the Flood, a specific recorded decline of 4.5 years per generation for two generations between one and two millennia later and a possible recorded decline of 3.3 years per generation over three generations half a millennium after that.

Now we jump down to a clear final decline of man's longevity, from Amram to Moses. They also were in the line of Levi. While the final notice of decline was Psalm 90:10 in which Moses wrote

that man's lifespan would be 70 or 80, these lifespans reflected the judgment of God on Israel's unbelief and the resulting death of an entire generation in the wilderness. In contrast Moses lived to the age of 120. Since Israel completed their 40 years in the desert in 1406 BC, Moses was born in 1526 BC. While the exact date of his forefather Amram is not known, Scripture says Amram was born in Egypt, married a daughter of Levi and his father was apparently an adult, so we place his birth shortly after the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn, say about 1870 BC. Thus we are measuring from birth to birth rather from death to death since these are the firmer numbers. Amram lived 137 years and Moses 120 years, so the decrease in longevity was 17 years. The years that passed are as follows: 1870 & 1527 or 244 years. The generations involved are: $244/25=10$. Thus declining longevity was 1.7 years per generation in this final measure.

So, Scripture provides four rough measures of lifespans over about 2500 years. Immediately after the Flood man's lifespan 450 years. Then, 1500 years later it was 236 years. Five hundred years after that it was down to 140 and yet 500 years still later it stood at 120. Would anyone question that Scripture charts a continual decline of longevity from the Flood to the death of Moses 2.5 millennia later. It would seem this gradual decline adequately explains the halving between Eber and Peleg. Most definitely God had given Abraham's line unusual strength and longevity. Many of the biblical numbers are at the high end of human longevity. This is especially seen in Levi's line concluding with Moses and his two siblings who all reached the age of 120 or more at the point where the average lifespan was 70. But even working with numbers that are at the high end of longevity there was still a clear and continuous decline from the Flood to Moses.

Two Standards for Starting New Generations

Knowing the number of missing generations is one of two numbers needed to determine the time of the Flood. The years represented by each generation must also be known. Then the number of missing generations will be multiplied by the years in a generation to determine how many years are missing between Eber and Peleg. The years in a generation will also be used when the total number of years is known but the number of generations is not known as in the case of the Egyptian sojourn.

As the records are studied it is apparent that as longevity decreased, the years to adulthood and thus producing offspring also decreased. While one might suspect this to be true, the record clearly shows it did happen. Those who lived about 900 years started families when they were about 100. While this does not help us find any missing generations before the Flood, it strongly establishes the concept of declining years to adulthood being a function of declining longevity. For our specific task we use 32 years to represent adulthood between Arpachshad and Jacob and 20 years in the period after Jacob, a total of 12 years decline in reaching adulthood after the Flood.

1. Standard Number One: 32 years

In the first grouping following the Flood (Arpachshad-Shelah-Eber), families began when fathers were 35, 30 and 34 or an average age of 33. In the second grouping (Peleg-Reu-Serug-Nahor), families began when the fathers were 30, 32, 30 and 29 or an average age of 30.25. To average all seven, we sum them ($35+30+34+30+32+30+20=220$) and divide by seven ($220/7=31.43$). To remain conservative and for sake of ease we rounded this number up to 32. Thirty-two then becomes the average number of years in each generation missing between Eber and Peleg. By way of example if

ten generations were missing between Eber and Peleg, 320 years would need to be added to the Shem line total to determine the time of the Flood ($32 \times 10 = 320$).

Following the first seven fathers named above, the next four fathers started families very late due to unusual circumstances: Terah at age 70, Abraham at age 86, Isaac at age 60 and Jacob at age 82. Each was an extraordinary situation. Infertility was the difficulty in the first three occasions, each of which involved Terah's line. For some reason he did not father Abraham until he was 130. Scripture specifically states that Sarah, Abraham's wife and an offspring of Terah, was barren. By divine intervention she and Abraham had their first and only son when Abraham was 100. Abraham's son Isaac was also married to a descendant of Terah and did not father an offspring by his wife Rebekah until God answered his prayer for offspring twenty years after they were married (Genesis 25:21). By that time Isaac was 60.

Jacob's situation is more unusual yet. Since Abraham arranged a marriage for Isaac when Isaac was 40, Jacob and his twin brother Esau likely expected that their father would arrange a marriage for them when they turned 40. Unfortunately, Isaac did not. When Isaac did not act Esau took not one but two Canaanite wives. They so distressed his mother that Jacob, being sensitive to his mother's feelings, decided to wait. It would be another 42 years before Jacob was married and his first child was born.

Determining the beginning of new generations on the basis of Terah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would miss the average by a country mile. Yet, their ages are frequently used as the measure of a generation and this is one of the reasons our declining longevity argument has been so well hidden. Since they are unusual cases, we will use the standard of 32 years derived from Arpachshad through Nahor in determining generations from the Flood down to the time of Jacob. In this way Terah being 130 when he begat Abraham represents four normal generations while Abraham fathering Isaac at the age of 100 represents three typical generations.

In the same way Isaac fathering the twins at the age of 60 represents two generations and Jacob beginning his family at the age of 82 represents nearly three generations. So while one might protest about a 5-4.5 year decline of longevity per generation and point to the 30 year decline between Terah and Abraham, that decline must be viewed in terms of four generations. This concept is further strengthened when one considers the 25 year decline from Terah to Isaac. It happened over the equivalent of seven generations. When viewed that way, the 5-4.5 year decline is in the ball park ($25/7 = 3.5$ year decline per generation). On the other hand, Abraham and Jacob lived more stressful lives than Isaac.

Another confirmation of this general principle is that as longevity decreased so did the potential start of each new generation. Eber and Peleg started their families at 34 and 30. But those after Jacob started their families even before the age of 20. Thus the age for reaching adulthood gradually declined to about 20 by the period following Jacob.

2. Standard Number Two: 25 years

Above we stated that the age of adulthood after Jacob was around 20. That is the record. But in the following discussion we will show that reaching adulthood and starting a family did not coincide as it did in the generations after the Flood when God's command to repopulate the earth was paramount. So we have decided on age 25 for starting new generations in this second time span.

Again Scripture provides us with much useful data—in this case, Jacob’s extended family that accompanied him to Egypt (Genesis 46:8-27). While Jacob started his family in his 80’s and even his twin brother waited until he was 40, Jacob’s sons began having families in their twenties and even before they were twenty. Case in point: we know the most about Judah’s fathering in the years before the relocation to Egypt when Judah was 45. In those 45 years Judah grew up, married and fathered three sons. Furthermore, his three sons grew up, two married and the third reached the age of marriage all in the same 45 years. Then Judah committed incest with the widow of his second son, thereby starting a third generation family. His second group of sons (twins by his daughter-in-law) should have been grandsons. This works out to starting the next generation when he was 23 and the third when he was 45—two generations in 45 years or 22.5 years per generation.

Some will protest that this was an unusual circumstance and requires an adjustment. Having sons through his daughter-in-law certainly was unusual. What should have happened is that when his first son was married at the age of 20, that son should have fathered a child instead of spilling his seed on the ground so that the LORD slew him. Then these two successive generations would have started when the fathers were 23 and 21 or an average of 22 years per father.

But that is not all. The second family Judah fathered consisted of twins—Zerah and Perez. The twins were born just before or just after the move to Egypt. But those named who moved to Egypt include two sons of Perez even though they were still in the womb and would not be born for another 20 or 25 years (Genesis 46:12). If this were not the case, a fourth generation would have been added to Judah’s line by the time he was 45. This would amount to new generations starting when each father was 15 years old which is highly unlikely. Since Hebrew genealogies are flexible, the writer of this part of Genesis chose to provide a fuller record of Jacob’s lineage in Egypt, so he included sons still in the womb who would be born in Egypt.

The record of Benjamin tops them all, further illustrating the idea of sons born to a very young father and even including unborn sons in this extensive list of Jacob’s heirs that accompanied him to Egypt. Benjamin was 24 when they moved to Egypt in 1876 BC. Genesis 46:21 lists ten sons for him! If they were all alive at the time of the move Benjamin would have had to have multiple wives and start having sons in his teens. Most likely some were grandsons or even great grandsons. Further, several are attributed to another of Jacob’s sons in another passage, so apparently a scribal error contributes to the confusion, but a few must have been alive at the time of the move meaning he was in his late teens or early twenties when he started his family.

Three sons are listed for Levi (Exodus 6:16) who was 46 at the time of the move. Since no sons are listed for Kohath at the time of the move, Kohath’s son Amram was born after the move to Egypt. Consequently, Kohath could have been an adult at the time of the move. Amram married a daughter Levi fathered after the move (Numbers 26:59). So unless she was born when Levi was elderly, the two male generations, Kohath and Amram, must have been born when their fathers were in their mid-twenties.

At the time of the move Jacob’s sons ranged from age 48 for Reuben to age 39 for Joseph plus Benjamin who came along later and was 24. Each of Jacob’s sons had at least one named son at the time of the move demonstrating the vigor of his line. It seems that some of his fifty plus grandsons were well beyond infancy. All of this points to the sons of Jacob starting families in their teens and twenties.

By the time of the Exodus 430-years later all able-bodied males aged 20-50 served in Moses' citizen army to defend their infant nation. Presumably, if a 20-year-old was considered old enough to risk his life in defense of his country, he was also old enough to marry and start a family. So the decline of longevity to the age of 70 was accompanied by the decline in reaching adulthood at the age of 20. As stated above this would be a 12 year decline in reaching maturity.

However, those early generations needed to repopulate the earth so they started families as soon as they were able. As we have seen, Jacob's sons were commonly starting families by the age of 20. Thus the potential age for starting families shrunk from 32 to 20. Nevertheless, for our purposes we need averages, not potential. By the time Israel was in Egypt and after, even though young men could potentially start families at 20, they had the leisure of starting them later and many examples are found of those who started families later, even Joseph the step-father of Jesus. As a result, we suggest using the age of 25 for determining generations during this period. Using 25 rather than 20 decreases the number of generations in Egypt by 20%.

Estimates of Omitted Generations and Year of the Flood

(See also Appendix Table 7.4)

Now we can estimate when the Flood happened, but this estimate is only a broad range of years, not a specific year. Following that will be an explanation of how these numbers were reached and the many variables. By recognizing omitted generations between Eber and Peleg the Flood dates between 4300 and 3600 BC. These dates are particularly encouraging to those who accept the Bible as divinely inspired because they encompass the earliest well-established post-Flood civilizations of mankind revealed by overwhelming secular evidence. In fact, Scripture indicates that those who got off the Ark quickly established an advanced civilization. Further, these numbers provide more years than the LXX which some creationists are resorting to.

The maximum date for the Flood is found by recognizing a 225 year decline between Eber and Peleg, an average decline of 4.5 years per generation and a 200 year quiet period immediately following the Flood to restart life. By dividing the total decline (225 years) by the decline per generation (4.5 years), 50 generations are found to be missing ($225/4.5=50$). The 200 quiet years give another 6.25 generations for a total of 56.25 generations. Since generations started every 32 years, by these considerations 1800 years are missing between Eber and Peleg ($32 \times 56.25 = 1800$).

Before the gap is a period of 101 years—the two years until the birth of Arpachshad, the 35 until he fathered Shelah, the 30 until Shelah fathered Eber and the 34 until Eber fathered the first unrecorded generation ($2+35+30+34=101$). By including the years until the birth of the first unknown generation (101) and the years from the birth of Peleg to Christ (2417), the maximum date of the Flood would be 4318 BC or 4300 BC for a round number ($1800+101+2417=4318$).

The minimum date for the Flood is found by assuming that Eber had extraordinary vigor and that if he had been average, he would have lived five fewer years than his father Shelah. Using 189 years of total decline between Eber and Peleg and five years for the average decline sets the number of missing generations at 37.8. Assuming also that during the most severe part of the Ice Age longevity decreased more rapidly, we round those generations down to 35. Multiplying 35 by the exact number of years per generation (31.43) calculates to 1100 years missing from the record ($31.43 \times 35 = 1100$). Adding the years in the gap to those before and after gives the minimum time of the Flood as 3618 BC ($1100+101+2417=3618$). Rounding 3618 to the nearest 100 gives a round figure range of 3600-4300 BC.

A friend saw these estimates of the missing generations between Eber and Peleg and took strong exception. He said four calendars from different parts of the world (China, India, Europe and the Americas) all point to about 4000 BC as the beginning of the earth. He said to read *After the Flood* by Bill Cooper. Amazingly, Cooper cited three calendars that he felt were free of major internal contradictions. All three placed creation at 4700 BC or earlier. Of the three he considered the Parker Chronicle to be the most reliable. It is Anglo-Saxon and places creation at 5200 BC.²⁴ By adding the biblical years before the Flood (1656) to our range of Flood dates (4300-3600 BC), creation falls in the range of 5956-5256 BC which is not that much greater than the Parker Chronicle and our dates come solely from studying God's Word.

Calculating Peleg's Year of Birth (See also Appendix Table 7.1)

This paper tags 2417 BC as the year of Peleg's birth. The trail to that date begins with Jacob's move to Egypt in 1876 BC, the standard date preferred by Evangelicals. When he came to Egypt, Pharaoh asked his age. Jacob replied that he was 130 years old (Genesis 47:9). By adding 130 to the 1876 BC date, we find Jacob was born in 2006 BC ($1876+130=2006$). Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born ($2006+60=2066$). Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born ($2066+100=2166$). By adding the numbers for the years of five previous fathers (Terah-130; Nahor-29; Serug-30; Reu-32; Peleg-30 = 251), we find Peleg was born about 2417 BC ($2166 + 251 = 2417$).

The year Levi was born is determined as follows. Joseph was elevated at the age of 30 (Genesis 41:46). Seven years of plenty and two years of famine had passed so Joseph was 39 when Pharaoh asked his father's age and Jacob replied that he was 130. Thus, Joseph was born when his father was 91 ($130-39=91$) which would place Joseph's birth at 1915 BC ($2006-91=1915$). Joseph was the youngest of the eleven sons born to Jacob in Haran in just nine years so his oldest brother Reuben would have been born in 1924 BC ($1915+9=1924$) and the third oldest, Levi would have been born in 1922 BC ($1924-2=1922$).

Individuals not fitting the pattern

Averages must be protected from exceptions and unusual circumstances. Both unusually vigorous people and people with lifespans considerably less than the average must be treated with care and when justified appropriate adjustments must be made. Possibly such a case is Eber, the third generation descendant of Shem who lived 464 years which is 31 years longer than his father Shelah (433 years). With Eber longevity increased rather than decreased. This is contrary to the general trend so he was likely unusually vigorous, but just how vigorous? His father and he could be treated like Peleg and Reu who both lived to the age of 239 immediately after the gap. With that adjustment Eber would be considered as living 433 years like his father. Or apart from unusual vitality again for sake of averages, he could be counted as living five fewer years than his father just as his father lived five fewer years than his grandfather. That would establish his lifespan at 428 years for the sake of averages and produce a longevity decline of 189 years ($428-239=189$). This would calculate to 38 missing generations ($189/5=38$) or 1216 years ($32 \times 38=1216$) and place the Flood at 3734 BC ($2517+101+1216=3734$ BC). More on Eber later.

Following Serug was Nahor who lived a short 148 years. He does not fit the pattern. Maybe he was sickly but more likely he died from violence or in some kind of accident. (Similarly, we suspect

²⁴Bill Cooper, *After the Flood* (Chichester, England: New Wine Press, 1995), 122.

Lamech died from violence.) So his years do not contribute to our search for the average decline per generation. But a minor skipping of generations may have occurred between Serug and Nahor. In David's line were three groups of three consecutive individuals with a relatively equal number of omissions between each group of three. If Moses were skipping two groups of names, the second gap would fall between Serug and Nahor. However, the decline between Serug and Nahor's son is only 25 years. At most 25 years only represents five or six generations and such a small number (25 years) is not beyond the deviation from averages.

We have already mentioned his son, Terah, who also does not fit the pattern already established. While his grandfather Serug lived 230 years, Terah lived 205 years, a 25 year decrease over two generations. Further he bore his first son at the age of 70 while all the preceding fathers born after the Flood fathered their first sons between the ages of 29 and 35. For these reasons we feel that the records of Nahor and Terah do not fit the clear pattern of the three born before the gap and the three born after the gap, so we are not using them in our search for the average years of longevity decline after the Flood.

Another exception could be Jacob's years. He describes how Laban exploited him for 20 years (Genesis 31:38-42). He was like a slave to Laban. After returning to Canaan he appointed Joseph to supervise his older brothers. He might have done this because he was worn out by that time. You might say he worked himself to death and thus died sooner than he would have otherwise. Thus, he most likely died younger than if he had not worked so hard.

An entirely different consideration is the work of God in judging unbelief while giving certain leaders and the line of Christ greater years and vitality. History records that in the early second millennium BC pharaohs were living about 60 years. Yet Joseph lived 110 years and each of those first three fathers in the line of Levi lived about 135 years. Even more startling four centuries later Mariam, Aaron and Moses all lived 120 years or more. Yet Moses wrote in his final days that a full lifetime was 70 years (Psalm 90:10). Possibly God supernaturally granted more years to Moses and his siblings in order to found the nation.

However, the 70 year standard might have been related to the judgment of God on the Exodus generation. Because of their unbelief God said they would not enter the Promised Land. Hebrews three relates that an entire generation other than those who believed God perished in the wilderness. It could be that the 70 year standard Moses wrote of took more time to become fully established after his death.

Noah and Shem

Noah and his son Shem are special cases in a category by themselves. Since both were born before the Flood they received the genes that called for 900 year life spans. As a result, both lived a long time after the Flood—Noah 350 years and Shem 500 years. There are reasonable explanations for how they could live so many years after the Flood when the new normal lifespan of those born after the Flood was 450 years. It is common medical knowledge that genes given at birth plus those replacements in one's early years have the most effect on one's lifespan. Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came. His physical body developed for 600 years under pre-Flood conditions. Certainly his walk with God gave him extra vitality. Because of all those pre-Flood years, the new conditions after the Flood most likely had less effect on him. If he had lived his entire lifetime before the Flood, perhaps he would have lived over 1000 years and set the record for the longest lifespan in human history. He also lived during those first two hundred years after the Flood that

may have been a quiet time especially given by God for the Ark passengers to get on their feet before the Ice Age began taking its toll.

While Noah lived 1/3 of his life after the Flood, Shem lived 5/6ths of his life after the deluge. He only had 100 years to develop his body before the hard times following the Flood. Without the impact of the Flood Shem most likely would have lived 900 years like his forefathers. Thus, it must be that those 500 years after the Flood had a much greater impact on his body than the 350 years his father lived after the Flood had on his father's body. As his father's heir, possibly the burdens of leadership and especially upholding faith in God after the Flood could well have taken their toll on his lifespan.

He may also have chosen to remain in the growing mountains of Ararat where the climate was more severe rather than in the Mesopotamian civilization bowl where Noah's descendants were defying God at Babel. His life may even have been cut short by accident or violence. So while Shem was not given those post-Flood genes which would have cut his life to 450 years, his body did bear the impact of living under the new conditions far more than it did on his father's body. Thus, Noah and Shem must not be cited in the averages. To include them is to compare oranges with apples and thus to obscure the powerful impact the Flood had on human longevity.

Further Considerations on Eber, the Wild Card

Eber lived 31 years longer than his father Shelah and 26 years longer than his grandfather who was born two years after the Flood. This might indicate that longevity actually increased in the third generation or at a minimum that there was no overall longevity decrease in the early years after the Flood. But again, for some unexplained reason God may have given Eber greater vitality. Or, it might have been like this—God may have sent a quiet period giving the eight ark survivors and their new families time to transition from food supplies on the ark to farming and shepherding. They also may have spent years salvaging the building materials used in the ark's construction, moving them to a safe location before the Ice Age gained momentum. Possibly Eber's father and grandfather in effect worked themselves to an early grave as they labored to restart human life after the Flood so Eber had it a little easier. Eber could have lived in the Mesopotamian basin where the Ice Age had less effect while Shem and sons could have stayed in regions closer to the Ararat Mountains which experienced more severe weather.

Possibly Eber's 464 years is the true longevity number for those first generations after the Flood. So enjoying unusual vitality, having it a little easier or not being the victim of sickness, an accident or foul play could explain Eber's longer lifespan. Because we do not know why Eber lived longer, he is something of a wild card. Just how one sees Eber's longer lifespan will affect his view of the number of years missing between Eber and Peleg. This uncertainty and the many exceptions previously noted require humility in approaching our subject and remind us again that God has only chosen to give us a general idea of the time of the Flood and not a more exact time.

Finally, we must recognize that the entire period from Eber to Moses was one of continuous, gradual declining longevity, but it would seem that the decline would not be a straight line. Rather it would be faster or slower depending on the level of stress and the location of the individual. Stressful conditions such as living in the teeth of the Ice Age or living as a slave would certainly reduce longevity faster. Yet even as some bore the rigors of the Ice Age the far greater population lived in the more agreeable climates of Southern Mesopotamia and Arabia. Maybe warfare and violence did as much to decrease their longevity as natural conditions. Nevertheless, the amount

of generational decline most likely varied from region to region and from period to period. Our records come mostly from just one family line so they reflect the region and the period of that line's experiences.

Shem's List – Not a Chronology

This chapter has presented strong evidence that Shem's genealogy in Genesis 11:10-26 is not a chronology. But those begetting numbers have great value as they reveal that the Flood marked both an immediate and long term decline in human longevity. Further, they disclose the vast difference between pre-Flood and post-Flood conditions. Most importantly, they show the effects of sin.

It was easy to conclude Shem's list was a chronology because the begetting age of each father is given, ten consecutive fathers with eight consecutive begetting numbers. But like a red flag Scripture does not add those numbers even though it gives important chronological totals elsewhere such as the 430-years in Egypt (Exodus 12:40) and the 480 years from the Exodus to the Temple (I Kings 6:1). In fact it neither invites the reader to add those numbers nor even gives a single hint that those numbers should be considered a chronology. While the silence of Scripture does not close the issue, it is a strong witness against the chronology argument.

But Shem's list does give an obvious clue that its objective was something other than a chronology. It's ten names are matched by ten names in Adam's list. Symmetry, not chronology appears to be the goal of placing ten names in each list. Ten representative names from Adam to Noah and ten more from Shem to Abraham beginning the line to the Redeemer first promised in Genesis 3:15.

Viewing Shem's list as a chronology is an interpretation, not a fact. Interpretations of Scripture and facts of Scripture must be carefully distinguished. The Gospel is a fact. That Jesus is the predicted Messiah of the OT is a fact. That Shem's list is a chronology doesn't qualify as a fact. A special branch of bibliology is called hermeneutics, the science of how to interpret Scripture. The most basic rule of hermeneutics is to compare Scripture with Scripture. This is the rite of passage that determines how the particular author of a passage meant his words to be understood.

How did the author of Shem's list use those words? The answer lies in how other Scriptures use genealogical concepts. Eventually it becomes apparent that they were about relating fathers to sons and sons to fathers, not giving exhaustive and complete lists. In effect they were used as this book finds in these first 100 plus pages. Identity was the issue, not history. Ultimately, Adam's line comes to a specific person named Noah and Noah's line comes to a specific person named Abraham whose descendants God will use to form the nation Israel and send the Savior. While it may be embarrassing or humiliating, those holding the chronological view must teach their followings the true way to view Shem's list.

Records Illustrating the Decline in Human Longevity

The information we have covered is summarized below in outline form. It shows the grouping of consecutive fathers for the purpose of establishing averages to illustrate declining lifespans of people born after the Flood. These numbers are taken directly from the Scriptures and therefore are as certain as Scripture itself. The groupings provide averages for each of the four periods identified in Scripture. Appendices Tables 7.1 – 7.4 give the details together with the summary in a numbers format.

Lifespans in Period #1: 450 years (Arpachshad-Eber)

(First Three Consecutive Fathers Born After the Flood) (about 4000 BC)

Arpachshad (438 years) – Shelah (433 years): **5 year decline per generation**

Shelah (433 years) – Eber (464 years): **31 year increase**

Generational Decline (omitting Eber): 5 years

Lifespans in Period #2: 236 years (Peleg-Reu)

(First Three Consecutive Fathers Born After the Gap) (about 2400 BC)

Peleg (239) – Reu (239): **0 year decline**

Reu (239) – Serug (230): **9 year decline over two generations**

Average Decline per Generation from Peleg to Serug: 4.5 years

Lifespans in Period #3: 137 years (Jacob-Amram)

(Four Consecutive Fathers Born About the Time Israel Moved to Egypt) (1876 BC)

Jacob (147) – Levi (137): **10 year decline**

(Jacob=2.8 generations: first son born at age 82)

Levi (137) – Kohath (133): **4 year decline**

Kohath (133) – Amram (137): **4 year increase**

Average Adjusted Decline per Generation: **2.1 years** ($10/4.8=2.1$)

Lifespans in Period #4: about 90 Years (Joseph-Psalm 90:10)

(Birth of Amram to Birth of Moses; c. 1866 BC- 1522 BC)

Years in period: $1866-1522=344$ years

Decline per generation: 2.8 years/generation ($395/28=14.1$; $40/14.1=2.835$)

After the Exodus in 1446 BC Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years as an entire generation perished by divine judgment. But the judgment was not the shortening of lifetimes. It was the sentence to stay in the wilderness until an entire generation perished. By the end of that time Moses observed that the normal full lifetime of man was 70 years. Joseph died at 110 early in the Egyptian sojourn. It seems that these 40 years of decline ($110-70=40$) occurred over about 400 years, from 1800 to 1400 BC. That amounts to a decline of approximately 2.8 years per generation, but it was a decline under the great stresses of slavery and the wilderness wandering.

Inescapable Conclusion: The data above shows that the lifespans in each period were shorter than those in the previous period. No one who accepts the inerrancy of Scripture would dispute this. Thus, beyond question Scripture itself reveals a continuing decline of lifespan from the time the Ark survivors left the Ark until the day of Moses nearly three millennia later. This progressive decline is undeniable.

But the biblical numbers also reveal a second halving of human longevity, the halving between Eber and Peleg. Scripture records a 225 year difference in the lifespans of Eber and Peleg. A difference of 25 or even 50 years might be acceptable but a halving, from 450 years for the first three generations after the Flood to 236 years for the next three generations after the Flood is a red

flag. Something happened between Eber and Peleg. That happening was the author of the passage employing the common Hebrew solution to long lists, he used YLD “to father” in the broad sense rather than the usual narrow sense of immediate relationship. While following his pattern of reporting when each father produced a son, that number refers to the immediate unnamed son while “to father” is used in the broad sense of a distant descendant.

So, it took the most severe act of nature in human history, the Flood, to cut man’s longevity from 900 to 450 years. Nowhere do we read of a similar act of nature to cut man’s lifespan in half a second time. Thus, this second line of argument strengthens the conclusion that this huge span of 225 years was not over a single generation; rather, it was the sum of declines of many generations skipped between Eber and Peleg. Missing generations explains the second halving of human longevity.

Genesis 5 – Omissions in the Line of Adam

⁶When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. ⁷Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died. Genesis 5:6-8.

Genesis five records Adam’s genealogy, ten names from Adam to Noah. While it is not the subject of this book, it is often discussed along with Shem’s list, so we must add a word about it. If Shem’s line in Genesis 11 is explicit, Adam’s line here in Genesis 5 is more so. While Shem’s line gives five details including the years before and after the birth of the son, Adam’s list gives those details and totals the years of the father as well. Why that sixth detail? Merely to establish a pattern? More likely, because of the great ages involved, the writer felt that he needed to total the years to avoid any misunderstanding.

As in Shem’s line, each of the details in Adam’s line is literal. Each named person was a real person. He actually lived all the years the passage says and he fathered a son. Some see in this list the abbreviation of many millennia. One is the well-known covenant scholar, Meredith Kline who taught that this Adam list represented more human history than the entire time since the Flood²⁵. He observed that the list contains ten names which raises the suspicion that it is tailored. But his reason for this vast amount of time is that he views history in terms of divine covenants and according to him Peter divides history into the world that was, which perished by water, and the world that now is, which will perish by fire, as stated in II Peter 3:5-7.

One of his students, Michael Lawrence, showed this author the printed notes from Dr. Kline’s class on covenant theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Lawrence had previously earned a bachelor degree at Duke University and following Gordon, continued his education with a Ph.D. in church history at Cambridge University, often regarded as one of the most prestigious universities in the world. While he did not agree with Kline’s idea of so many years before the Flood, he did give insight into why Archbishop James Ussher felt the lines of Adam and Shem were tight, exhaustive, immediate father-son relationships.

Lawrence explained that Ussher was a Bible scholar who loved the Word of God and believed in inerrancy. But he was bound by the rigid thinking concerning genealogies in Great Britain which

²⁵Meredith Klein, “Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview,” (Hamilton, MA.: Gordon-Conwell Seminary classroom notes, 1992), 8.

viewed them as precise, exact and complete. England and Scotland had a combined monarchy. When Queen Elizabeth died childless a careful examination of genealogies determined that James VI of Scotland was the correct successor and he became King James I of England-Scotland. This selection required careful records for officials to determine who had the next claim to the throne. Precise genealogical records gave the answer. To Ussher it was inconceivable that genealogies could be taken in any other way.

This was the only way someone living in England-Scotland would ever take genealogies. Ussher was a product of his culture and brought to the Scripture his cultural experience just as all Christians bring to the Scripture a framework of assumptions. In this way he made unfounded assumptions about the Biblical genealogies. To him genealogies were all about a line of succession.²⁶

While condensation is all but demanded by the enormous drop in longevity between Eber and Peleg, no such clue is found in the Adam line. Instead, we find a growing pattern of sin. “The wickedness of man was great in the earth and...every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Conversely, Enoch walked with the LORD and became the first of four successive, unbroken generations—Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah—so it was exactly 969 years from the birth of his son Methuselah to the Flood. Further, Seth was the immediate son of Adam. Only four fathers remain who might have represented thousands of omitted years—Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel and Jared.

Man’s growing sinfulness brought on the Flood. We suggest God’s justice required Him to terminate generations born into this irreversible situation. To stop this pattern God limited the number of generations before the Flood. Kline failed to grasp the purpose of the Flood—to break the enslaving straight jacket of sin and restart the human race. While Adam’s line does not represent millennia of human history, a few names might have been omitted to produce precisely ten. Even if two or three were omitted, this would add only 200-300 years to the age of the earth. Kline’s call for a long pre-flood era of many millennia is merely another example of how we all wonder much about the years before the Flood. We take our various stabs at them. Yet, they lie not in numbers as much as in understanding the mysteries of iniquity and godliness (II Thessalonians 2 and I Corinthians 15: 51-58.) Nevertheless, genealogies are a joy, when correctly understood, to keep us true to inerrancy and prevent presumption in our interpretations of Scripture.

One minor discrepancy in our point that all eight who lived and died before the Flood lived about 900 years is Lamech who died at the age of 777. The next greatest deviation from the 900 year average is Methuselah who lived to 969. Methuselah died the year of the Flood, but his son (Lamech) died five years before the Flood. Very possibly Lamech was the victim of foul play as attempts grew to silence Noah and his message of judgment. Yet even this foul play served the purposes of God for it fell on the 777th year of Lamech’s life which in numerology has extreme significance. Seven represents completion and triple sevens would reflect the trinity in seeing this total rejection of the Creator. In Book 2 of creation geologist John Reed’s fictional Flood trilogy the

²⁶Michael Lawrence, Senior Pastor, Hinson Baptist Church, Portland, OR, Interview by the author, 5/19/2015.

Godly who had helped build the Ark intended to board the Ark but the enemy murdered their entire community.²⁷ Only the eight escaped.

What Abbreviated Genealogies Teach

To summarize, a faulty view of biblical genealogies leads to the idea that the time of the Flood and the creation of man can be calculated within a few years. This chapter has explained why Hebrew genealogies do not support such calculations. It finds overwhelming support that as many as 1300-1900 years elapsed between Eber and Peleg and maybe 200-300 additional years before the Flood. This means that whereas many creationists thought that man and living things were created about 6000 years ago, they really were created more like 8000 years ago. Thus, we have good reason to be tentative where God is silent. But whether 6000 or 8000 or even 10,000 years old, lifeforms on planet earth are still vastly young compared to the billion year figure of secular science.

So, this book joins those who find overwhelming biblical and scientific support for life on earth being but thousands of years old. However, we take exception with those who insist that Genesis chapter eleven presents a complete father-son list allowing a more exact age calculation. Just one clear abbreviated genealogy would question the idea that Shem's genealogy is complete. This paper presented such an exception in chapter one, the Levi-Aaron list. Chapter six provided many lists where abbreviation is certain or suspected. We must conclude that it was not God's will for man to be burdened with establishing and defending the age of the earth to within a few years. Such an approach is not helpful. It produces divisions within and justified criticism without, all of which harm the Kingdom of God.

The next chapter tackles maybe the greatest disinformation to Shem's genealogy, that found in the Septuagint.

²⁷ John K. Reed, *Lost Worlds Book 2, Mabbul*, (Evans, GA.: Mabbul Publishing, Word Ministries, 2007)

Chapter Eight

Shem's Genealogy—Which Bible?

The first seven chapters of *HB* presents a rock-solid case for a huge gap in Shem's genealogy, from 35 to 55 generations skipped between Eber and Peleg. The omission of those generations places the Flood around 4000 BC or nearly 1700 years earlier than Archbishop James Ussher's Flood date. This finding is based on how Scripture itself uses family terms, genealogies and those numbers given in Genesis five and eleven. A daunting obstacle opposes this view—many Bibles do not contain the same numbers.

You read correctly. Those numbers in Shem's list as well as the numbers in Adam's list, used by so many young earth creationists to determine the date of Noah's Flood and creation, are not even found in a majority of the world's Bibles. They appear in most Protestant Bibles. But Catholic and Orthodox Bibles contain numbers from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and the adherents of those branches of Christendom greatly exceed those who use the Protestant Bible—1.6 billion vs 920 million according to Wikipedia. The begetting year of most fathers in those Bibles is increased by 100. Even some knowledgeable creationists argue adamantly for the Septuagint's larger numbers. If we are using wrong numbers, this book cannot be right.

To make matters worse, the Flood itself is viewed as a local event by a significant number of godly Bible believing Christians and the six days of creation as undefined periods of time. Other views also conflict with our missing 35-55 generations view. While entire books address the many issues examined in this chapter, we will explain the view and give the fewest possible words in answering it. But be warned, this is a venture into uncharted territory for most inerrancy folks.

Up front we want to dogmatically state that we believe the Bible of the Reformation preserves the correct text. While the Greek *Septuagint* (*LXX*) is an excellent translation of its base Hebrew text, the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. To some extent a translation contains interpretations of the translator, so the text of the original language must be preferred. This was the conviction of the Protestant reformers who fought numerous misinterpretations based on the *LXX*. This is why seminaries that train pastors teach the original languages of both the Old and New Testaments. Besides being a translation, the *LXX* contains 14 non-canonical books, obvious changes from the original and contrived numbers in the genealogies of Adam and Shem. For these reasons and more, we view the original language text called the *Masoretic Text* (*MT*) to be the correct Old Testament text.

Origin of the Greek Septuagint (*LXX*)

Our story begins by rehearsing how there came to be two major versions of the Old Testament. In colorful language Flavius Josephus relates that Ptolemy II Philadelphus who ruled Egypt from 285 to 246 BC requested of the high priest in Jerusalem that a copy of the Torah be translated into Greek and added to his library in Alexandria which had reached 200,000-volumes by that point. Over time Ptolemy's library became one of the most famous in the ancient world and it's Greek became the common language of the Mediterranean region and Middle East. The Torah contains the first five books of the OT written by Moses as God spoke to Israel in the wilderness (1446-1406 BC). Ptolemy's request was nearly 1200 years later, about 250 BC. Jerusalem sent 72 elders to Alexandria where they quickly made the translation. Because just over 70 Jews were involved, their translation was called the *Septuagint*, the Greek word for 70.

A second story dates the LXX to about 280 BC. While only 30 years separate the two dates, the Word of God requires accuracy and truth. Evidence favors the 250 date but the 280 date is advanced by those who argue for the LXX numbers and therefore is important to the question of which text contains the correct numbers. This controversy is explored in much detail in Appendix 8.3.

The original Septuagint contained just the five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. This is extremely important because over hundreds of years many more books were added to it, yet the growing collection continued to be called the “*Septuagint*.” First, by fits and starts during the next 150 years the remainder of the Hebrew Bible was translated into the Greek by possibly four generations of translators and became a part of the Septuagint. This was the OT often cited in the NT. Then, as the church age progressed more and more non-canonical books were added to it. This much larger collection is what the words “*Septuagint*” and “*LXX*” refer to today.

Aramaic Replaces Hebrew

An impressive argument for the LXX numbers is that they are supported by 400 years of historians including Demetrius, Eupolemus, Philo and Josephus before the first known mention of the MT numbers. This MT silent period lasted from the beginning of the LXX translation to the alleged Jewish deflation of the birthing numbers after 70 AD. However, it happened as Hebrew underwent a transformation in Israel. With the destruction of Israel and the Babylonian Captivity, nearby peoples replaced the Jewish population. As Jews slowly returned after the prophesied 70 years of exile, they became mixed with this new population, some of whom spoke a significant regional Semitic language called Aramaic (from Aram, one of Shem’s five sons). As Aramaic words entered the Jews’ Hebrew language, their distinctive Hebrew tongue eventually came to be replaced by Aramaic.

By Jesus’ day Aramaic, not Hebrew, was the everyday language spoken in Israel. Possibly only several hundred thousand Jews could even understand biblical Hebrew. To get along as a conquered people, many Jews in Israel also spoke the international language, the Koine Greek. Scholars debate just how much the average Jew of that day used or even understood Biblical Hebrew although the Hebrew OT did continue to be used by Jews in Temple functions, scholarly debates, public teaching and readings in local synagogues. Nevertheless, that Hebrew OT was the official OT text of Judaism and in coming centuries came to be known as the *Masoretic Text (MT)*.

Just before His ascension Jesus told his disciples “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). As the church reached further and further from Jerusalem, it needed to speak in a language the world understood. That language was not Aramaic or biblical Hebrew. It was the Koine Greek. The early disciples witnessed from the Greek Old Testament, the LXX. Thus, the LXX became the commonly used OT Bible of the NT Church while the books of the NT all came to be preserved if not written in that same Greek language and remain so to this day. Fifteen hundred years later leaders of the Protestant Reformation returned to the Hebrew MT believing it was the true OT.

Necessity, therefore, forced the use of the Greek LXX, but the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) prove beyond doubt that the MT all along was the preferred Jewish text. The next pages will explain why their existence is among the top reasons *Hidden Beauty* believes the MT, not the LXX contains the true birthing numbers in the Genesis five and eleven genealogies.

Continuing, we also learn from this so-called period of silence the priority of God. He was vastly more concerned with getting out the Gospel than establishing the dates for the Flood and creation. In fact, those dates were so unimportant to God that they are never given in all of Scripture. Suggesting that a written summation of the Genesis five and eleven numbers is unnecessary and the reader can add those two sets of birthing ages in his head while reading the text defies about every rule of writing. This is doubly certain in view of the summation of each birthing and remaining number in the Genesis five list. Nine times Scripture gives the birthing number, the remaining years and sums those two numbers.

Clearly, by summing those two numbers nine times, the author shows they were meant to be summed while the absence of a summation of the nineteen birthing numbers shows they were not meant to be summed. Such minor issues as the dates of the Flood and creation could wait until they needed to be addressed. But Jesus commanded the apostles to devote their attention to announcing the good news that “God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes on him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

In addition to the two major Pentateuchal texts—the Masoretic Text in Hebrew and the original Septuagint in Koine Greek—the Samaritans had their own version. When they separated from Judah following Solomon’s reign, the godly among them honored Moses and lived by the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, the ungodly leaders made major changes such as changing certain commands related to worshipping in Jerusalem so that they could live as a separate kingdom. It was written in Hebrew using the Samaritan alphabet. It is called the *Samaritan Pentateuch (SP)* and is helpful to textual scholars as they study verses in the Books of Moses. However, after the captivity it lost its significance and by the days of Jesus and the Apostles, the *MT* and *LXX* were the primary OTs used.

Differences between the MT and the LXX

There are tens of thousands of differences between the MT and the canonical OT LXX books. Many are merely matters of breathing, pronunciation, spelling, etc. The *Torah* is the most similar in the two versions while substantial differences are found in some of the other books such as Jeremiah and Daniel. Our concern is the numbers in Shem’s genealogy which most creationists sum to calculate the date of the Flood. If those numbers are wrong, we are beating a dead horse and Ussher’s date for the Flood is wrong as well.

Astonishingly all but the key numbers differ in the Genesis five and eleven lists as authority Dr. Pete Williams wrote in a 1998 *Journal of Creation* article. Further, the LXX contains one more name than the MT. In a spreadsheet Williams displayed side by side the years given in the three OT Pentateuch texts for Genesis five and eleven.²⁸ This involves a whopping 146 numbers. (See Appendix, Tables 8.1 and 8.2.) In fact, of 20 names only the numbers of Noah and Shem agree in all three texts. Beyond mere disagreements of certain numbers, twelve fathers were 100 years older when their heir was born according to the LXX. The LXX numbers also provides a gradual decline of human longevity.

²⁸ Pete Williams, “Some Remarks Preliminary to a Biblical Chronology,” *Journal of Creation*, 12(1) April 1998: 98-106.

Many creationists prefer the larger numbers and several dogmatically defend them. They charge that the birthing ages in the two genealogies were deliberately and systematically deflated after 70 AD in the MT while the LXX numbers are mostly the correct numbers. They add that they are not alone, that others who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture also maintain that the MT numbers were deflated. On the other hand, Williams says that both “the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch show evidence of systematic schematisation [British] within themselves.” Is Williams a lone voice? No. Numbers specialists have studied and compared the three different manuscripts of these two passages. In noting the specific numbers and their patterns they conclude that the LXX numbers are artificial and obviously manipulated—devised, not natural.

Why would specialists in the field of number patterns stamp the LXX numbers as artificial and manipulated? Here are three reasons and undoubtedly there are more. First, the birthing numbers in the LXX are uncannily similar to each other. From Cainan to Lamach they read 170, 165, 162, 165 and 167. The odds of five consecutive generations giving birth to their heirs so close to the same age is great. Because the MT numbers are 100 years less, they are spread out about four times compared with the LXX and do not raise red flags to numbers specialists. The Shem list, though, is a scandal. The LXX gives the following birthing ages for the first seven (including the extra name in the LXX list) named fathers born in his line after the Flood: 135, 130, 130, 134, 130, 132, 130. The odds of such similar birthing ages are astronomical. Second, the LXX numbers show a consistent decline in longevity after the Flood with one exception. While this is extremely satisfying to the secular mind, it is a stretch statistically.

Thirdly, the LXX Shem birthing numbers show an artificial pattern when calculated as a percentage of total lifespan. This observation is not apparent on the surface, but stands out when one divides the birthing age by the total age. For example, Arpachshad was 135 when he fathered the next generation. Divide 135 by his lifespan of 438. The answer, 23.9%, tells how far he was into his total years when he fathered the next generation. The first four names (Arpachshad, Cainan, Shelah and Eber) show these percentages: 23.9%, 28.3%, 28.3% and 26.6% and this in spite of LXX adjustments in total ages to show gradual reduction in longevity. The next four names show these percentages: 38.3%, 38.9%, 39.4% and 38.0% in spite of an increase in Nahor’s longevity. The artificial nature of these numbers is obvious—four consecutive names with percentages between 23.9% and 28.3% and the very next four names with percentages between 38.0% and 39.4%.

If using today’s average lifespan of 70 years, these numbers would read 16.7%, 19.8%, 19.8% and 18.6% for the first four names and 26.8%, 27.3%, 27.6% and 23.9% for the second four names. By comparison the MT percentages are 8.0%, 6.9% and 7.3% for the three names and 12.6%, 13.4% and 13.0% for the next three. This is consistent with the contention of this book that following the first three names is a gap of 35-55 generations. The MT birthing numbers show that the first generations after the Flood obeyed God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 9:7) by having children as soon as they were physically capable while the LXX numbers don’t show such urgency (23.9%, 28.3%, 28.3% and 26.6%). The very numbers of the LXX are sufficient reason to reject them.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

But the very best evidence, however, to uphold the MT as the correct OT text is the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). Those who weigh the MT vs the LXX must understand these scrolls so *Hidden Beauty* devotes many pages to their content, the Qumran community and distortions by sensationalists. See Appendix 8.4 – 8.6. In 1947 Bedouin youths looking for lost sheep stumbled

across several parchments in a cave near the Dead Sea. They were identified as legitimate ancient documents and soon the search was on for more. Over eight years searchers found 900 scrolls and uncounted fragments, mostly in Hebrew and written on parchment. They were hidden in eleven caves in the cliffs close to an ancient two-building settlement called Qumran that looked down on the NW corner of the Dead Sea. The fragile pieces of parchment had been preserved by the hot, dry desert climate and the darkness of the caves. This discovery is variously called the greatest archaeological event of the 20th century and the greatest finding of ancient documents of all time.

Searchers found fragments of every book of the OT except Esther. Textual scholars began studying the manuscripts as soon as they realized the scrolls were genuine and have been studying them ever since. A growing list of insights have developed over the intervening 70 years of study and the more recent discovery of scrolls at six other Judean Desert locations. Seven hundred of the original scrolls are non-biblical sacred writings. They give a new understanding of the religious life of Israel during this period. But *HB* is exploring the question of whether the LXX or MT is the true OT so it will focus on the 200 plus biblical scrolls as well as more recent biblical discoveries. First, early impressions will be reported. Then the more accurate current understanding is related.

The scholars quickly realized that not all the texts read alike. Yes, many of them did read like the earliest already-existing MTs, but some of them read like the earliest LXX texts. Further, some did not read like either. They were sorted into piles that were similar. Eventually they had five groups—those similar to the MT, those similar to the LXX, those similar to the Samaritan Pentateuch, a fourth similar group and finally those that fit none of the four piles. What an eye-opener. Before, the thinking was that there was just a single text of the Hebrew Old Testament and copies of it had more or fewer mistakes depending on the diligence of the scribe. Now it was apparent that multiple Hebrew OT texts had come into existence over the centuries.

In studying the base Hebrew texts used to translate the LXX, the scholars discovered that the LXX was a good translation, that it faithfully translated the Hebrew text that it was based on. As a result, the LXX has been declared an excellent and trustworthy translation of its source Hebrew texts. Some of the remarkable evidence for its accuracy will be addressed later.

The presence of different families of OT texts at Qumran means the 70 who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek had multiple Hebrew texts to choose from. They did not have to change any birthing numbers in the genealogies of Adam and Shem. Those numbers already existed in the text they selected to translate into Greek. The argument that the LXX numbers are right while the MT numbers have been changed doesn't fit the finding of multiple Hebrew OT text families found at Qumran.

The existence of these multiple textual families led to further observations. Differences in the texts did not seem to trouble the Qumranian scribes. They carefully copied the texts they procured, even obvious mistakes. This showed the care with which the scribes did their copying. The two previous oldest Masoretic Texts were the Aleppo Codex of 930 AD and the Leningrad Codex of 1050 AD. They are almost identical to each other. Now the DSS discovery brought to light scrolls that existed a thousand years before and they were remarkably similar to those two medieval texts. One scroll is the complete book of Isaiah. It is amazingly close to Isaiah in the previous oldest copy of the MT, the Aleppo Codex.

However, the birthing years in Genesis five and eleven is the issue before us. With several exceptions the scrolls are not complete OT books but rather portions of OT books, chapters and

even compilations of verses from various books. None contain any of the birthing years of Genesis five and eleven so that is not our argument. Rather, they consistently show that the Scriptures regardless of textual family were carefully and faithfully copied during the time when Israel was shifting from Hebrew to Aramaic. Thus, the DSS prove that the charge that Jews made extensive changes to the MT in the second century A.D. is false.

The birthing numbers were changed sometime before the translation into Greek. So, when the Jews translated their Torah for Ptolemy's library, they had multiple texts to choose from and to avoid offending the Egyptians chose a text that had the larger numbers. Toward the end of this chapter, we will describe the development of the OT canon and suggest those birthing numbers were most likely changed well before 250 BC.

More Recent Insights

In 2016 newly developed computer imaging was able to read a charred Hebrew scroll from an ancient synagogue at Engedi dated c. 200 AD. The scroll consisted of Leviticus chapters one and two. The words in it were identical to the earliest existing Hebrew copy of Leviticus 1-2. Emanuel Tov, who coordinated the work of 98 scholars during his years as editor-in-chief of the 40 volume DSS publishing project from 1991 to 2009, exclaimed, "We have never found something as striking as this. This is the earliest evidence of the exact form of the medieval text [earliest previously existing MTs, the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices]." ²⁹ Biblical scrolls found at five other Judean Desert locations are like the Engedi Leviticus scroll. They are identical (or nearly identical) to the MT. They were carried by those fleeing the Romans during the Jewish revolts of 67 and 132 AD and represent Jewish national circles that adhered only to the MT.

More careful examination of the Qumran scrolls since 1990 reveals that the Pentateuchal ones were likewise close to the MT while the texts of other OT books were more like other textual families. In a 17-page article Emanuel Tov, explains what was going on. ³⁰ The goal of the Qumran community was to keep the Mosaic Law as perfectly as humanly possible. In this effort they interpreted the requirements of the law more strictly than the priesthood in Jerusalem and viewed themselves as the true Israel. They were opposing the wicked priest (presumably the Levitical officials at Jerusalem) and even observed a different calendar than the temple leadership. They wrote the 700 non-biblical sacred texts in their efforts to accomplish their goal. So while they stayed close to the Pentateuchal MT in their effort to fully keep the law, they practiced greater freedom in the other OT books, showing their freedom from the religious establishment in Jerusalem.

Those loyal to the Jerusalem priesthood fled the Roman war machine but did not take their scrolls to Qumran. Instead, they hid out in other Judean Desert locations. The Qumran scrolls represent various religious movements in Israel that identified with the Qumran goal. As a result, on the one hand scrolls exist that are identical or nearly identical to the MT Pentateuch which shows the great care given the MT. On the other hand, the existence of multiple textual families

²⁹ Emanuel Tov, "The Biblical DSS as Representing Variety in Judaism and Early Christianity," posted 3/2020; (Search on the Title).

³⁰ Tov, *ibid.*

shows beyond question that these different textual families were well known in Israel and had a long history.

Tov also wrote an article on the numbers problem in the three major Pentateuchs. He concluded that the differences are recensional, not scribal.³¹ He believes that the Hebrew base text for the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch developed as one text and were later separated. He also views the LXX numbers as obviously contrived.

Now, for another shocker. The textual scholars have studied OT quotes in the New Testament. It turns out the NT authors cited verses from various OT textual families. Tov observed that the Apostle Paul used currently recognized different Greek textual families for the same biblical book (Isaiah) and apparently under the same conditions in the same epistle (Romans). Paul, it appears, used whatever text was available wherever he happened to be. This shows that God's focus is the message, not the exact wording.

To all the DSS evidence for the careful handling of Scripture, two unfortunate responses are found. Most creationists dismiss them. In fact, most have not even heard much about them. But those who have say the people who lived in the tiny settlement of Qumran in the midst of the 11 Dead Sea caves and collected and copied the scrolls are insignificant, unimportant. Unbelievers go even further, identifying them as heretics—Essenes. The Essenes had their own agenda. They mixed Judaism with heathen beliefs from ancient Eastern religions. They conclude that possibly Jesus got His ideas from them. In contrast, creationists conclude: they were not a part of true Israel; their scrolls prove nothing about God; mystery and confusion surround them; we have better things to do with our time.

Thirteen Reasons to Prefer the Masoretic Text Numbers

A plethora of misinformation underlies the thinking of those who prefer the LXX numbers. Our first eight reasons for rejecting these arguments have already been explained. First and foremost is that the DSS have a strong preference for the MT. Second, the LXX translators had multiple Hebrew texts to choose from and chose the textual family with the larger numbers. Third, the LXX numbers are obviously manipulated. Fourth, the changing of languages in Israel and growing dependance on the LXX explains why the LXX birthing numbers predominantly show up in historical records. Fifth, God's clear priority was to get out the Gospel, not clarify minor issues such as the dates of the Flood and creation.

Sixth, the purpose of the numbers: most creationists say they were given to establish a chronology of early earth history. This argument was addressed at length in chapter one (pp 17-19). It quotes a conservative Hebrew scholar who offered possible non-chronology purposes for those numbers. He specifically stated that "The major arguments they use (for the chrono-genealogical view) are defective and falsifiable." Arguments seven and eight are major subjects of this book—the common Hebrew practice of condensing genealogies and the huge decline of longevity between Eber and Peleg in the MT. (These two arguments dissolve if the LXX numbers are correct. The LXX numbers contain no enormous decline in longevity between two generations.

³¹ Emanuel Tov, "The Genealogical Lists in Genesis 5 and 11 in Three Different Versions," 37-52. (Search on the title to find this pdf file.)

The remaining arguments have not been previously mentioned. Nine. This argument involves a complicated grammatical issue regarding the form of the Hebrew verb “beget” in the Genesis five and eleven lists. Hebrew verbs do not have tenses. While English verbs have tenses which tell about the “when” of the action, Hebrew verbs have seven possible stems which tell the type of action of the verb. One of the challenges to the new Hebrew student is learning all the forms of those stems for the same verb.

The Hebrew verb for beget (YALAD) is in the hiphil stem in Genesis five and eleven. It is used consistently for a total of 55 times. Those not seasoned in Hebrew might translate the hiphil of YALAD with “he had” or “he brought forth to birth.” With this rendering of YALAD the student might conclude that because of this, the age of the father when the named son was born establishes a chronology. He might conclude that though names may be omitted, the chronology remains unchanged. With this thinking he would sum the Shem list birthing ages found in the LXX and confidently conclude that the Flood occurred around 3300 BC. By adding the numbers in Adam’s list, he would place creation around 5560 BC. Thus, the Hebrew student would conclude that the Hebrew grammatical structure prohibits omitting generations.

The fact is that the hiphil stem indicates **causative** action. While the basic qal stem would be sufficient for “he had” or “he brought forth to birth,” the hiphil stem has greater force. It says “A” took an action that **caused** the birth of generation “B.” If a generation “C” followed, “A’s” action, in effect, caused that birth as well. In fact, regardless of how many generations followed “B,” “A’s” action caused that chain. Thus, all descendants of “A” were caused by that action (even though the actions of descendants were necessary as well). But the writer felt the need to record when “A” took that action. This is where the confusion arises. The offspring’s name is mistakenly linked to this age. When that happens, the reader establishes a chronology. But “A’s” age was when he took this action and his immediate son was born. The named son could be the immediate son or any descendant down the line. It was the choice of the author to name the one in the line he wanted to feature.

If the author had wished to emphasize that the son was born in the normal process of nature, the stem indicating **intensive** action, the piel stem, would have been used. That would be saying that “A” did not adopt “B” or buy him as a slave or procure him in some other way, but he acquired him by **begetting** him. But neither the qal nor piel stems were selected. The author chose the stem that emphasizes **causation** and he did this repeatedly. So, the passage emphasizes that the father’s action caused the births of all who resulted from his action. If the author named “C” rather than “B,” he would be skipping one generation. If he named “G” rather than “B,” he would be skipping B, C, D, E and F—five generations. Thus, the hiphil does not introduce a chronology. Because of the hiphil, those from Green to Unger who taught Hebrew for a lifetime knew they were on solid ground when they stated that names were omitted in the lists.

Believers who subscribe to the inerrancy of Scripture are to be commended as they try to take the literal meaning of the words their translations use. But since the Hebrew verb form can, to some extent, be lost in the translation, Scripture must be read with care. To this extent those who read a translation of the Hebrew are dependent on Hebrew scholars. Why four paragraphs on the hiphil not supporting the chronological argument? It is because creationists have been inundated with articles on Genesis five and eleven being chronologies. Those lists are even given a special name—chronogenealogies. In effect, those well read in creationist literature have been

brainwashed as this idea has been repeated over and over so it could take multiple explanations using different words to plant the correct meaning in their minds.

Ten. The DSS are first hand documents in existence today. Conversely, the actual texts of many of the various external witnesses to the LXX numbers during the 400 silent years such as Demetrius, Eupolemus and Philo are not available for independent verification. They cannot be checked to determine if their statements are consistent, in proper context and not somehow compromised. Rules of evidence prefer a physical document to a report of a document.

Eleven. Josephus is cited as a key historical witness to the LXX birthing numbers but his testimony is questionable. He declared that everything he wrote came straight from the Jews sacred books and that he accessed the original Hebrew documents. Yet he was in Rome and under Flavian patronage when he wrote all of his known works. Josephus scholars universally decry his liberties with the facts. He elaborated at will and changed obvious facts to entertain and not offend his readers. For instance, in relating about Abraham in Genesis 11 and 20, he says Abraham and Nahor married their cousins, the daughters of their brother Haran. When Abimelech confronted Abraham about Sarah being his wife, Josephus wrote that Abraham said she was his cousin even though the LXX says "Sarah is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother." Without question he would definitely have reported the greater LXX birthing numbers as the MT numbers would have insulted the intelligence of his readers.

Behind the personage was a character. Here are the facts. He was a Jewish general in Galilee leading a revolt against the Romans. He was defeated and taken prisoner. That should have been the end, but Josephus had a secret weapon, words. With words he made the Romans and Greeks love him. The way he wrote delighted them. He even wrote they all worshipped the same god. Various people used different names. The Greeks called him Zeus.

In addition to Josephus' known penchant to elaborate at will, his LXX list does not include the second Cainan. He writes that from Adam to Moses were ten fathers and from Shem to Abraham were ten fathers so he leaves out the second Cainan. This is extremely damaging to his testimony. In fact, it pretty much disqualifies his witness to the LXX numbers. It indicates that he had no Hebrew text or if he did, it did not contain the second Cainan, or he wanted to delight his audience with exactly ten names in each list. Since the second Cainan is in today's LXX, one must wonder just how reliable his copy of the LXX was or how reliable today's copy is. He also gave three or four different numbers from today's LXX. While Josephus is cited as a leading ancient historian to the LXX numbers, if a leading witness is so defective, how certain can we be about the others?

Twelve. Jerome (345-420 AD) testified to seeing the actual Hebrew texts in Jerusalem. This man was a true scholar in Latin, Hebrew and Greek. He translated the Latin Vulgate directly from the Hebrew. Even though he is dated to the late 4th century AD, he would have carefully investigated any tales of Jewish officials deflating the numbers after 70 AD and he would not have selected the MT numbers unless he was convinced they were correct. Jerome is a strong witness to the MT numbers.

Thirteen. Argument from the Book of Jubilees (BOJ). The BOJ (c. 150-160 BC) declares that 50 Jubilees occurring from Creation to Joshua's conquests, 2500 years. To do so it changed some MT birthing years in the two lists to total that number but its first five birthing numbers are the same as those in the MT and the sixth is different by just one year. LXX advocates say that the MT numbers

were copied from the BOJ and since the BOJ numbers are unreliable, the MT numbers are also unreliable.

Scholars agree that the BOJ numbers were contrived to produce fifty jubilees. Still, God's law regarding sabbath years lay deep in the souls of His people. They were to do no work and let the land rest on the seventh year. After observing seven sabbatical years they were to observe a super sabbatical year on the fiftieth year. So, the numbers seven, 49 and 50 were very powerful and pleasing to the Jewish mind. Is it not possible that some overzealous Jew began thinking about those begetting numbers in the MT and by changing some could more establish Israel's early history from them with greater certainty? He could use the first numbers because they were small and would give his idea credibility. In fact, he would only have to change a half dozen of the 19 MT numbers to achieve his goal. This could explain how the BOJ came to be written.

More importantly, the MT numbers existed well over a thousand years before the BOJ numbers. So, the argument using the BOJ as the source for the MT numbers is backwards. The BOJ got many of its numbers from the existing MT. Further, while the BOJ drew considerable attention at both Qumran and Jerusalem, it was never declared authoritative in either place.

A baker's dozen of arguments have been given preferring the MT birthing numbers in Genesis five and eleven. These arguments will be challenged by godly believers. Some of our thirteen arguments may even be incorrect. For instance, the Josephus argument may be blamed on scribal errors and the external witness argument may be challenged. But no one can dismiss most of the others such as the arguments from the DSS and the pattern of the LXX numbers. Consequently, the inescapable conclusion is that MT numbers are correct and the LXX numbers are artificial.

However, some advance a fourteenth argument for the MT numbers. They claim that God promised to preserve the Scripture's original text. They cite such verses as Psalm 12:7, Luke 16:17, Romans 12:1-2, and Jude 1:3 for this claim. This is so surprising that we must repeat: one highly visible Ph.D. creationist (and his followers) in effect says God has promised to preserve the original autographs. But this is not what those verses are saying. Rather, they concern the fulfillment of what God has promised, not the text in which He promised it. Jesus indicated clearly that God will fulfill all He has said in Matthew 5:18: "Until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

The idea that God has promised to preserve the original text sends the blood pressure of scholars who have spent lifetimes studying the various texts and therefore know of thousands of differences in them through the ceiling. It brings utter scorn on all who hold it. As we have said repeatedly, the original autographs were lost long ago. Errors have entered into the text(s) that we have today. Thus, we must compare Scripture with Scripture to get the clearest and best meaning. Creationists need to separate themselves from this unbiblical teaching.

Those who prefer the LXX birthing numbers do so because they are persuaded that the Flood and creation occurred earlier than Ussher's dates and the LXX accommodates them with earlier Flood and creation dates. *Hidden Beauty* also came into existence because it seemed that civilization was going strong at the time of Ussher's Flood date. But *HB* limited its search to the Scriptures and drew its conclusions from the common and frequent practices within the Hebrew text. Defending the larger LXX numbers is certainly zeal for God, but wouldn't it be better to stand on the common practices of Scripture which uses family terms broadly and condenses genealogies?

Other Views Needing Fine Tuning

The Local Flood View

Believers exposed to the early pronouncements from the budding science of geology saw their precious Bible vilified via Noah's Flood. While the Flood is the greatest geological event spoken of since creation, it is a religious story and thus a tempting target for scoffers. And that is what happened. Early geologists unmercifully ridiculed the biblical Flood story. Those who love Jesus searched for an answer. They noticed that the words Scripture uses for the Flood are employed in different senses throughout the Bible and began to defend it by reasoning that Scripture was using words like "all," "every" and "on the earth" in a limited sense. They suggested the Flood may have occurred where a sea like the Black Sea exists today or possibly the Flood wiped out a large population in a region like the Tigris-Euphrates River basin.

Geologists have learned much since the days of Charles Lyell, the father of geology. Now they know of entire systems or masses of magma that rise like plumes or trees all the way from the lower mantle to the surface of the earth. One is under the Indian Ocean. Another is under an area greater than Ethiopia. "All the fountains of the great deep burst forth" (Genesis 7:11) no longer sounds that far-fetched. Geologists know that the crust of the earth up to ten miles down is layered with fossil-bearing, water-deposited material and hardened flows of magma. These layers can be traced for thousands of miles and give evidence of immediate deposit. Vast amounts of physical evidence in the earth's surface layers confirm a global flood.

However, believers should look to Scripture as the final authority, not Scripture as interpreted by some human authority. Scripture itself uses an overwhelming number of terms commonly understood in a global, world-wide sense in speaking of the Flood:

—Of the wickedness of man and judgment on all humans outside the ark: Genesis 6:3, 5, 5, 6, 7, 11, 11, 12, 12, 13, 13, 13, 17, 19, 19, 20, 20; 7:4, 11, 11, 21, 22, 23 (23 times);

—Of the death of all land animals except those on the ark: Genesis 6:19, 20; 7:3, 14, 14, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 23, 23 (14 times);

—Of the waters increasing/prevailing: Genesis 7:16, 18, 19, 19, 20, 20, 24 (7 times);

—Of the subsiding of the waters and the exiting of the Ark: Genesis 8:1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 5, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 17, 18, 19, 19, 19, 19 (22 times);

—Of God's command to fill the earth and His promise not to destroy all flesh by another flood: Genesis 8:21, 21, 22; 9:1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 7, 7, 10, 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 12, 13, 14, 15, 15, 16, 16, 17, 19, 10:32 (28 times).

A dozen all-encompassing terms such as "all flesh" might be tolerable in describing a devastating flood of limited geographical area. But Scripture uses such terms 80-90 times as it describes a flood that blotted out all land-dwelling life. Similarly, a chapter might suffice to describe a local flood, but Scripture devotes five chapters to this flood. Five chapters is equal to all the Scripture that comes before—both the creation account and all pre-Flood history.

The rest of the Bible continues this global view of the Flood. Thousands of years later, God said, "I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth" (Isaiah 54:9). God says that just as He has kept that oath, so He will also keep His oath to love Israel. Jesus said "the Flood destroyed them all" (cited in two Gospels: Matthew 24:39; Luke 17:27). Peter reasons of the

certainty of future judgment by using the Flood as an example: “if (God) did not spare the ancient world...when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly...” (II Peter 2:5). Later Peter divides time into two epochs: “the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished, but...the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire...,” i.e., then...now, (II Peter 3:6-7). Scripture abounds with statements to the effect that the Flood was global. As to human authorities, Merrill F. Unger, a modern prince of biblical Hebrew, wrote in his Bible dictionary, page 372, “In the Genesis account nothing short of a globe-encircling catastrophe is indicated.”

In addition to the constant use of inclusive nouns and adjectives in the Flood account, nine major features of the Flood story support a global event—Satanic activity, design of the Ark, the years provided to build it, the duration of the Flood, the character of Noah, pre-flood geography, permission to eat animal flesh, the rainbow and repopulating the world. The Flood record begins with a brief but chilling and mysterious account of Satanic activity that worked to corrupt mankind and thus destroy God’s plan for man. Commentators generally overlook Satan as the cause of the explosion of human wickedness that required radical surgery, yet that is the Scriptural explanation (Genesis 6:1-4) that begins five chapters on the Flood and the repopulation of the earth.

The Ark was remarkably suited to enable the survival of its passengers. It was the largest vessel built until modern times, yet its dimensions were as sound as today’s ship design. How is that possible? God, not Noah, specified the dimensions of the Ark. God designed the Ark to float and hold a maximum of cargo, not travel to some destination. Basically, it was a rectangular box which would head into the wind to prevent capsizing. If the flood was local, there would be no need for a ship at all. God could simply direct the Noah party out of the danger zone. But the Ark was an ocean-going vessel for a worldwide flood.

Because of the wickedness of man God determined to destroy all flesh in 120 years (Genesis 6:3). If the flood was local, this would give Noah enough time to make a hundred trips to the safe zone, even if it were a thousand miles away. But if the flood were to be all encompassing, Noah would need helpers and this is exactly what happened. After the 120-year warning God gave him three sons. But Noah would also have to learn the craft of ship building. Then he needed the time to train a large team of helpers. Finally, he was assigned the daunting and dangerous task of preaching the message of coming judgment during that time. The time element is consistent with a global flood.

Scripture reports that the Flood continued to rise for 150 days, covering the highest hills and taking all human life outside the Ark. By comparison the Great Mississippi Flood was the most destructive river flood in the history of the United States, with 27,000 square miles inundated in depths of up to 30 feet in early 1927. Yet it did not cover all the surrounding hills and drowned barely a fraction of the population. Following 150 days of rising water, the Ark passengers could not disembark for another 221 days because it took that long for the land to dry out and be safe. When the animals were released, they would quickly travel up to hundreds of miles in all directions from the Ark and all that land had to be safe for them. No local flood has produced conditions across thousands of miles that took over a year to return to normal.

Another unique feature of the Flood is that the chief character, Noah, is ranked with Daniel and Job as the most righteous man in history (Ezekiel 14:14, 20). In the entire Flood narrative God does the speaking and Noah does the obeying with no indication of hesitation or back talk. How different is the story of Moses from the burning bush to his striking of the rock. God couldn’t blot out such a

righteous man as Noah. This world's most righteous individual of the day was suitable for dealing with the world's most unusual flood of all time.

As to geography some local flood proponents suggest that mankind had not spread out worldwide, that he only occupied a small area of the world, so only a local flood was needed to blot out all flesh. This argument assumes that the geography of the earth before the Flood was the same as today. That notion has been changing over the past fifty years. Now creationists with relevant scientific backgrounds think the geography of the earth's surface was vastly different before the Flood and this is consistent with Genesis chapter one. Since all the land was in one place, just one super continent existed. This condition means that man was not spread out over the entire globe but was found in just the super continent portion of the earth.

The mechanism which brought on the Flood broke up the super continent. The pieces of land moved over an unknown period of time to form today's major continents and many islands. The mechanism that started this process, while not yet understood, involved a destabilizing of the earth's mantle as it belched vast amounts of volcanic material. The continuing volcanic activity also sustained the warmed oceans and a thin atmospheric haze to produce the one-time conditions for an estimated 1000-year ice age which then reshaped vast portions of the deposits made by the Flood.

God stated another worldwide change. It is so astonishing that expositors hesitate to take it at face value yet it explains how the animals and their keepers could live peaceably on the Ark for a year. Apparently, the fall did not alienate man and animals. While some humans may have harmed animals, the general population lived peaceably with them. But in some way the Flood caused a nutritional need for man that only animal flesh could supply. While God gave only the green plants for food before the Flood, He added animal flesh to man's diet after the Flood. Here are the words of God Himself:

²[God said] "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." Genesis 9:2-3.

Yet another unique feature of the Flood was the covenant God established between "me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations" (Genesis 9:12) which was sealed with a sign that is seen all over the world.

¹¹"Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹³"I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth" Genesis 9:11, 13-16.

The sign of the rainbow reaches as far as Noah's Flood reached. It is world-wide because the Flood was world-wide. As numerous defenders of the Bible have pointed out, vastly devastating local floods have occurred thousands of times down through the centuries, so if Noah's Flood were local, God who cannot lie would have lied many times.

Lastly are the multiple statements related to repopulating the world. Six times Scripture repeats this idea:

Genesis 9:1 “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’”

Genesis 9:7 “And you (Hebrew-plural), be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

Genesis 9:19 “These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.”

Genesis 10:5 “From these (sons of Japheth) the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.”

Genesis 10:32 “These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.”

Genesis 11:8 “So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth.”

These nine unique features of the Flood utterly distinguish it from any other flood in all history.

The Day-Age View

Vast scientific research finds the universe billions of years old. Physics has reached the point where it recognizes that if creation began as a tight ball of infinitely hot and compact matter, it would fly apart at an astronomical rate and in 14.3 billion years spread out to today’s universe. In deference some creationists have sought for Scriptural agreement by interpreting the days of creation week as vast periods of time. They notice that the Hebrew noun for day has different shades of meaning as do most Hebrew words. One of those shades of meaning for “day” is a period of time. On this basis they view the days of creation as periods of time.

To be sure, throughout Scripture “day” is used in different senses. But the laws of hermeneutics require the interpreter first to see if Scripture itself defines those days in Genesis one, and if so, to accept the Scriptural definition. So, does Scripture itself define the length of those days? Indeed it does. The fifth commandment sets up an analogy between man’s work week and God’s creation week. Israel was to follow the pattern set by God. This means Hebrews were to work six days just as God worked six days and then rest on the seventh day just as God rested on the seventh day.

⁸Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter.... ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:8-11.

We can first eliminate any idea that the word “day” in verses referring to man’s work week was longer than a normal day. Exodus 23:12 is specific: “Six **days** you shall do your work, but on the seventh **day** you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.” Besides Exodus 20:9-10 and 23:12, this idea is stated in yet a third place:

²Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day. Exodus 35:2-3.

So these three passages settle the issue of whether the days in man's week were literal or not. Beyond doubt they were literal. But the question before us is "Were God's creation days literal?" At this point, the day-age folks make an observation that might raise uncertainty. They observe that the seventh day of creation week was not framed chronologically by an evening and a morning. They are correct to the extent those words are not used in association with the seventh day. The day-age people then take their observation to the next level by saying this indicates that since the work of creation was done, God not only rested on the seventh day but is still resting today. So now, according to their reasoning, one of the days of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is longer than a normal day. In the end, they conclude all the days were longer than normal.

A continuing seventh day is a crucial first step to their argument for the days being ages. So, they spend much time explaining the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments that speak of God offering His rest to humans. Then they associate those rests with the rest of God following the sixth day of creation week. While the subject could consume an entire Bible study (and pages of this book), we will state simply that each of these three rests was different. God rested for one day to set a pattern for the Sabbath rest.

The rest God offered Israel was the rest of being a nation with their own geographical territory. To acquire that land, they had to fight, not rest. To be prosperous, they had to work the land six days a week, not rest. That rest was interrupted when Assyria captured the Northern Kingdom and Babylon captured the Southern Kingdom. The rest offered since Calvary is the rest of eternal salvation, gained by believing on Jesus Christ. That rest never ends. God gives one kind of rest to Israel and another kind to NT believers. Since those are rests from the hand of God, He calls them "My rest," but they are not the rest of the seventh day of creation week.

God is working today, not resting, according to the words of Jesus: "My father works until now and I work" (John 5:17). At a future time, God will perform a new work of creation, a new heaven and a new earth. So the rest of God on day seven of creation week lasted one normal day. All seven days of Genesis 1:1-2:3 are literal, normal days in which God shrank millions and even billions of years of development of the universe and earth into six literal days.

Perhaps evening and morning were left out so that what was said would stand out. God blessed the seventh day, the only day of the seven He blessed. This was not a general blessing but a very specific blessing. In effect by setting the seventh day apart as holy, God consecrated it for all time. This was long before God gave the Mosaic Law. From this seventh day on, it would proclaim God as the Creator. To violate it by making it other than a normal day would be to desecrate what God made holy. Exodus 31:17 is the fullest biblical statement of the purpose of the seventh day. It signifies that God created everything in six days. Here is what it says:

"It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17.

So the seventh day is a sign. For the sign to work the previous periods must be days not years or billions of years. If they are not normal days, the sign is destroyed. While the words seem repetitive, one could say "The seventh day throughout human history witnesses to God as the Creator and that He did the work of creation in six normal days. What Scripture itself says about

the seventh day is truly remarkable and what Scripture itself says needs to be the creationist's focus.

Returning to the days of Genesis one, days are stated as ordinal, not cardinal numbers in the creation account. Cardinal numbers follow the pattern of "one," "two," "three." Ordinal numbers express the order of things and follow the pattern of "first," "second," "third." In arguing for the seventh day continuing to the present, some observe that the King James Version translated the days as a sentence: "And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:5). They are correct to the extent that the verb is not associated with the noun "day" but with the nouns "evening" and "morning." The English Standard Version correctly translates: "And there was evening and there was morning." The next two Hebrew words are the adjective "first" and the noun "day." In English we would say, "The first day." Some have incorrectly observed that the definite article is used for the first six days but not the seventh day. The fact is, the definite article is not found with any of the seven days. Rather, it is a given in the construction itself. This definite article argument is a red herring used to buttress the day-age view.

Some might raise objections by pointing out that "Sabbath" can be a day, a year or even a lot of years. True, but Scripture generally indicates which kind of a Sabbath is meant, i.e., a Sabbath day, a Sabbath year or a Sabbath of Sabbath years. For instance, Leviticus 25 introduces a particular kind of Sabbath: "the land shall keep a Sabbath to the LORD" (Leviticus 25:2). Verses three, four and five explain: ³"For six **years** you shall sow your field... ⁴But in the seventh **year** there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow...⁵You shall not reap.... It shall be a solemn rest for the land." God permitted people to take food from it for themselves and their livestock, but for an entire year they were not to work it. The Sabbath year was for the benefit of the land. This was three millennia before modern agricultural practices.

The Sabbath year had other features outlined in the entire fifteenth chapter of Deuteronomy. "At the end of seven **years** you shall grant a release" (Deuteronomy 15:1). "He shall serve you six **years** and in the seventh **year** you shall let him go" (Deuteronomy 15:12). "He has served you six **years**" (Deuteronomy 15:18). The word "day" is not found in this chapter because the subject is years, not days. "At the end of seven **years** in the **year** of release" (Deuteronomy 31:10). On other occasions Scripture uses the word "day" for a normal day. "For six **days** you shall eat unleavened bread and on the seventh **day**..." (Deuteronomy 16:8).

So, when the Scripture wants to speak of years, it uses that word over and over. Likewise, it uses the word "day" hundreds of times for an ordinary day. Why should the words for "day" and "year" be understood any differently in Genesis 1-11? In the genealogies we read "all the **days** of Seth were 912 **years**" (Genesis 5:8). All those days added up to 912 years. All those days were normal days. In the same way Genesis 2:4 states, "In the **day** that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens" (Genesis 2:4). Looking back there was the first day, the second day, the third day, etc. When summed the total was six normal days.

One troubling thought comes with the idea that according to the day-age theory, late in day six, about 50,000 to 150,000 years ago, man was created. Scripture gives us 2000 years of well-established biblical history from Abraham to Christ and the 2000 years from Christ to the present. Even those 4000 years seem immense when one considers that the current signs of the times point to Christ's return at any time. Saying that 46,000 to 146,000 years of undescribed divine activity in the affairs of man is inconsistent with the biblical revelation of a God who acts deliberately and in a

timely way. Let us prefer what the Bible says with regard to those six days of creation than an interpretation based on today's science. That is the life of faith.

Many ancient people such as the Greeks and religions such as Hinduism believed that matter was eternal and evil. The 2nd law of thermodynamics states the universe is expanding indicating matter had a beginning. Creationist and astrophysicist Hugh Ross founded Reasons to Believe which confirms the Scriptural account of creation through recent scientific findings. To date he claims to have found 250 such reasons to believe the Bible. Dr. Ross is a leading defender of the day-age theory so he subscribes to the age of the creation if produced by God at the normal speed of 14.3 billion years. We believe his 14.3 billion years are better explained by a God who is all-powerful and compressed all that work into six normal days.

Dr. Ross believes that the entire universe is necessary just to support life on one planet, the earth. We agree. Of special note, he speaks of one scientific development that might well explain day two of creation week. He says that in 1999 astrophysicists discovered dark matter and estimates that it is the dominant component of the universe, currently comprising 70% of its mass. It is embedded in the edge of the universe and is fine tuned to continue the universe's expansion which must happen to sustain life on earth. We believe dark matter best explains the waters above the heavens when God separated them from the earth on day two of creation week. We will know for sure in heaven, but creationists owe Dr. Ross their appreciation for his ministry of acknowledging creation as testifying to the existence of the God of the Bible.

Extra Name in Shem's Genealogy

The DSS expose an error commonly repeated by creationists who defend the *MT*. It has to do with a second Cainan in Luke's genealogy of Christ. See Appendix 8.6.

Arguments from Meaning of Names and Symmetry

A very different approach used by some creationists to determine whether the *LXX* or *MT* of Shem's line is the correct reading is to study the meaning of names. These views are held by Christians with a rich tradition of intense study of God's Word. For their sakes *Hidden Beauty* provides thought for their consideration, but because this chapter is so long, see Appendix 8.7 for our discussion of the subject.

When Were the Birthing Years Changed?

History of the Masoretic Text

We began the chapter with the puzzling problem of two Old Testament texts. One is the official *Textus Receptus* of Judaism, the Hebrew Masorah (Masoretic Text). The other is the Greek translation of a different Hebrew textual family. How do two different textual traditions square with inerrancy? Scriptural inerrancy applies only to the original writing. About 98% of the OT was written in Hebrew. All agree the original autographs were lost long ago.

After divine revelation and enablement to record comes preservation and transmission. God used Israel to preserve the MT as is seen in the oldest existing MT, the Aleppo Codex of c. 930 AD. Looking at the details, with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD devout Jews sought to protect the copies of the *MT* they possessed. Faithful copying continued for the next 400 years. Then around 500 AD several families of priests began composing rules for copying. Over the next 400 years these rules

would become the standard for copying the Hebrew Old Testament. These scribes became known as Masoretes, so eventually the text they preserved became known as the Masoretic Text. It was the same text copied at Qumran a millennium earlier.

Some charge that the Masoretes and those before them changed the text in a number of ways. They point to the change from the Phoenician script to the Chaldean block alphabet. This was a necessary change because if alphabets change, for Scripture to be understood, the letters in it must also be changed. A second misleading charge is that the keepers of the official text added vowels. This is also true. In fact, they added even more. Originally, the text only contained consonants and the letters of each line stood side by side without breaks. At some point scribes added spaces between words, marks that indicated vowels, marks to show pronunciation and cantillation, and even marks to indicate paragraphs. Later, someone added chapters and verses. Who would want to go back to letters without vowels or breaks from margin to margin?

But the critics point out that consonants without vowels can become different words depending on which vowels are used, where they are used and how many are used. For an example in English, the three consonants “slt” can mean entirely different things depending on which vowels are used: salt/silt/slat/slit/slot/slut/slate/salute. But the alternative is that every reader must sort this out for himself, in effect requiring him to become an expert in this. On the basis of tradition and much learning the scribes were in a far better position to determine the correct word than the average reader. So vowel pointing actually helped to clarify the text for those seeking its guidance.

Then the critics point to the explanations the Masoretes put in the outside margin and below the text. These did not change the text at all. The Masorah parva are statistical notes in the outside margin of each page. This was all a part of counting all the words in a book or all the letters on a page, etc. That certainly didn’t change the text. The Masorah magna are notes below the text on each page that in effect expand on the Masorah parva. It cites entire verses found elsewhere that contain a certain word. All of these devices made the unchanged text easier to read.

Finally, the Critical Apparatus is the section below the Masorah magna that contains questions and uncertainties about the text. It is a reminder that some question the text at that point and maybe someday the problem will be resolved. Clearly, the Critical Apparatus does not change the text. In conclusion, while the charge that Hebrew scribes changed the text through the centuries has taken in a lot of gullible readers, just the opposite is true. The notes in the outside margin and at the bottom of each page along with the many marks within the text and later chapter/verse divisions have helped to improve the readability and clarity of the text through the centuries.

Transmission of Scripture

Along with the preservation of Scripture comes its transmission. While inspiration is completely divine and thus without error, the preservation and transmission of Scripture involve mankind. While God will never let preservation deteriorate so the message is lost, history testifies that those who had high respect for God diligently copied and translated the Scripture. God always had such servants. As a result, today’s Bible is entirely adequate to instruct the follower of God in His will. Since few speak biblical Hebrew today, God’s servants have translated the Bible into thousands of modern languages. It was no different in the days of Jesus and the New Testament writers. Even back then few spoke biblical Hebrew. Even then they needed a translation of the original text. But now the Old Testament is available in its original language and possibly a thousand scholars worldwide can work with the myriads of documents to determine the most exact reading. The MT

like every other textual family of the Bible has accumulated scribal errors and even deliberate changes through the years. But most importantly it is to be preferred because it is in the original language of the OT.

Development of the Old Testament Canon

Following revelation and inspiration at some point the revelation is also recognized as authoritative and thus binding on all mankind. That is canonization. Canonization happened immediately in the case of the books of Moses. At the point where Moses completed the Pentateuch, the OT consisted of five books. They were placed in the care of the priesthood of Israel. The priesthood was responsible for preserving, teaching and transmitting the books of Moses. In time a special class of priest called scribes would be trained to make copies of God's revelation.

The second clear step in the canonization of the OT came with the work of Samuel. Samuel, though a member of the tribe of Levi, was not a descendant of Aaron and thus not qualified to be an Aaronic priest. In admirable integrity he somehow prevented being called a priest in Scripture and most likely in life. But because Eli's sons were wicked and Eli was elderly, God used Samuel to serve as a faithful priest during that ugly period when Eli's sons were the official priests. Beyond that God began the line of prophets with Samuel. Further, as the last judge he provided the binding force of government in Israel. He was a type of Christ, combining the three functions of leadership in a society under God—prophet, priest and king (the judges were the forerunner of kings). Samuel trained Eli's sons' sons to be faithful priests so that the next three generations of Eli's descendants faithfully served the office of priest until the priesthood was transferred back to the line of Aaron through Eleazar in the days of Zadok.

I Chronicles 9:22 credits Samuel along with David for organizing and standardizing the service of the priesthood in the Tabernacle. Samuel also scrupulously honored the canon of the Law and wrote and/or certified the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and most of First Samuel that tells about his ministry and David's years before the death of Saul. Samuel faithfully declared God's word in his lifetime so the portions of Scripture that he produced were likewise canonical when he produced them.

The third period of canonization came in the days of David and Solomon. They were neither priests nor prophets but they expressed worship and divine wisdom. Their books would begin a third section of Scripture, the writings. God showed His unique pleasure with David by giving him victories over the enemies of Israel and giving him the promise of a house that would last forever. God likewise placed His approval on Solomon by granting him the wisdom he asked for and expanding his kingdom. Later, God authenticated the books of the prophets with fulfilled prophecy. In this way the fourth period of canonization was accomplished. Finally, the work of Ezra the priest testifies to much work with Scripture. He would have completed the Old Testament Scripture except for brief portions added after his time.

Jesus refers to Scripture several hundred times with various statements such as "It is written" or "Moses said." On the day of his resurrection "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). On a later post-resurrection appearance he said, "Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). These are the three sections of the Old Testament. The next verse says "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

God the Son called these writings Scripture. Thirty years later the Apostle Paul would write “All Scripture is God-breathed.” II Timothy 3:16.

The DSS make no distinction between these books called Scripture and the many other religious books in the collection. From this DSS scholars conclude that the OT canon was not yet established in Israel at that time. It is true that no body of believers had yet certified a list of divinely inspired books. But while unbelievers may have been uncertain about which books belonged to that category, the words of Jesus in the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles in the rest of the New Testament show that the godly knew which books were Scripture. Therefore, canonization by a large body of Christians must not be confused with the recognition of authoritative books by believers.

The voice of the splinter group at Qumran that disappeared from 70 AD until the discovery of the DSS cannot begin to compare with the voice of the New Testament church which became a major movement within the entire Roman Empire and constantly spoke of “Scripture.” The community at Qumran was entirely comfortable with writing books of religious fiction and storing them beside the books of the OT. These were the kind of anti-OT material NT writers warned about. Undoubtedly Paul had such Qumranian favorites as the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Book of Enoch* in mind when he instructed Timothy to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths...” I Timothy 1:3-4.

The Apostle’s words “Certain persons...have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law [but] without understanding...what they are saying.” I Timothy 1:6-7. These verses would have included the Qumranians’ extensive teaching of the law in their sectarian books such as the *Community Rule*. Of the Qumranian type of asceticism he wrote “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons... who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving....” I Timothy 4:1-3.

Further, only individual OT books were found at Qumran, not groups of books bound together to indicate they were equally authoritative. To dismiss the DSS because they were the product of heretics is to miss their value. But to overstate their meaning with such statements as “they prove there was no OT canon during the Second Temple [Herod’s Temple] Period” is equally harmful. What they do show is that various versions of the OT existed between 100 BC and 70 AD, that scribes faithfully copied them through the centuries to follow and that by far the preferred OT text at Qumran was the basis of the Masoretic Text.

Answer to “When Were the Birthing Years Changed?”

As reported earlier, Emanuel Tov concluded that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Hebrew forerunner of the LXX were originally one document. Since the Samaritan Pentateuch was composed after Solomon when Israel separated from Judah, the years could have been changed any time after that. Solomon’s kingdom gained a much greater understanding of the history of Israel’s neighbors, so seeds for changing those numbers could have formed that early.

But why would the Jerusalem Elders select a text for translation into Greek that was only 1/7th as popular as the preferred Torah text at Qumran? That question can be answered by another question: “Wouldn’t they select the version they felt would best be received in the Greek world?” They would have had broad knowledge of Greek thinking. They knew the Greeks believed in more years of civilization than the majority Hebrew text seemed to report. It apparently was a small thing

to them to carry to Alexandria the Hebrew text that recognized the most years since they knew the Greeks believed the Great Pyramid of Giza was built 300 years before the Flood date found in the majority Hebrew text.

How tragic that the 70 had become so insensitive to their own sacred writings that they could not recognize the very nature of Hebrew genealogies, that they were about identification of descendants with ancestors and ancestors with descendants rather than records of precise succession.

Weighing the LXX Textual Quality

As textual scholars study the two texts, they find occasional scribal errors in the MT that can be corrected from the LXX text. See Appendix 8.7 for four such instances. Appendix 8.7 also explains how changes in the LXX directed the location of Abraham's homeland to Urfa in Northwest Mesopotamia instead of Ur 700 miles to the Southeast.

Our next three chapters become a unit on the Book of Job. They describe a world awash in history eight or nine generations before Peleg but many generations after Eber. They add further evidence of a global flood nearly two millennia before Ussher's too late Flood date (2348 BC).

PART IV - SHEM'S ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY CONFIRMED BY JOB

Chapter Nine

Evidence from the Lifespan of Job for Missing Generations

Scripture does not give Job's genealogy, but such lists are only one way to date an individual. The goal of this and the next two chapters is to showcase the many ways that do date Job. As a consequence, his life and times demand an earlier Flood date. The following ideas will be developed in these three chapters:

1. Job lived 280 years which places his birth in the 35-55 generation gap between Eber and Peleg.
2. Job lived when dinosaurs dwelt without fear of humans in the Jordan Valley.
3. Job lived in the declining years of the Great Ice Age. The book contains 15 distinct kinds of ice age phenomena.
4. God orchestrated Job's ordeal to show mankind how malicious and dangerous Satan is. This message was needed early in God's revelation to man.
5. Job descended from Shem through Aram and Uz. Knowledge of God was still abundant in his land. A far different picture is seen in that same land in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, half a millennium later.
6. Peleg's name means "divided by water" and most likely refers to the closing days of the Ice Age when glacial melt and subsequent rising sea level covered land bridges between continents.

280-Year Lifespan (2690-2410 BC)

We must start with Job's lifespan found at the end of the book. In his extreme pain Job had said regrettable things about God. After he repented and prayed for his friends the book concludes by reporting that God doubled all he had (Job 42:10). This doubling included ten more children, the same number that perished at the time of Satan's attack. Why not 20? Job only needed ten more to double the original ten because he would have all 20 with him forever in heaven. His years followed the same pattern. He lived 140 years after his ordeal (Job 42:16). His ordeal had not erased from his mind the memories of those former years of walking with God and building a ranching empire. Doubling his years was like doubling his children—he lived 140 years after his ordeal to double the 140 years he lived before his ordeal, giving him a total lifespan of 280 years.

The above is our conclusion, but how did we get there? Job chapter 42 begins with the doubling of his animals, not his children or his years. Verse 12 says "he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys." These numbers are exactly twice as many animals as he had just before his ordeal, for Job 1:3 states, "He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys." Then came the attack of the enemy. Fire from heaven took the sheep. Chaldeans stole the camels and Sabeans plundered the oxen and donkeys. Job never saw them again. After his ordeal relatives showed him sympathy and gave him money and gold (Job 42:11). With this start he began to rebuild his stock. By the end of his life 140 years later Scripture reports that he had exactly twice as many animals as before Satan's attack. Indeed, God did double his livestock.

Doubling Job's Children

Next, Scripture speaks of his children. After Job's ordeal, Scripture states that "He had also seven sons and three daughters" (Job 42:13). To do this God obviously restored his health. Ten is the same number that he originally had for Job 1:2 reported "There were born to him seven sons and three daughters." Satan killed them all by sending a wind that collapsed the house of the oldest brother where they were celebrating. But there is an apparent problem. On the one hand "The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42: 10). On the other hand, the LORD gave him only ten more children, not twenty. Why only ten more? Wouldn't it take twenty to double them? The answer is that there is a fundamental difference between Job's animals and his children. Those first animals were lost to Job forever. Job would never see them again. But those first seven sons and three daughters were not lost forever when the great wind took them.

Job's family believed in the true God, the Creator. When they were killed, they went to glory and are there with Job today along with the second set of ten. Job has twenty sons and daughters with him forever. God did double his children even though doubling them would only take giving him ten more whereas doubling his animals would require heaven to stock his land with twice the number he had before his ordeal. Heaven's math is flawless.

Doubling Job's Years

Finally, the last verse of Job states that he lived 140 years after his ordeal. We understand those years matched the years before his ordeal. But 280 years places his birth before that of Abraham, Terah, Serug, Reu and even Peleg. No known commentator views Job to have lived 280 years. Invariably Job is given a shorter lifespan. Why? Where do they go astray? Job 42:9 says "The LORD restored the fortunes of Job." Job 42:12 says "the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning," while 42:10 is more specific: "The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." Then Scripture gives specific numbers in three categories—his animals, his children and his years.

Many students of Scripture conclude the doubling only applied to his cattle. They reason that while he received twice as many animals but only the same number of children as before, the doubling only applied to material possessions. They conclude that only ten more would contradict the statement that God doubled all he had so the doubling only applied to his animals. Yet others do include his children but not his years. Some even include his years but state that he lived 70 years before his ordeal and God doubled that number after his ordeal, so that he lived 140 years after his ordeal for a total lifespan of 210 years (70+140=210).

It is true that Job involves much mystery, especially about when he lived and when the book was written; the ideas and form of poetry are so advanced—how could the events have taken place so early? Some find the time of the Patriarchs to be a good fit because Jacob's twin brother Esau had a son named Eliphaz (Genesis 36:4, 10, 11). They suggest he was the leader of the three friends who came to comfort Job. The Eliphaz in the book of Job was from Teman and a town by that name existed in Edom, the nation Esau founded. Others notice that Issachar's third son was Yob (Job) and suggest that he might have decided to go out on his own after Jacob moved his people to Egypt, settling in the Sinai Peninsula where they say Job lived. They strengthen this argument by adding that Moses may have known him during the forty years Moses lived in the Sinai with Jethro, the priest of Midian. They suggest this was how Moses learned Job's story. (Jewish tradition holds Moses to be the author of Job.)

But people weren't living to the age of 280 or even 210 in Esau's day. Esau's brother Jacob lived 147 years, Levi lived 137 years and Moses lived 120 years. Further, names are often repeated in Scripture. Most tellingly, the city of Teman existed before it was taken over by the Edomites. The whole idea of Issachar's son leaving Jacob's extended family in Egypt is unlikely. Finally, Job knowing Moses is impossible since the Eliphaz who was Esau's son would have lived when Jacob moved his people to Egypt, hundreds of years before Moses was born.

Still others disregard the length of Job's life entirely and suggest he lived during or shortly before the days of David because the poetry of Job is like that of Psalms and Solomon's books. But by that time the average lifespan was 70, only half as long as Job lived after his ordeal. In the discourses Eliphaz refutes Job's position by asking if Job was so old that he possessed all knowledge. "Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills? Have you listened in the council of God? And do you limit wisdom to yourself?" Job 15:8-9. Eliphaz next answers his question with "Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father" 15:10.

Job was not near the end of his life when Satan struck. His father was still alive and people even older than his father described as "the gray-haired and the aged" were living in his day. Nevertheless, in chapter 42 God says that Job spoke correctly about Him while his three comforters did not which indicates he already had to have lived many years to gain his knowledge of God. Therefore, Job had already lived many years at the time of his ordeal and others were considerably older.

So, the usual practice is to focus on the animals but not dwell on his children or years. What does Scripture do? His animals are mentioned first; they were the least important, the most superficial; there is no elaboration. His children were far more important so Scripture not only reports their number but elaborates significantly on them. Lastly, his years were the most important of all. Scripture reports their number and elaborates on them with unusual detail as well. This structuring reinforces the idea that the doubling applied to his children and his lifespan as well as his animals. When they are viewed in this light, only one conclusion remains—Job's children set the pattern for the doubling of his years. Job lived a total of 280 years.

Four Generations in Job's Second Family

What Scripture says about those years after his ordeal reinforces our view. The sequence begins with "After this Job lived 140 years." Job 42:16. For perspective Abraham lived a total of 175 years so 140 is just 35 years short of Abraham's entire lifetime. Jacob lived 147 years or just seven years longer than Job's years following his ordeal. Next it says "[He] saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations." Job 42:16. The first generation would be those seven sons and three daughters. If Job recovered his health over the next ten years, he would have begun fathering/begetting children ten years into the second 140 years. At the standard rate of gaining maturity at the age of 32, the second generations would have begun 42 years into Job's 2nd 140 years. The third generation would have begun when he was 74 years into the second 140. Finally, the fourth generation would have begun when he was 106 years into the second 140 years. This is about right mathematically because at 140, the first of the fifth generation would have just been born.

Wouldn't this also have been true before his ordeal? If so, the first generation would be 32-50 years younger than him making him begin the first generation when he was 32, the second when he was 64, the third when he was 96 and the fourth when he was 128. Being 140 years old at the time of his ordeal fits while being 70 does not.

Furthermore, the only activity mentioned of his first batch of ten children is “eating and drinking,” and “feasting.” They held feasts in the house of each one on his day and their sisters would join them (Job 1:4). The feasts lasted for multiple days and Job was not present because the text says “When the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them.... Thus Job did continually.” Job 1:5. This lifestyle sounds more geared to retired or semi-retired people. Yet if he was only 70, the oldest would have been 38 while the youngest would have been 20 meaning that most of them had not even reached adulthood. But if he were 140 when they were killed, the oldest would have been 108 and the youngest 90.

The servant who brought the terrible news called them young people: “their oldest brother’s house ... fell on the young people and they are dead.” Job 1:18-19. “Young people” is a relative term, frequently used by an older generation for the next generation regardless of age. If they were 90-108 and Job was 140, “young people” would be appropriate. Further, they were not living with their parents any longer. Each owned his own home and ran his own life. Thus, his children’s easy lifestyle adds further support to the idea that Job had lived many more than 70 years and his first ten children were far older than 20-38 when Satan struck.

Some will dismiss this line of reasoning as speculative but it logically applies the pattern given by Scripture and it is such specific patterns as found in all the numbers in the lines of Adam and Shem that make the Scripture believable, not mythical.

Support for 280 Years from the Circumstances of His Death

Finally, Scripture concludes its elaboration on his years by stating the circumstances of his death: “And Job died, an old man, and full of days.” Job 42:17. These words are standard statements in Scripture for living a full life rather than a life cut short prematurely or unusually extended. His 140 years were not miracle years other than being restored to health so he could live the standard lifetime of his day. Abraham’s death received the same Scriptural notice:

⁷These are the days of the years of Abraham’s life, 175 years. ⁸Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years. Genesis 25:7-8.

An entirely separate line of reasoning involves the hints of many years before his ordeal. The book shows he knew much about God. He also was careful in his worship of God, always consecrating his sons and daughters after each round of their feasting (Job 1:4-5). Of all people God chose him to expose the unseen enemy of mankind. All this suggests many years of spiritual growth. The size of his ranch suggests he had been at it for a long time. His position of highest respect in the nearby town suggests the passing of many years. The discourses ask if he were so old he knew all things. The very fact that the spiritual leaders of his area came to comfort him suggests that he had been around a long time. Job’s 280 year lifespan is but the first of many reasons to place his birth half a millennium before Abraham’s. (See Appendix 11.1 for a list of fourteen reasons for dating Job early.)

Job’s Character and World

¹There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. ²There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. Job 1:1-3.

This opening paragraph introduces Job as a man without blame. Not that he was sinless, but as people looked at his life, they recognized qualities like honesty, justice and compassion. Upright comes from straight or correct. It answers to righteousness. Job had a high regard for God and walked according to His standards.

The words describing Job's character are in the very first verse of this sixth longest Old Testament book. But they are repeated and they come from the very mouth of God when God says to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Job 1:8. This time God adds that Job is at the top of the ladder, in a class all by himself, that there was none like him on the earth. Job was the most righteous man alive in his day.

That is not all. After Satan had destroyed all of Job's wealth and caused all ten of his children to perish, God repeated the phrase: "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." Job 2:3. In the face of losing all his possessions and ten kids, he retained his integrity. In spite of this crushing blow he was still in a class all of his own. None was like him in living the way God intended man to live.

The suffering Job endured is so horrible that some feel his account is more of an allegory, a story designed to teach God's children to trust Him in the worst that could be imagined. No human could possibly survive that, goes this thinking. Yet he is mentioned as a real person in both the Old and New Testaments. James 5:11 speaks of his exemplary patience.

In Ezekiel 14:14 and 20 God emphasizes how certain was the coming judgment by saying to Ezekiel, "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land God was judging], they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God." In verse 20 God repeats this statement with an oath: "As I live declares the Lord God. They would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness." Both Noah and Daniel are regarded as men who really lived. In fact Daniel was alive when God gave this prophecy to Ezekiel. This certainly argues that like Noah and Daniel, Job was a real person. The experience of Job is more than a moral lesson. It is a record of events that actually happened.

Job's Family Business

The next verses describe his enormous ranch, large family and active worship of the true God. Verse three mentions 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, very many servants and summarizes: "This man was the greatest of all the people of the east." The numbers are impressive. For instance if his 3000 camels were roped at 25' intervals, the caravan would stretch over 14 miles. More seriously, not many today are familiar with how such animals could be employed to make Job the wealthiest man "in the east." So let us look at the operation and size of such a ranch on the basis of general standards of production for these animals.

Essentially Job owned an enormous family business complex consisting of three major divisions: farming, manufacturing and trading. Each complimented the other and made maximum use of his work force. The work year began with spring planting. One ox can pull a plow. A yoke of two provide both power and endurance. The man wrestling with the plow would wear out long before two oxen. But someone needed to make sure the oxen stayed on course, so one man would lead them while the other muscled the plow. When the plow man became exhausted, they would trade

jobs. Following them would be people to break up clods and smooth the dirt. Last of all would come the planters.

Division One: Farming

During planting season most of Job's available community chipped in, essentially moving into the field. Each yoke involved a family or two, possibly a total of ten people including women and older children. Thus 5000 people would make the greatest use of Job's 500 yoke of oxen. Being a godly man, Job would make sure his workers had a day of rest. Then time was needed to set up field camps where the oxen plowed. Most of the area was composed of rather narrow valleys or bands of fertile soil broken up by numerous rocky hills, plateaus, mountainous regions and wilderness.

Now it becomes obvious why the donkeys were needed. They brought both provisions to the field camp(s), sometimes as far as 20 miles from headquarters and supplies for planting. The various crops were planted at different times. Possibly the planting season extended over ten weeks which allowed for about 50 plowing days after subtracting the days for moving, rest and bad weather. If each yoke plowed two acres a day, 500 yoke would plow 1000 acres a day or 50,000 in 50 days. A square mile contains 640 acres, so 50,000 acres amounts to 78 square miles.

When the Sabeans stole Job's oxen (Job 1:15), the donkeys were feeding beside them. Apparently, Job practiced crop rotation, leaving a portion of the fertile land to rest each year. The oxen fed on this resting land at night and during the non-plowing season as well. Manure from the animals further enriched the fallowing soil for its next cycle of planting. Because the area was becoming more arid, possibly one-third of Job's total arable land rested each year. Adding this land to the land being plowed brings the total land that could be cultivated to 100 plus square miles.

Crops matured for harvest at different times as well, so harvesting also lasted for about two months. Again, all available personnel were needed for the harvest. During the harvest season donkeys carried loads in both directions—taking provisions out to the field workers and returning with the harvested crops.

Division Two: Manufacturing

Wool from Job's 7000 sheep would supply his manufacturing division as well as provide meat for his employees and sacrifices for worshipping the LORD. Possibly ten garments could be made from the spring shearing of each animal. While keeping the sheep involved about 300 men and older boys, more help would be needed at shearing time. When the women weren't in the field for planting or harvesting, they would be making garments (70,000 a year from 7000 sheep). Many would clothe Job's community; the rest would be available for trade.

Division Three: Trading

Job's 3000 camels explain his great wealth. They formed his trading division, carrying his farming surplus and manufacturing products throughout the region. They would have been resting during planting and harvesting while all available hands were involved in those efforts. During the trading season each caravan might involve ten to twenty camels, 150-300 caravans. Each twenty-camel caravan consisted of camel drivers, skilled traders and guards, possibly ten men. While camels can walk all day at four miles per hour, to save their energy for carrying products, the men

with them did not ride; they walked except, per chance, for a few elderly, highly skilled traders. Those walking limited the caravan to 20-25 miles a day.

During the trading season about 2000 of the men of Job's ranch including most of the strongest men were involved in caravan operations. Another 300 cared for the sheep, 200 cared for the donkeys and oxen and still hundreds of others provided services for the ranching community and mansions of Job and his seven semi-retired sons. Possibly 3000 working age men were a part of Job's operation. With retirees, women and children, his entire community could have numbered 12,000.

Job's operations stretched over 1000 square miles, given all the unusable land within which he found 100 square miles suitable for farming and another 50 for the grazing of sheep and camels. The area of his land compares favorably with the famous King Ranch of Texas, USA with its 1300 square miles.

Social Life of Job's Adult Children

Each of Job's seven sons had his own house. With Job at 140, his sons would be around 100 and have children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren. "His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them." Job 1:4. "His day" is commonly understood to be the birthday of each son. "And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all." Job 1:5. "Days of the feast" and "run their course" sounds like multiple days for each feast and cycles of celebrating. It could be that "his day" was a designated day on the calendar like the first day of each new moon or the first day of each quarter to kick off another cycle of feasting at each brother's house.

Priestly Function of Job

Following each cycle, regardless of their frequency, Job diligently performed the service of family priest, consecrating each son and offering a burnt sacrifice for each. The idea that he was very conscientious in this expression of faith is reinforced with "Thus Job did continually." Job 1:5. So even though his vast business operation undoubtedly kept him very busy, he was not too busy to find time to worship God. What previous men of faith had learned of God was available in Job's day and on the basis of this verbal Bible Job had established a strong trust in God.

The next section will provide numerous further reasons to conclude Job was born nearly 300 years before Peleg rather than 400-1200 years after Peleg. While it would not seem so, the location of Job's ranch is a significant element in determining when Job was born.

Location of Job's Ranch

That very first verse also tells where he lived: "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job..." So, who was Uz and where was his land located? Determining all this takes some detective work but many clues are available to provide a reasonable answer. One Uz is found among the earliest people in the line of Shem. Shem had a son named Aram who fathered a son named Uz. This Uz is found in both the genealogies of the Table of Nations and those in Chronicles.

The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. Genesis 10:22-23.

The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. And the sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech. I Chronicles 1:17.

Aram was among those born in the first generation after the Flood; thus his son Uz was born in the second. Further, Uz was Aram's firstborn. While these are obvious facts, they are extremely important and must not be overlooked. They mean he was on the ground floor in obtaining land in the years after the population scattered following the Tower of Babel judgment. His father must have taken his family west because his descendants, the Aramaeans, came to occupy portions of modern Syria, Jordan and western Arabia. As the firstborn, Uz received choice land—much of what is today Jordan and western Saudi Arabia. A substantial population developed across this region and a millennium later Job was born. He possessed a large amount of land, had incredible business skills, was commendably godly, and attracted thousands of folks to his ranching enterprise. He exhibited the best qualities of the Shem-Aram-Uz line.

Godliness, Sunrise, Chaldeans, Sabeans and Camels

Besides the person for whom the land was named, many other clues help locate Job's ranch. God says Job was "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil." Job 1:1b. Like his ancestor Noah who lived a thousand years before, Job was a spiritual beacon in his day. Very possibly Noah's Shem-Aram-Uz branch remained true to Noah's God during this entire period. Each of the five men who spoke in Job came from different people groups yet were descendants of Aram or influenced by Aram's descendants. How else to explain their sound knowledge of God?

Another geographical clue is found in Job 1:3: "He was the greatest of all the people of the east." The word "east" is "sunrise." Directions were in relation to Israel. But since Abraham did not enter Canaan until half a millennium later, how can this phrase be explained? The answer lies in the work of the Holy Spirit who led the editor/writer to include this in the book's final form. This statement locates Job's ranch more to the east of Israel rather than to the north as in Syria or to the south as in the Sinai.

The assaults of the Sabeans for Job's oxen (Job 1:15) and Chaldeans for Job's camels (Job 1:17) point to a west to northwest Arabia location. The Sabeans were famous marauding nomads from the depths of the Arabian wilderness to the east. As to the Chaldeans the servant was very specific. Their style was distinctive; they were well organized; they executed their attack military style. Clearly, they were well known in Job's day. In later times they occupied a land north of Mesopotamia so they either migrated north over the centuries from where they lived in this early period or this was a splinter group. This might place Job's ranch more to the northern portion of the land of Uz.

Camels are another clue to where and when Job lived. While donkeys were used for local transport, camels carried goods long distances. The camel does not have a hoof. Instead, it is equipped with a large leathery pad that prevents it from sinking into the sand. Their long legs distanced them further from the hot earth than the legs of donkeys or horses so they were better fitted for hot desert temperatures. They could walk for days between watering spots. As will be seen later, Arabia was covered with vegetation due to hypercyclones until the waning days of the

Ice Age. As the Ice Age came to an end and desert regions increased, camels became the standard pack animals.

Job spoke of the caravans of Sheba and Tema. The countries of Sheba, home to the Queen of Sheba in southwestern Arabia and Tema which was NW of Sheba were famous for trading all across Arabia. Job would have been very familiar with them and their countless trading routes. His 3000 camels would also have been familiar sights across much of Arabia. This places Job on the fringe of the Arabian desert where he could still farm successfully but also trade in the desert regions to the east.

Other References to “the Land of Uz”

Very important clues come from the other two times the land of Uz is mentioned in the Old Testament. Both references are found in the writings of Jeremiah which date two millennia after Job’s ordeal. By that time nations had formed in parts of the land of Uz so they help to identify the entire region of Uz. In Jeremiah 25:15-26 God directs the prophet to make the nations drink the cup of His judgment. This judgment consists of defeat in warfare. Many nations and kingdoms are in this passage. The list, however, contains an order. It begins and ends with the two nations that treated Israel the worst—Egypt and Babylon who were the first and last to be judged by God. But it also seems to be a listing of nations from closest to Israel to those more distant. The following is an attempt to pick out the names of the nations without citing the entire content of these twelve verses:

¹⁵Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it:” ¹⁸Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; ¹⁹Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his officials, all his people, ²⁰and all the mixed tribes among them; all the kings of the land of Uz and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, ²¹Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; ²²all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and all the kings of the coastland across the sea; ²³Dedan, Tema, Buz; ²⁴all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed tribes who dwell in the desert, ²⁵all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; ²⁶all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another, and all the kingdoms of the world. After them the king of Babylon shall drink.

God begins with Jerusalem and Judah, the heart of Israel. Then come the bordering countries of Uz, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon. Philistia bordered Israel on her southwest; Edom, Moab and Ammon were those small nations that bordered her on her south and east. Tyre and Sidon were the small people groups immediately to Israel’s northwest. The list concludes with countries more distant from Israel—the coastlands, Dedan, Tema, Buz, Arabia, the desert, Zimri, Elam and Media.

Remarkably when this list gets into specific geographical regions bordering Israel, the very first area is Uz. The next nations were to Israel’s southwest, south, southeast, east and northwest, leaving only her north and northeast for Uz. Damascus representing Syria to her north is absent from this list which suggests that Damascus had already been conquered by Babylon. The only region left for Uz is the northeast border of Israel.

Lamentations 4:21 confirms the above: “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz.” Jacob’s twin brother Esau founded a nation called Edom and Edom occupied an area SE to SW of the Dead Sea which was at least partly in the area of ancient Uz. In a similar way Moab and Ammon, the sons of Lot, established nations that occupied portions of

ancient Uz on Israel's eastern border. The only remaining portion of Uz not specifically occupied by a nation in Jeremiah's day was the northeast border of Israel. Thus, the land of Uz in Job's day occupied an area from northeast to south of the Israel of Jeremiah's day. Job's ranch could have been located anywhere within this large territory.

Outside of the book of Job, of all the biblical writers Jeremiah alone names ancient Uz as a land. For Jeremiah to think in terms of that area's name found in just five words of previous Scripture ["in the land of Uz"] suggests the book of Job was a prominent source of his thinking about God. It would be a fascinating meditation for someone to dwell on how the book of Job contributed to Jeremiah's faith.

Conclusion

In summary Job lived somewhere in Uz, somewhere east of Israel, somewhere that was vulnerable to the Sabbeans of the desert and Chaldeans from some distant place, somewhere where his caravans could trade throughout Arabia, somewhere where he could have traveled to the Jordan River to see Behemoth, somewhere where lakes still froze fast, where hail and snow were common, and where windstorms might level the strongest houses.

Job lived in the transition from the Ice Age to the post Ice Age period, the subject of chapter 11. He lived before Arabia became unfarmable desert. Numerous indications point to an area northeast of Israel, somewhere in northern Jordan or northwest Arabia, several hundred miles east of the Mediterranean. As a descendant of Uz this was the portion of land he received and where he made his home in the waning centuries of the Ice Age.

Chapter Ten

Evidence from the Message of Job for Missing Generations

For a host of reasons some already stated in chapter nine, the Book of Job supports the view that Shem's genealogy omits names. This chapter begins where God tells Job to recall his watching of the greatest land creature, the dinosaur Behemoth, in the Jordan Valley. That certainly happened many centuries before Abraham. But Behemoth was just one step in the goal of recording the book's essential message for mankind.

We are told in the opening two chapters of Job that Satan caused Job's suffering. But far earlier, in the first chapter of the Bible we read without elaboration that God created the great sea monster and set him apart from all other animals. In Job 41 God finally elaborates on this king of pride who struck terror into the heart of man above all other creatures. By this we learn that God created him to picture the menace of Satan and for this elaborate warning to stand forever in the oldest book of the Bible.

As to timing, Job himself was born eight or nine generations before Peleg, the fourth named generation of Shem's descendants born after the Flood. Job lived in the waning years of the great Ice Age, long gone and forgotten by the days of the Patriarchs. In restoring Job who said God hated him, God spoke of His creation with more words than in Genesis. Why? Creation showed how good and kind God was to Job. With this matter settled God was free to reveal the real source of Job's suffering by speaking of Leviathan, the divine picture of Satan.

Behemoth and Leviathan

For 44 verses in Job 40 and 41 our Creator speaks of the two enormous reptilian creatures mentioned above: Behemoth, a powerfully-built, long-tailed land creature and Leviathan, a vicious sea monster of tremendous strength that stood at the apex of the animal kingdom. Commentaries of the church fathers, those of the Reformation and even most today identify Behemoth as a hippopotamus or elephant and Leviathan as a sea crocodile or whale. After all, those were the largest land and sea creatures somewhat fitting God's description that they knew. Not anymore. Today the world's museums are stuffed with the fossilized bones of great land and sea creatures that were buried and preserved in the muds of the Great Flood. Sea creatures in the Flood's cooler ocean regions and young dinosaurs on the Ark enabled both types to survive the Flood and grow in population until humans squeezed them out.

But why speak to Job about these two impressive creatures when Job had wasted away to skin and bones, enduring the worst imaginable suffering for perhaps a year? Wouldn't God comfort Job and explain his pain? In truth He did. The creation lecture showed that God was kind and good while those monsters pointed to the real cause of Job's suffering. It did not come from God but from the evil personage the sea monster depicted—the leader of the fallen angels who desires to see every man share his misery in hell forever.

Bible commentators with their incorrect interpretations of Behemoth and Leviathan have muted Scripture's purpose in exposing Satan's sinister character and ignored God's use of the analogy. This chapter presents four Hebrew nouns used in the Old Testament to represent this creature and the frightening character it was designed to portray. Then it will explore the angelic rebellion which

required the creation of Leviathan. God's exchange with Satan follows. All of this argues for many omitted names in Shem's list.

Four Hebrew Nouns for the Sea Monster

Hebrew Noun #1—Tannin

So God created [*bar'ah*] great sea creatures [*tannin*]. Genesis 1:21.

God created the animal kingdom on days five and six of creation week. Of all those animals, He named only one—the great sea creature. The Hebrew word is *tannin*. Here the plural form of the noun is used, indicating God created many of them just as He caused the waters to swarm with fish (Genesis 1:20). The adjective *great* further distinguishes this creature from all others. It forms a Hebrew grammatical construction that emphasizes the adjective and can be rendered “the sea creatures, the great ones.”

To further focus on this creature, God placed him first in a new wave of divine creative activity. The Hebrew verb used here is *bar'ah* which specifically means “to create.” It is only found three times in the creation account. Otherwise, the two more general verbs, “to make” and “to form” are used to describe God's work of creation. The other two uses of *bar'ah* are without question major acts of creation. It is used for the creation of the material universe in verse one and for the creation of man in verse 27.

Yet, here in verse 21 *bar'ah* is used for the creation of living things that had an immaterial component. Whereas plants created on day three have life, creatures created on days five and six of creation week have some kind of a mind or immaterial component and this higher level of life warranted the primary word for creating. The leading creature in this category was the great sea monster. A literal translation would read: “And Elohim created the sea creatures, that is, the great ones.” The NKJV and ESV render *tannin* “sea creature” here while the NASV uses “sea monster.”

Certainly, the creation of creatures was insignificant in comparison with the creation of the physical universe and man. Yet, here it stands—their creation set apart with the universe and man. Could it be that God used *bar'ah* specifically to raise questions about the only named creature in this category of life? Yet Genesis 1:21 provides no further details about him. In this way it seems that God established an open door to speak of him at a later time. At the end of creation week God saw all He made and it was very good; while enormous, the great sea creature was not menacing. The fall of man marred all of God's creation and the sea creature became the most fearsome of animals.

Hebrew nouns often express characteristics of the thing they name. *Tannin* literally means “long-stretched” and in its primary form, the three consonant verb form means “to stretch.”³² It is found fifteen times in the Old Testament. Five times it is used for a snake (serpent). Aaron threw down his staff and it became a *tannin*. Deuteronomy 32:33 and Psalm 91:13 also use *tannin* in the sense of snake. Being a creature that appears to be stretched out because it is long and narrow, snakes were miniature versions of the great sea creature.

In the psalmist's day, four hundred years after Moses compiled Genesis, Scripture repeats the creation pattern, using the sea creature to represent the animal kingdom. Psalm 148 is one of the

³² Keil, *Genesis, Volume I*, 60.

“Praise the LORD” psalms. The first six verses call on angels, sun, moon and stars to praise the Lord. Verse seven turns to things on earth; the first thing mentioned is the sea creature (*tannin*). “Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures [*tannin*, in the plural form] and all deeps.” Psalm 148:7. This verse would be referring to sea monsters as living marine creatures, not analogies to Satan, but it does show they still existed or were at least remembered even in the psalmist’s day.

The prophets used the sea creature to picture the two great nations that oppressed Israel. God addressed Pharaoh as a great dragon in Ezekiel 29:3: “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon [*tannin*] that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, ‘My Nile is my own, I made it for myself.’” Three chapters later God tells the prophet to “say to Pharaoh King of Egypt: ‘You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon [*tannin*] in the seas.’” Ezekiel 32:2. The lion was highly admired, considered the most regal of animals. Pharaoh represented himself that way. But God said in reality he was like the dragon (*tannin*). While *tannin* was famous and powerful, he was not considered noble. People dreaded the sea monster. He had a reputation for being dangerous, sinister and evil, certainly not the reputation Pharaoh sought.

Comparison with the sea monster was similarly used for Babylon: “Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has devoured me [Judah]... he has swallowed me like a monster [*tannin*] [swallows its victim].” Jeremiah 51:34. Babylon had gobbled up Judah with the same ease that a *tannin* gobbled up its victims.

Hebrew Noun #2—Leviathan (Job 41:1)

God chose the ordeal of Job to answer the many questions about the sea creature of Genesis 1:21. Job had charged that God was treating him unfairly, attacking him like an enemy. He demanded an audience with God so he could make his case. After Job’s three friends and a young theologian falsely accused him of grievous sins, God appeared in a powerful whirlwind which established a commanding presence. But He did not bring a crying towel, nor did He sympathize with Job or even mention Job’s suffering. Most importantly, He did not appear to be grilled by Job. Rather, He began: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you and you make it known to me.” Job 38:2-3. It was Job who needed further enlightenment and not the other way around.

So God would do the questioning and Job would do the answering. God’s subject was His creation which testified that He was good, that He sustained it, that He had filled man’s habitat with the fruit of His goodness and specifically that He had blessed Job through it. Therefore, God was not Job’s enemy and had not caused him to suffer. Job was speechless.

Two important truths need to be recognized at this point. The questions God asked were a universe beyond the learning of Job’s day which assures us that the Creator of the physical universe Himself was asking them. Answers to many of God’s scientific questions have only been learned in recent years; others still elude today’s most advanced science. Mankind did not have this knowledge 2550 years before Christ. If these questions had been composed by man as unbelievers charge, they would reflect the same bad science and even anti-science expressed in the writings of the ancients.

Also, we must recognize how pleased God was (and is) with the time-space-matter creation He made. God is more than boasting here, He is raving. If we ever wished to hear the Creator discuss His creation of the universe, the earth and living things at length, we have such a record right here in Job 38-41. These four chapters contain more than the entire book of Genesis or any other portion

of Scripture on creation. Engineers know the difficulty of designing something that works correctly. God speaks of many inanimate and living things and they all work with breath-taking precision.

So then, if God was not the source of Job's suffering, what explained his ordeal? After questions about the physical and animal world, God spent the last 44 verses on the greatest land and sea creatures. Ten verses are devoted to Behemoth which by the testimony of God was the greatest land creature (Job 40:19)—a dinosaur with a long neck, long, powerful tail, bones like tubes of bronze and limbs like bars of iron (Job 40:18). All the land dinosaurs did not perish in the Flood. One pair of each kind was preserved on the Ark to repopulate the world after the Flood. Since many reptiles grow all their lives it would have been unnecessary to take full grown specimens on the Ark. God would have sent a young Behemoth pair. Over a millennium later Job watched these giant monsters in the Jordan Valley. While they were gone by the day of Abraham, they were still living in Job's day.

King over All the Sons of Pride. Job 41:1-34.

Behemoth was not at the top of the monster ladder. God used him to lead up to the most awesome of them all, the great sea creature Leviathan (Job 41:1). God devotes all 34 verses of Job 41 to this fearsome animal, the same number of verses found in the entire six-day creation account of Genesis 1:1-2:3. They speak of his exceeding danger to humans but it was up to Job to make the connection, that Leviathan represented the source of his grief.

A Leviathan was almost impossible to kill. His size, armored exterior and ocean habitat gave him an enormous advantage over humans. By comparison man had limited maneuverability on or in the water. As to weapons at this time man was still limited to his own strength or those powered by his own strength such as spears and arrows which were useless against Leviathan. Thus, people lived in mortal fear of these creatures. Job knew what God was talking about. He had nearly lost his life in some unexplained encounter with a Leviathan:

Lay your hands on him; remember the battle—you will not do it again! Job 41:8

From this we learn that Job traveled extensively because he would have to journey to one of the world's oceans or large water bodies to have seen a Leviathan unless Lake Lisan was connected to the Red Sea and a Leviathan occasionally ventured up river to this large inland lake. In verse after verse God describes the danger of trying to tangle with him (Job 41:7-10, 25-29). He terrified people by rising high in the water, then crashing down with all his weight (Job 41:25) causing some commentators to conclude he was a whale. Many ancient seamen described his aggression, even attacking ocean-going vessels. Job said, "Am I a sea monster [*tannin*] that you set a guard over me" (Job 7:12)? Job felt God was watching him with the same intensity people set a guard to watch for the sea monster's presence once one was spotted in their area.

This second Hebrew word for the sea monster (*Leviathan*, capitalized in English translations) is found six times in Scripture and is the one Hebrew word that only refers to this creature or the enemy he represented. The Hebrew stem in its various forms connotes a wreath which is something round and narrow; in the verb form, "to twist, to surround;" together *tannin* and *Leviathan* suggest the twisting motion of a crawling snake. Psalm 104:26 speaks of this serpent-like creature living in the open ocean: "There go the ships and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it." Some have concluded that Leviathan was a salt water crocodile which is an exceptionally large species of crocodile. However, those crocodiles lived in bays and other shallow bodies of salt water. They did not play where ships sailed on the high seas; neither would they remain in plain sight when

humans came along. Rather, they would slip away to hide under the water. On the other hand, Leviathan had no fear of humans so he did not hide when ships appeared. Most particularly, the sea crocodile was not the greatest of all creatures that ever lived as God says Leviathan was.

The cursing of the villagers at the arrival of a Leviathan was a fitting comparison to the intensity with which Job cursed the day of his birth. “Let those curse it [the day of his birth] who curse the day [Leviathan arrived in their bay], who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.” Job 3:8. Their children would not be safe on the shore or in the water with Leviathan around so they had to drive him out of their bay or lagoon or move somewhere else until he left. But they cursed that day because in rousing up Leviathan, some would be injured, some might die in the battle and all would be terrified.

One might wonder if the sea creature (*tannin*) of Genesis one is the same as Leviathan of Job 41. A complete word study makes this obvious but Psalm 74:13-14 provides a quick answer by using the two words synonymously. It is referring to the Red Sea event: “You [God] divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the **sea monsters** [*tannin*] on the waters. You crushed the heads of **Leviathan**; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness” (emphasis ours). God parted the sea for Israel to pass, and then returned the waters to drown Pharaoh’s charioteers. The bodies of soldiers and horses washed up on the shore where carrion eating creatures of the desert consumed them. There were no actual sea monsters in this event but both the words for sea monster and Leviathan are used for the same purpose, as analogies to describe just how frightening and lethal Pharaoh’s chariot army was.

Although ancient writings, including Ugarit (Babylonian) and Canaanite literature, give this creature mythical qualities, long before the distortions, on day five of creation week God created a real creature that was at the top of the animal world, the greatest of all His living earthly creatures. God concluded His words about Leviathan with that very picture. “On earth there is not his like [equal], a creature without fear. He sees everything that is high; he is king over all the sons of pride.” Job 41:33-34. Beyond question this creature was a real animal and well known to Job and the people of his day.

Hebrew Nouns #3 and #4—*Nachash* and *Rahab*

Besides *tannin* (Genesis 1:21) and Leviathan (Job 41:1) two other Hebrew nouns (*nachash* and *rahab*) are used for this creature. *Nachash* is the primary Hebrew word for snake. It is found in Genesis three where Satan used a snake to speak to Eve and trick her into eating of the forbidden tree. It appears in Numbers 21 where poisonous snakes bit the people and they died. God reversed their lethal bites by having Moses fashion a bronze snake and mount it on a pole. By looking on the bronze snake whoever was dying from a snake bite would live. A derivative of this word is the Hebrew word for copper and bronze. Many snakes have the glistening brown color of these metals. Various evil connotations arose from the shape and motion of the snake. A verb form of this word is used ten times in the Old Testament for practicing divination.

Because of its long, narrow shape and twisting motion, *nachash* was used twice for the sea creature. “If they [the wicked] hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the [sea] serpent [*nachash*], and it shall bite them” (Amos 9:3). Amos had previously spoken of digging into Sheol or climbing to heaven to flee from God, so he was not talking about the bottom of a shallow bay. He was talking about the bottom of the ocean, far below the diving capacity of the sea crocodile.

Job talked about the power of God in chapter twenty-six. God stilled the sea and by His wind cleared the sky. He pierced the fleeing serpent (*nachash*) and shattered Rahab (the fourth Hebrew word for the sea monster) (Job 26:12-13). “Rahab” is always used as a proper noun in the Old Testament but its various Hebrew forms convey a very specific meaning. The masculine noun meant “storm, arrogance.” As an adjective it meant “proud, defiant.” The verb form meant “to act stormily, boisterously, arrogantly.” Years later the harlot of Jericho who hid the two Hebrew spies received this name. Rahab must have been a very assertive person even in her mother’s womb. The word “Rahab” is also used six times in Scripture for what the sea monster represented—those who act defiantly against God and His chosen people Israel. Four times it specifically refers to Egypt which enslaved God’s chosen people. Their ways are likened to those of the sea monster.

Besides Job 26:12-13 several other passages use two or more of these words together, showing they were synonymous. In Isaiah 51:9 Rahab and the sea creature (*tannin*) are used synonymously: “Was it not you [the LORD] who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon [*tannin*]? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?”

Isaiah is speaking of Israel crossing the Red Sea while Pharaoh’s pursuing army was lost in the sea. In his arrogance and defiance of God’s will (Rahab-like characteristics), Pharaoh came with the might of a sea serpent (*tannin*), but God easily pierced him and cut his army to pieces. While *tannin*, *nachash* and Rahab had other uses, they together with “Leviathan” are used in the Old Testament about twenty-five times to develop an awareness of this intensely evil spiritual being God wanted to warn man about.

As revelation progressed God gave man more and more details about the dangerous enemy Leviathan represented. Finally, Revelation 12:7-9 and 20:1-3 clearly refer to him as the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the devil and Satan and relate how God removes him in stages. Meanwhile, God has provided armor to protect the believer from the cosmic powers Satan commands but this armor must be appropriated.

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Revelation 12:9.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:10-12.

Thus, God had a very special purpose for fixing this animal in people’s minds. He designed this creature to represent the leader of the angelic rebellion. As the most vicious and dangerous creature known to man, it portrayed how harmful Satan is. In common speech it became a measure for the worst that man could imagine. Satan is “our ancient foe who seeks to work us woe.” But while Leviathan was the worst creature a person could encounter, he was no match for God. The implication is that when Job didn’t understand what was happening, he should have trusted God who has the greatest power—who is omnipotent. So the first chapter in the Bible singles out this creature and the oldest book in the Bible goes into incredible detail as God Himself discusses its power and ability to harm.

Creation of Angels and Need for Leviathan

Long before this space-time-matter continuum God created a vast population of spirits in His image. Because man was created a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7), we can only imagine their fine minds, great strength, powerful wills, beautiful worship and bonding friendships. Did they all know each other... a billion or one hundred billion? Apparently, they had the opportunity and the capacity. But they were not all similarly gifted. Some had greater capabilities and higher positions as they functioned in their divinely appointed duties. Then one became lifted up with pride. Ezekiel 28:12-19, a prophecy with both an immediate and more distant application, tells what happened. This evil one set himself against God. Even worse he exalted himself and thought in his heart, "I will set my throne on high...I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14). He eventually persuaded a full third of the angelic population to support him in his quest to sit on God's throne (Revelation 12:4).

God loved each of the angels He created. With sorrow He exercised judgment. To our limited thinking the sentence was unbelievably harsh—incarceration in the eternal fire (Matthew 26:41) especially prepared for these fallen angels. Yet, while God's sentence on Satan and his followers was pronounced in eternity past, it is still to be executed. Instead, God created the universe and man.

God marked the leader of these rebels with the name "Satan" which means adversary. All would know that there were just two camps—God with His forces and the adversary with his; good and evil; light and darkness. To this day the adversary and his minions have limited freedom to oppose God's work (James 4:7; I Peter 5:8). Somehow the creation of man is a part of God's ultimate dealing with Satan. Since Satan can't touch God, he seeks to harm this instrument of God that somehow is God's tool to execute the sentence pronounced long ago—hence, Leviathan. The book of Job brings this out more than any other Scripture.

Some maintain that God created the angels as well as man during creation week and that Satan fell with a third of heaven's population a short time later. Creating angels and man at the same time confuses the immaterial with the material. The space-time-matter creation of Genesis one was physical and material. Angels like God are immaterial, not physical and therefore not a part of God's physical creation. God not only created angels before the time that is measured in the physical universe but He and His angels shared much activity. Each of the angels had his place. Each learned to function in an orderly way. Each learned how to exalt God's throne. If a comparison could be made to the human time-frame, it seems that far more time went by when God and His angels enjoyed each other than has gone on since God created Adam.

The idea that Satan fell after the creation of man introduces the bizarre situation of 1/3rd of heaven's population being consigned to hell just years after God created them. No. The heavenly population surrounded God for a vast time in eternity past learning their duties and perfecting their worship before pride led Satan to gather a huge following to challenge God and eventually be put on trial by God and sentenced to the lake of fire. The whole idea comes from an over-literal reading of Genesis 1:31 which says "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Unfortunately, "everything" is understood to be everything God ever made rather than the subject of Genesis one which is the creation of all things subject to the physical realm.

Satan's First Attack on Mankind

In the preceding chapter we saw the consistent life of faith of the one God chose to expose Satan's twisted thinking about the Creator and his intense hatred for mankind. After just those opening five verses, we entered the very presence of God. The veil that separates the physical universe from the highest heaven, the spiritual heaven of God's abode, was parted briefly that we might learn of a conflict between God and the fallen angels and be alerted to the mortal danger in which it places mankind.

When God created Adam, He established one prohibition: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:16-17. At a later time, the Tempter came and persuaded Eve to eat from the forbidden tree. He must have swelled with glee and settled back to watch the man and woman die. He thought he had thwarted God's plan before it even started. But God had far more in mind—a masterful plan to overcome man's disobedience and provide hope and respite despite oceans of suffering caused by Satan.

As God warned, when man broke the only prohibition He had given him, man did die. He died spiritually. This spiritual death was an immediate break in the bond between God and man, an alienation, an invisible barrier that caused man to hide from God. Further, Adam's disobedience triggered the principle of entropy (progressive disorder/breaking down) throughout the entire physical creation. It all began to go downhill. Further, man began to die physically, a process that took some 900 years in Adam's case. Along the way suffering was inherent.

Here now in Job, the oldest book of the Bible, God reveals this conflict more fully than in all the rest of Scripture. He demonstrated early how sinister, how cruel, how powerful, how hateful that adversary is towards his Maker and therefore toward man whom God created to share His heaven. In Job God is delivering a message to the world of mankind He loves: "Be warned. There is an adversary who works with all his cunning during your entire lifetime to ruin you. He is trying to poison your soul just like he poisoned his own soul and the souls of those who joined him. Only I and My salvation can deliver you from the adversary's doom and destruction in eternal fire."

As Job opens, we enter the very presence of God on "a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD and Satan also came among them." Job 1:6. Those who gathered were called "the sons of God." Of all humans only Adam and Eve were directly created by God and thus can properly be called "the sons of God" in that special sense. However, all the angels were directly created by God. Thus, they bear the title, "Sons of God." Here God is conducting a mandatory assembly of all His angelic sons, both the holy and the fallen.

The Questioning of Satan

In front of the entire angelic population God initiated a conversation with Satan. In doing so He would give the angels another lesson in the wisdom of His ways. "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Job 1:8. What a contrast. Job diligently honored God, living in the light of all God had revealed by his day. Satan was the opposite, a total rebel. The trap was baited. Satan took it—hook, line and sinker, so to speak:

⁹Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions

have increased in the land. ¹¹But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has and he will curse you to your face. Job 1:9-11.

God provided salvation for man immediately after the Fall by teaching the first parents to offer animal sacrifice, an exercise which unknowingly embraced God's lamb to come. Man could not earn salvation; he did not deserve salvation; God provided it in grace. Satan slammed God's plan of grace, dismissing God's salvation for man as a sham. Evil said light was darkness and darkness was light. "Just remove your hedge and then you will see his true colors," challenged the Destroyer.

In effect Satan charged that Job feared God because it paid, that God bought His worshipers, and that Job didn't truly love God. His worship was motivated by self-interest. Job was a hypocrite. Beyond this Satan was saying that God's salvation for mankind doesn't work, that His plan to provide redemption to those who were born spiritually dead due to Adam's disobedience was a hoax. Further, Satan expressed his disdain and sneering contempt for God not in private but before the entire population of heaven. The hosts of heaven held their collective breathes. How would God reply?

[To pause and wonder: all of this at the beginning of the oldest book of the Bible. What a disclosure of high priority in God's mind.]

The Attacks of Satan on Job

First Attack: Destruction of Job's Possessions

Before that angelic assembly God as much as declared "Let the contest begin. We will test your [Satan's] contention. We will see if Job is a phony or not. Here were the rules." "All he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." Job 1:12. With that Satan rushed out to orchestrate the senseless destruction of all Job had. Messengers arrived one after another from distant parts of the ranch to report 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, the keepers and Job's ten children—all gone. What a show of power and hate.

Satan brought the Sabeans of the desert to plunder the oxen and donkeys and murder or kidnap Job's servants with them. In a distant region he caused some sort of natural disaster, possibly a lightning storm or pyroclastic flow from an active volcano, to destroy the sheep and their keepers. From beyond the desert, he brought the Chaldeans for the camels. He caused a freak tornado to come from the wilderness and strike exactly when Job's children were celebrating on the day of his firstborn. This mayhem would stand for all time as a grave illustration of Satan's power on planet earth.

All heaven watched to see what Job would do next. Here is what they saw and heard: ²⁰"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.'" Job 1:20-21. Next, we are given the divine commentary on Job's response. "In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong." Job 1:22. The Adversary had been wrong. Instead of cursing, Job did just the opposite, he blessed the LORD.

Second Attack: Destruction of Job's Health

Destruction and death had come in Satan's first attack. Job lost not only family but longtime, trusted servants. In the following months with heavy heart he cared for widows and orphans as he began rebuilding his ranch.

Sometime later the Sons of God were again summoned to assemble before their Father. Again the Adversary was singled out. God pointed out that Job "holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." Job 2:3. God actually said that He destroyed Job without reason. Satan did not govern creation. God alone rules. God is sovereign. No event happens without His permission.

The Accuser did not admit that he had accused Job falsely. He had taken a chance. Maybe Job would crack. But the mental anguish and sense of abandonment by God he caused hadn't worked. Satan proposed to change the rules of the game.

⁴"Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." ⁶And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." Job 2:4-6.

This time Satan would resort to pain, the most intense he could inflict. No need to orchestrate Sabeans, Chaldeans, hails of fire and destructive wind. Satan made a beeline for Job's ranch in the land of Uz. But he had to be careful here. His attack must not be lethal or the contest would immediately be over. In fact God had specifically commanded Satan not to take Job's life and Satan dared not defy God in the face of a direct command. Satan "went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." Job 2:7.

Now Job couldn't even work. He was in constant pain. In time he lost weight to the point where his bones showed. His skin turned black. The malady changed his appearance beyond recognition. It was visible for all to see and considered a sign of God's disapproval. People turned against him. Even the most despicable showed their contempt by spitting on or at him.

Under the duress of pain people say things they would not otherwise say. God knew Job's worship was truly motivated by love for Him, not material blessing. But the hosts of heaven, not even the Adversary with all his great power, could see Job's heart. This contest was for their sake, not God's. As for God, He previously received Job's worship and was exalted by it. Now He was exalted by Job's steadfastness while under intense suffering. Through months of physical pain Job did not curse God. Then it was time to conclude the contest. All heaven watched to see how God would end it and restore Job.

Surprises never cease. God, of course, knew exactly what He would do. He would use this opportunity to give mankind an answer for undeserved suffering, the message for which the Book of Job is most remembered. But to get it all out, the angels as well as future generations of mankind would have to know what was going on inside Job, what was going through his mind, what was in his soul. Thus, God moved three of Job's longtime friends, possibly noted regional theological authorities like Job to make "an appointment to come to show him sympathy and comfort him." Job 2:11. They would end up having an all-day debate with him and in all these words everyone would come to know what Job was thinking.

Finding Henry Morris' Book on Job

Now I must become personal. The reason will soon be evident. I certainly was fully committed to biblical inerrancy after two years at Multnomah School of the Bible (now Multnomah University) in Portland Oregon. After completing my undergraduate work at Wheaton College, my four years at Dallas Theological Seminary cemented my inerrancy conviction. When I abandoned the gap theory through the teaching of Dr. Henry Morris II, 30 years later, I entered the world of creation science—evidences for a young earth.

As my wife and I founded the Mount St. Helens 7Wonders Creation Museum in 1998, one of the early books we ordered for the new bookstore was Morris' book on Job. I was so impressed with it that over the next three years we sold about 70 copies which may have made it our top selling book. In my hands is my original copy with underlining and highlighting on nearly every page. In November of 2000 I wrote that I had begun "a careful study of the book." This would have been my second or third reading. In time you might say that of all the 66 books in the Bible, Morris' book caused me to specialize in the Book of Job. Now sixty-five years of biblical study skills have been poured into Job.

Morris showed that the purpose of Job was not undeserved suffering as most expositors taught; but as Dr. Harold Wilmington explained in the Foreword, Morris felt it demonstrated God's sovereignty to the heavenly population and reemphasized the importance of God's original creation.³³

Parents prioritize the training of their children. Some lessons are more basic than others and must be taught early on. Such is the Book of Job where God graphically presents three foundational truths for understanding His heart and making sense of our existence. While each lesson reinforces the other two, here is how these lessons become obvious:

Lesson one. God is resolving the discord in heaven caused by the rebellious angels who challenged His government. This discord is obvious through God's exchange with Satan (Job 1-2) and His analogy to Satan through Leviathan. It leads to the second lesson which addresses suffering.

Lesson two. Man is the innocent victim of this angelic warfare. He tries to make sense of the suffering it causes, reasoning that God has the power to prevent or remove it. But by leaving the fallen angels out of the equation, he ends up with the conclusion that somehow God is to blame for suffering. In doing so man overlooks the fact that all suffering is produced either directly or indirectly by those rebels. The dialogues of Job and his friends picture how mankind struggles with this issue.

Lesson three. The physical creation is an exquisite and complex game board designed by God on which this conflict is played out. That God not only designed but also maintains it is sufficient evidence for mankind to trust Him completely in what man cannot understand. God provides this lesson in his discourse on creation in Job 38-40.

The theological confusion of Job and his friends along with God's examination comprises the book's celebrated poetic content, thirty-nine chapters which focus on Job's plight (Job 3-41). First, the acrimonious discussion of Job and his friends. Then arrogant Elihu who falsely claimed God had

³³ Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*, (Green Forest, AR.: Master Books, 2000), 8.

given him a message for Job. Finally, God came and restored Job. This day was also Satan's final chance to so provoke Job that he would curse God. Yet when the day was over, Job's confidence in God was fully restored.

Job's friends knew much of the ways of God, but there was this great gap in their theology—believing that all human suffering was the result of personal sin. Purely cause and effect. When one committed sin, God was obligated to punish. In this case they were convinced Job had committed some awful sin and they continued that vein until God appeared. Eight times they stated their position with different arguments and eight times Job answered. Job had defended his innocence, but in the process began to question God and even condemn God. Then a fourth person angrily pounced on Job for his words about his innocence and God's unfairness but basically his solution for Job's suffering was no different than that of the others.

Suddenly God appeared, challenged Job to listen carefully and proceeded to ask precise questions about major areas of creation. Here He says more about His creation than in Genesis or any other book of the Bible. He also speaks more personally about it with chapters of profound questions. Some still cannot be answered by the world of science. Only the Creator Himself could have such intimate knowledge of the universe and its operation. Job had thought God didn't care, wasn't paying attention. These questions caused Job to realize that God actively and continuously sustains all creation so God was not absent or silent but was actively and daily caring for Job. Job's heart was thrilled. His Old Friend was back.

Creation is the most basic argument in proclaiming God's love and concern for mankind. It sets Him apart from all impostors. When it comes to alternatives, how could one not choose the Creator as opposed to the adversary in any of his many costumes? Resolving this heavenly conflict, recognizing its hurtful effects on humanity and God's provision of the physical universe summarizes the message of Job, three subjects of earth-shaking proportions all rolled into one comprehensive whole, but so novel in part to standard Christian thought that certain details must be carefully examined.

Miserable Comforters: A Further Attack by Satan

Job's three friends arrived to find his situation so appalling that ¹²“they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. ¹³And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.” Job 2:12-13. Finally, Job broke the silence as he lamented that the pain was so intense that its only escape was never having been born in the first place.

The next chapters (chapters 4-31) contain three cycles of speeches. Rather than provide sympathy, the three friends tried to solve the dilemma of Job's great loss. Obviously it was more than coincidence. First Eliphaz spoke and Job answered. Then Bildad gave his ideas and Job countered. Lastly Zophar counseled and Job replied. The first cycle is found in chapters 4-14. Eliphaz had an entire week to consider the possibilities and then he shared his wisdom. “As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.” Job 4:8. For two chapters (4-5) Eliphaz developed the idea that Job had lived a life of iniquity. Now God was punishing him. Here was what Job must do. “As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause.” Job 5:8. Job gave a lengthy reply in chapters six and seven to the effect that such advice was not helpful, even cynical because “I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” Job 6:10. Still, he

implored his friends to provide an answer. “Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have gone astray.” Job 6:24.

Bildad weighed in with “Can reeds flourish where there is no water? ¹³Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless shall perish.” Job 8:11, 13. He affirmed Eliphaz’s solution with “Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers.” Job 8:20. Job replied at length in chapters nine and ten, first agreeing with Bildad, “Truly I know that it is so,” then wondering how anyone could be blameless and finally coming up with the opposite answer. ²¹“I am blameless; ²²therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.” Job 9:2, 9:21-22.

That really got Zophar’s goat. It was his turn and he was livid. He viewed Job as stubborn and harangued him unmercifully with statements like “Should a man full of talk be judged right?” and grouped Job with “worthless men.” His next insult rated five stars. “But a stupid man will get understanding when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man” (Job 11:2, 11, 12). Donkeys never give birth to people so Zophar views Job’s thinking as hopelessly stupid. His solution was the same as the others, “If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away” (Job 11:14). So far it is hard to detect sympathy or comfort.

Zophar rang Job’s bell. Following his friends’ first three speeches, Job began a three-chapter rebuttal with this epic retort, “No doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you.” Job 12:2. Stedman paraphrases Job’s put down like this: “You’ve got all the answers, you’ve solved all the problems, you know everything.”³⁴ The more they pushed, the more Job pushed back. In the process he said worse and worse things about God. He insisted repeatedly that God was treating him unjustly. “I want to argue my ways to His face,” “Why do you [God] count me as your enemy?” “You put my feet in the stocks.” “You destroy the hope of man.” Job 13:15, 24, 27; 14:19.

The second round of speeches (chapters 15-21) grew in unkindness and hardened positions. The third round (chapters 22-31) included baseless charges of specific sins (Job 22:6-9). Eliphaz and Bildad said hateful things while Zophar gave up. Meanwhile Job had more and more to say in his defense. The two sides couldn’t be further apart. Their friendship appeared broken beyond repair.

Insights into Job’s Responses

As his friends pushed him to the wall, pressing their assault, Job said more alarming things about God, words for which he would later repent. “He has torn me in his wrath and hated me” (Job 16:9). “My spirit is broken” (Job 17:1). “He has made me a byword of the peoples” (Job 17:6). “God has put me in the wrong” (Job 19:6). “He has kindled his wrath against me and counts me as his adversary.” Job 16:9; 17:1, 6; 19:6, 11. Speaking directly to God, Job said, “You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand, you persecute me.” Job 30:21. Finally, Job defiantly demanded an affidavit of charges from God and stated that he would stand before God as a prince and defend himself (Job 31:35-37).

On the other hand, his words revealed a remarkable life of faith. “I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” “I who called to God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, am a

³⁴ Ray Stedman, “Job: The Hardest Lesson.” <http://www.raystedman.org/bible-overview/adventuring/job-the-hardest-lesson>, 1965. Stedman has the clearest view on the subject of suffering in Job of the authorities this author reviewed.

laughing stock.” “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15). “For I know that my Redeemer lives...in my flesh I shall see God.” “My foot has held fast to his steps, I have kept his way...I have not departed from the commandments of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.” ²“Oh, that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me, ³when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through the darkness, ⁴as I was in my prime, when the friendship of God was upon my tent, ⁵when the Almighty was yet with me.” Job 6:10; 12:4; 13:15; 19:25-26; 23:11-12; 29:2-5.

Here, approximately midway between creation and Christ, God’s words were available, His commandments known, man recognized His light. Further, man called on God and God answered him. Therefore, man knew God watched over him, had hope in a living redeemer, walked with God, sensed God’s friendship and lived in the expectancy of ultimately seeing God in his flesh. These words testify to a just God who in every age provides knowledge of Himself to those who seek that knowledge. Job spoke of himself as “just and blameless.” He had lived up to all the light God had given. God had revealed that He would bless those who so lived. For this reason, Job was so confused, so bewildered, so brokenhearted.

Elihu: Satan’s Final Attack

After Job’s friends spoke, an angry individual named Elihu demanded a hearing. This individual was not a peer of the four. Being young he had no choice but to wait until the others had finished. Then he unloaded for six chapters (Job 32-37) saying more than the entire books of I-III John. He took an entire chapter just to dogmatically state that he had the answer (chapter 32). He speaks even more vilely of Job than the three. If Satan were using them to destroy Job, how much more this man? Fortunately, Job did not reply. Either he was too exhausted or more likely, God broke in before Job could say something even more regrettable.

Elihu’s demeanor was so disgustingly arrogant one might be tempted to associate him with Nimrod, but no one can prove this link for sure. Elihu was a Buzite of the family of Ram. Ham’s oldest son Cush had a son named Raamah (Ram). Raamah fathered Sheba and Dedan. Since these people groups are mentioned in the discourses of Job, they could have had a son named Buz from whom Elihu came. The most notorious of Cush’s sons was evil Nimrod (Genesis 10:6-8). While Elihu’s actions point to such an association, we have previously observed that the same names occur again and again in the Old Testament so one must be very cautious about identifying a certain individual or place with one previously mentioned.

Deviously Elihu said that Job was wrong about God not speaking (Job 33:14ff). He claimed that God spoke in dreams but man (Job) didn’t listen. God also spoke through pain. Further, God sent mediators or angels (Elihu is referring to himself) “to declare to man [the sinner] what is right for him.” Job 33:23. This angel (the one with an answer from God) says to the sinner, “I have found a ransom.” Job 33:24. The ransom is what the sinner must do to be restored. In this way Elihu was claiming to have a direct message from God which was false.

Then Elihu proceeded to describe how the sinner (Job) should embrace the ransom (ie, Elihu’s solution) by abandoning his great wickedness which Elihu spells out in the next chapters.

²⁶Then man prays to God, and he [God] accepts him; he [the repentant sinner] sees his face [sees God’s face] with a shout of joy, and he [God] restores to man [to the sinner] his righteousness. ²⁷He [the sinner] sings before men and says: “I sinned and perverted what was

right, and it was not repaid to me. ²⁸He [God] has redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.” Job 33:26-28.

In chapter 34 Elihu continued at length on how God sees all man's steps, particularly Job's, so “there is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves.” Job 34:21-22. God calls them “worthless,” “wicked,” and He “shows no partiality,” “shatters the mighty without investigation,” “overturns them in the night and they are crushed,” “strikes them for their wickedness... because they turned aside from following him.” “They caused the cry of the poor to come to Him.” Job 34:18-19, 23-25, 27-28. He wishes that Job were “tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men, ³⁷for he adds rebellion to his sin.” Job 34:36-37. To Elihu Job has acted so wickedly that God should punish him even more severely.

In view of his litany of Job's sins and Job's terrible suffering because of them, it is hard to deny that Elihu actually held the same position as the first three, that Job's sins had resulted in God's judgment. Yet Scripture already told us that Job's loss of possessions and health was not over sinfulness but due to an unseen contest in heaven. God said specifically before the entire heavenly host “that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil.” Job 1:8.

So, contrary to the views of most commentators, Elihu did not have a message from God or even the answer to Job's suffering and he was not sent to prepare Job for God's visit. While they correctly observe that God did not condemn him or require an offering from him or even mention him, we suggest he was so blatantly out of order that Scripture leaves the reader to correctly assess his discourse. He was clearly Satan's last attempt to get Job to curse God. Being young in the faith God let him off with a large measure of grace, sparing him further public humiliation.

On the other hand, Job's friends were Job's age and knew much sound doctrine. Certainly they should have known better than to charge Job with specific sins, apparently parroting the idle gossip that spread rumors of sins supposedly committed by Job. Elihu would see how God dealt with them. Hopefully someday he would match his zeal for God with spiritual wisdom. In the end God would say to Eliphaz, “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” Job 42:7. In fact, all four taught God was behind human suffering. This was an attack on the very character of God.

Job had stated over and over that he wanted an audience with God. Elihu's last words were “He does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit.” Job 37:24. The very next words are “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said...” Job 38:1. Contrary to Elihu's pronouncement, God did come to Job, providing further evidence of just how empty Elihu's words were.

With the assault of Elihu the contest was over. Job had not cursed God. God was vindicated before the angels. Now Job must be restored. As only God could, He reestablished Job's fellowship and trust in Him and even reunited him with his friends. How God does this is the subject of chapters 38-42.

God's Creation Discourse

God accomplishes multiple purposes in his discourse to Job. First, Job had said awful things about God and needed to repent. Second, God's anger burned against his three friends. They needed to cover their sin with sacrifice. Third, Job and his friends needed to be reconciled. Fourth,

Job needed to learn the true source of his suffering. In fact, all mankind needed to know that Satan seeks to destroy us and, in the process, produces untold suffering. Possibly theological thinking attributed all suffering to God from creation up to Job's day. This idea was a huge distortion of the goodness of God and needed to be corrected. In a way, all these individual purposes come together to broaden our understanding of God's nature. He is perfect love and perfect righteousness. Job is given to help man see more of God's glory.

Job felt God did not care about his intense and extended suffering. Job was wrong. God did care. If Job's condition had been fatal, upon death he would have been welcomed into paradise with superlatives for his notable faith. But since God had other plans for Job, He chose to restore his wavering faith by appearing to him personally and speaking to him more about His creation than to any other person on record in all of human history. This was a signal honor. Nevertheless, Job needed to retract statements he had made about God under duress, so God's instruction took on a very personal form, numerous direct questions about creation that would cause any thinking person to realize His careful design of and providential care for the earth and its inhabitants.

This was overwhelming evidence that God knew the smallest details about His creation and therefore, about Job's life as well as ours. God was working. He was involved. How could Job say God didn't care when His creation shows He does care. Creation is a huge testimony to God's watching over every man. Jesus said God sees a single sparrow that falls to the ground and a person is of far greater value than sparrows. In fact, God numbers every hair on a person's head (Matt 10:29-31).

Possibly no one has spoken more clearly on the significance of God's appearance to Job and its meaning than Henry Morris:

People say that the Book of Job was written to solve this problem [human suffering], so what does God have to say about it? Amazingly, God says nothing about it! His divine message, given out of the whirlwind, occupies 123 verses in four chapters, yet there is not a word about the sufferings of Job, or even about human suffering in general. What God does talk about is creation! The mighty message from heaven focuses exclusively on the doctrine of special creation of all things by God, and then his providential care of his creation. It exalts his power, his wisdom, his purpose, his love.³⁵

God first addressed Job with, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Job 38:2. Job repeated this very statement when he repented indicating they were addressed to him, not Elihu as some commentators suggest. God then commands Job to "Dress for action like a man; I will question you and you make it known to me." Job 38:3. It had been a grueling, exhausting day. How could Job have come to attention and focused mentally for another hour? Only with God's help. Surely God strengthened His beloved servant to receive His corrective message. God would direct the conversation. He would ask the questions. Job was required to answer.

First question about creation: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." Job 38:4. For starters, God was asking, "How much greater is the Almighty than man?" The missing answer is "the Almighty was building a universe when man did not even exist." This measure shows just how insignificant man is in comparison with the Almighty

³⁵ Morris, *Job*, 86.

who set in place the scientific principles that make the universe work. Job must have thought, “Oh, Oh! If there are more questions like this, I won’t be doing much answering.”

Later in His four-chapter discourse God reproved him with “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.” Job 40:2. God was pointing out that Job had spoken sinfully of the Creator and he needed to confess his wrong. In the end Job did just that.

Effect of God’s Questions

With the thirty-fourth verse discourse about Leviathan God was done. For four chapters He had spoken of creating and preserving the universe, the earth and all living things on it. He spoke with authority and certainty; yet, underneath was an unspoken message of concern and even pleading with Job. “How could you say such things of Me when I have done and continue to do all this for you?” These words that seem so stern at first really contained a deep drawing of Job’s heart back to God. Job simply melted; his heartache vanished; he replaced silence with words of repentance:

²I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?” [Job repeats God’s initial question.] Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴Hear, and I will speak; “I will question you, and you make it known to me.” [Job recites God’s initial command that he now answers.] ⁵I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42:2-6.

With this confession of sin Job was again right with God. Now he was needed to perform a spiritual service, a priestly function. His friends had stirred God to anger by their false representation of Him. They too must be brought back to God and Job is asked to be the human agent in this restoration. God said to Eliphaz the Temanite:

⁷My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. ⁸Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Job 42:7-8.

Now it was their turn to repent. Verse nine records that they did. They offered the sacrifices God required. No common person could afford to sacrifice a bull. The sacrifice of seven bulls and seven rams showed in a material way how they had been Job’s peers, men of wealth. Job witnessed their act of repentance.

But how could Job pray for them after all the ugly words between him and his friends. They had said hateful things of him and he had replied with increasing rancor: “No doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you.” “You whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all.” “Miserable comforters are you all.” “Ten times you cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me?” “How then will you comfort me with your empty nothings? There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood” “How you have helped him who has no power! How you have counseled him who has no wisdom...With whose help have you uttered words?” Job 12:2; 13:4; 16:2; 19:3; 21:34; 26:1-3. After such sharp words in their all-day exchange, how could they ever want to speak to each other? How could they ever want Job’s prayers and how could Job find it in his heart to pray for them? Yet it all happened as God directed:

So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. Job 42:9.

At the age of 140 Job prayed for them, forgiving every unkind thing they had said. He illustrates the truth that it is never too late to forgive the wrongs others have done to us. Job's confidence in God was restored as he saw God in an entirely new light. For his final 140 years he would share these radically new insights about the LORD's work in creation and His providential care for it. In the end his book would become one of the most proclaimed pieces of literature in all human history.

Chapter Eleven

Evidence from the Times of Job for Missing Generations

Chapter nine showed that when Job's 280-year lifespan is placed on the timeline of human longevity decay, Shem's genealogy clearly omits generations. The next chapter found that the very purpose of Job, identifying the supreme enemy of man's soul, argues convincingly for missing generations. Now a third argument from the book of Job, equally powerful, fills chapter 11--constant references to unusual weather conditions. Such weather uniquely characterizes an ice age. The events of Job are played against the backdrop of the Great Ice Age and reflect a setting long before Solomon or even Abraham.

Henry Morris observed that Job mentioned cold more than any other book in the Bible. He went out on a limb to write "there are even hints of the post-flood Ice Age scattered throughout the Book of Job."³⁶ The struggle for survival in an ice age world filled the memories of all who spoke in Job. Job himself personally experienced at least the tail end of the Great Ice Age in the first 140 years of his life. This provides the strongest of the three arguments found in chapters 9-11 for generations being omitted between Eber and Peleg since the Patriarchs lived long after the Ice Age. But as previously discussed expositors place Job's years anywhere from the days of the Patriarchs to the days of David (2100-1000 BC).

Discovering Dr. Bernard E. Northrup³⁷

After many years of growing conviction that generations are omitted from Shem's list, I stumbled across Dr. Bernard E. Northrup who excitedly taught that the Book of Job graphically portrayed life in the Great Ice Age. He had been doing this since 1971 but creationists mostly ignored him because of the two catastrophes he saw striking planet earth in Genesis 1:2-8. Nevertheless, Northrup was unique in that he was a professional in four areas—geology, the Old Testament, Hebrew and linguistics. Most importantly, he held to the inerrancy of the Bible. As to geology he loved rocks from childhood and prepared for a career as a geologist. Then came the call of God and he became a Hebrew professor instead, teaching seminary level Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic for a lifetime. His unique background led to unparalleled insight into the subject of *HB*.

Over the years he served his denomination's mission board by helping Bible translators often located in remote areas typically accessed by missionary aircraft. Geology was always in the back of his mind because to him it confirmed the Bible and showed beyond question the reality of the God he loved. Whenever possible he would work with the pilot to plot a course that took him by a significant geological formation. For nearly half a century he collected information on hundreds of formations his gifted eyes observed, invariably associating them the great biblical event that produced them. In the church this author attended was a retired missionary who told of arranging for Northrup to see a formation in northeastern Brazil.

Northrup correctly felt that God's Word and God's works would agree. By that he meant the Bible and the geological column would agree. He felt that God's creating an earth covered with water on Day One of creation week and thrusting up the super continent out of the water to begin

³⁶ Morris, *Job*, 29.

³⁷ Bernard E. Northrup, *The Genesis of Geology*. <http://www.ldolphin.org/genages.html>.

Day Three would have produced a considerable portion of the geologic column. This is the portion that lacks fossils. Then the Flood contributed its share to the geological column and the breakup of the super continent added further features, according to Northrup. Last of all and maybe on the back of the super continent break up, the Great Ice Age would have completed the geological column.

In Northrup's early years (1950-1975) he adamantly opposed those who assigned most or even the entire geologic column to Noah's Flood. In one article he welcomed the ideas of a promising young geologist, Dr. Steven A. Austin, feeling those ideas were headed in the right direction. Austin's doctoral dissertation spoke of coal fields in New York and Pennsylvania grading from harder coal in the east to softer coal in the west. In Northrup's opinion the action of the biblical Flood explained how this happened.

Job: Replete with Ice Age Phenomena³⁸

Northrup's views reached maturity about the middle of his career when it came to him that Job was an ice age book. No previous Old Testament scholar had drawn such a conclusion. Why could he? The explanation lies in the fact that the science behind an ice age was brand new. It began to develop during his lifetime and continues to grow to this day. His training and continuing interest in geology plus his highly developed skills in biblical Hebrew made him the man of the hour. To this day some 50 years after his 1971 epiphany few expositors acknowledge the many ice age statements in the book. To help the reader see this aspect of the book of Job, Northrup's ice age observations are drawn into the list below:

1. Seas frozen over ("the broad waters are frozen fast" 37:10; "the waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen" 38:30);
2. Clouds loaded with moisture ("He loads the thick cloud with moisture" 37:11);
3. Ice swollen flash floods ("My brothers are treacherous...as torrential streams...dark with ice" 6:15-16);
4. Volcanism/pyroclastic flows ("fire of God fell from heaven" 1:16; "underneath it is turned up as by fire" 28:5);
5. Sun and stars hidden by the thick clouds of hypercyclones and possibly dense clouds of ash from volcanic eruptions ("who commands the sun, and it does not rise" 9:7; "Deep darkness...thick clouds" 22:13-14);
6. Glaciers ("From whose womb did the ice come forth?" 38:29);
7. Canyon-cutting erosion ("who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain?" 38:25);
8. Extreme earthquakes ([he] "shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble" 9:6);
9. Crustal upheaval ("he removes...overturms the mountains" 9:5);
10. Destructive winds ("a great wind struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead" 1:19);

³⁸ Bernard E. Northrup, "On Finding an Ice Age Book." <http://www.ldolphin.org/iceage.html>. Accessed 2018.

11. Violent lightning storms (“He lets go...His lightning to the corners of the earth” 37:3);
12. Intense rainfall (“His mighty downpour [forces] every man [indoors]” 37:6-7);
13. Snow and hail storms great enough to interrupt wars (“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or...hail?” 38:22-23);
14. Hunger and inadequate shelter (“want and hard hunger...dwell in holes...and rocks” 30:3, 6);
15. Tsunamis (“If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land” 12:15).

Significance of the Above List

Through the centuries no one associated these acts of nature with an ice age because the science behind it was not understood. Even today the cause of the many ice ages embraced by secular science is hotly debated. An ice age requires two opposite conditions—heat and cold. The heat is necessary to evaporate vast quantities of water from the ocean which falls as record amounts of rainfall at lower latitudes and sleet and snow at upper latitudes. The friction of earth movements produced by powerful earthquakes, by the horizontal and vertical movement of crustal plates and by extensive volcanic activity combine to generate the heat. All of these acts of nature are found in Job.

Atmospheric volcanic ash accounts for the cold. One Indonesian volcano, Mount Tambora, erupted throughout 1815 and 1816. Its ash blanketed the earth sufficiently to cause worldwide harvest failures in 1816, an event known as the year without a summer. Behind this phenomenon is the physics of wave lengths. A thin layer of ash high in the sky does not impede light rays. Even in the presence of such a layer the sun by day and the moon and stars by night can be seen. But heat has a different wave length. This difference decreases its ability to pass through even a thin layer of ash. Depending on the amount of ash in the sky, a portion of the sun’s heat rays are reflected back into space.

To bring on an ice age volcanoes need to release enough volcanic ash to drop summer temperatures by up to 40 degrees. Further, this condition must last for centuries. The multiplication of and eventual extinction of Woolley Mammoths along the Arctic shoreline reveals this happened. Only Noah’s flood could cause these two extreme conditions. Since there was only one such flood that covered the highest mountains, there was only one ice age.

Creation scientists have advanced various models for the Biblical Flood. One, the Catastrophic Tectonic Plate theory, produces ample earth movements to produce the necessary heat. First, the entire pre-Flood ocean floor subducted under the great continent. Second, a 45,000-mile trench formed on the ocean floor, allowing magma to rise from deep in the earth and replace the old ocean floor. Third, heat from the magma and the friction of rock sliding on rock warmed the world’s oceans by 40 to 50 degrees. Fourth, vast worldwide volcanic activity continued for the next thousand years. Fifth, the heated oceans evaporated enormous quantities of water to produce the Ice Age. Sixth, the one great continent broke up into the many continents and islands of today.

Regardless of the model, continuous ash in the sky and massive evaporation from the world’s oceans caused the Ice Age. By Job’s day the earth was settling down and the Ice Age was coming to an end, but the extreme conditions it produced were still vividly in the collective memory of all who spoke and are found frequently in their dialog.

Job hardly begins when these extremes appear. In his back yard, so to speak, a volcanic pyroclastic flow consumed his 7000 sheep and their keepers (Job 1:16). His servant described the event as “the fire of God.” While it may have been a lightning storm ranging over many square miles of land which would be remarkable in itself, other acts of nature in the book point to a volcano spewing hot gasses down its side and across Job’s grazing land. Volcanoes are the result of earth movements and unheard-of earth movements were still common in Job’s day. Both earth movements far beyond anything experienced today and the earthquakes of enormous magnitude that they produced are casually mentioned:

**⁵He who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger,
⁶who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble. Job 9:5-6.**

Just three verses after the fire of God, a violent storm with unheard of wind speeds struck. This mega-tornado collapsed his oldest son’s house, fell on its occupants and killed hundreds. He lived in a house, not in the tent of a nomad. For the sake of coolness houses in hot, dry lands were constructed with heavy building materials like stone or brick. Lost were Job’s seven sons, three daughters, family members, guests, friends, and all the servants but one.

In Job are more references to ice age type weather than any other book of the Bible. During the Great Ice Age, while snow fell at the upper latitudes, rain fell closer to the equator on land that later became deserts. Both statements in the book of Job and modern science reveal this. The following pages cite numerous indications of such weather conditions:

¹⁵My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that pass away, ¹⁶which are dark with ice, and where the snow hides itself. ¹⁷When they melt, they disappear, when it is hot, they vanish from their place. Job 6:15-17

These verses depict weather extremes—large quantities of ice and snow accumulating in stream beds during the winter period, then becoming treacherous as the summer hot weather melted them in areas that today are semi-deserts.

Those of Job’s day observed how such rushing water produced erosion which he used to illustrate how his suffering was wearing away his faith:

The waters wear away the stones, the torrents wash away the soil of the earth; [even] so you destroy the hope of man. Job 19:14.

Like ice and cold, excessive water is mentioned frequently in Job. Eliphaz eulogizes God’s provision of water: “he gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields.” Job 5:10. Job spoke of washing himself with snow (Job 9:30) and of waiting for the spring rain (Job 29:23). “They [the poor] are wet with the rain of the mountains.” “Drought and heat snatch away the snow waters.” “In the gullies of the torrents they [the poor] must dwell.” “The wind...the roar of the storm” (Job 24:8, 19; 30:6, 22). Job, Elihu and even God Himself dwelt on violent storms, snow, ice, thick clouds and the rain they produced, none of which are common events in NW Arabia today or even when Abraham lived.

⁸He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not split open under them. ¹⁴The thunder of his power, who can understand? (Selected statements of Job in 6:8-14.)

⁶For to the snow he [God] says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour. ¹⁰By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast. ¹¹He

loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. (Selected statements of Elihu in Job 37:6-11.)

²²Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail? ²⁵Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, ²⁶to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, ²⁷to satisfy the waste and desolate land and to make the ground sprout with grass? ²⁸Has the rain a father or who has begotten the drops of dew? ²⁹From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? ³⁰The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. ³⁴Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? ³⁵Can you send forth lightnings.... ³⁷Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, ³⁸when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? (Selected statements of God in Job 38.)

Elihu spoke of lakes frozen fast (Job 37:10) while God spoke of seas being frozen: “waters become hard like stone and the face of the deep is frozen.” Job 38:30. These words describe ice age events. Deserts are notorious for heat and cold. But cold nights don’t freeze lakes like stone or cover seas with ice. Job may have learned of frozen oceans from travelers since caravan drivers heard many tales. But Elihu was most likely speaking about lakes freezing solid right where these five men lived—in an area from central Mesopotamia to central Jordan. Such extensive freezing could only occur before the Ice Age ended.

Growing Desertification

The book of Job speaks at length of large-scale farming and ranching on the one hand and desert-like conditions on the other. It would seem that they don’t go together, but the fact remains that a careful examination of many statements suggests there was a cold, wet season and a hot, dry one and that both were extreme where Job lived. The wet season brought some violently moist weather while the dry season was very hot. This would have occurred in the final stages of the Ice Age.

Rifts and Tidal Waves

Geologists know of another earth movement that happened late in all this activity. A crack developed in the crust of the Afro-Eurasian continent, from Turkey all the way to Tanzania, 6000 miles to the south. It is called the Syro-African Rift. Northrup carefully investigated the Jordan Rift segment where a lake formed from north of the Sea of Galilee to south of the Dead Sea. Geologists call this ancient body of water Lake Lisan. Ice age storms may have filled Lake Lisan to the point where it connected with the Red Sea but movements changed that topography again and again so no one can tell for sure. But if so, the surface of the lake would have been over a quarter of a mile higher than the present elevation of the Dead Sea.

Northrup graphically captures the reader’s imagination by saying that Job 12:15 (point #15 above) poetically describes the action of a tsunami/tidal wave. First the water recedes due to an earthquake somewhere at sea, but then returns with great destructive force. Northrup found plains high above the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea that were washed repeatedly by tsunamis all the way to the mountains in Jordan. He also found walls high on either side of the Jordan Rift that were pounded by wave action. If Job lived at that time, he could have been an eye witness to these tidal waves and Leviathans that made their way up the trench from the Red Sea. All of this action left a

fertile valley. Half a millennium later when most of the water had evaporated Scripture described the southern portion of this valley which attracted Lot along with the substantial population of Sodom and Gomorrah:

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) Genesis 13:10.

If the Great Ice Age is so obvious in the Book of Job, why didn't students of the book point this out long ago? As previously pointed out, first and foremost, the science of an ice age only began to be hammered out during the 20th century and its fine points are still being debated so the associated phenomena were not realized in the past. Consequently, Bible expositors through the ages would have been ignorant of the weather phenomena associated with an ice age and interpreted those Hebrew expressions within the range of their non-ice age knowledge. Second, some of the references identified by Northrup could be explained in other ways! For example, Job 9:17: "He crushes me with a tempest" is figurative. As a satisfying explanation for the verse, the expositor would leave it at that. But behind Job's metaphor would be the literal kind of violent storm he experienced during the Great Ice Age that took people's lives. Third, there was only one ice age so at only one time in all Bible history would such phenomena actually be witnessed by people and described.

Maybe even more astonishing is the fact that Northrup had been teaching Job for nearly 20 years when this insight suddenly came to him. Imagine—a scholar in the Hebrew who was also an avid professional geologist did not see those clear references to an ice age for that many years. This suggests how difficult it is for mankind to recognize obvious truths in God's Word when their minds have not been conditioned to such insights. Maybe this explains why twenty centuries of Christian scholarship has not recognized the obvious omission of names between Eber and Peleg.

Hypercyclones and Rainfall in Job

The Book of Job speaks often of fierce rain storms. To have such heavy rainfall there must be thick clouds. Eliphaz speaks of clouds so thick that Job might think God could not see what he did: "But you say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness? Thick clouds veil him, so that he does not see.'" Job 22:13-14. Later Elihu says, "He loads the clouds with thick moisture." Job 37:10. In fact, Elihu spent all of Job 37 speaking of extreme weather and most of it had to do with rain. He stated that God orders "the downpour, his mighty downpour" to fall and it drives both man and beast to shelter (Job 37:6-8).

God Himself asked Job:

**²⁵Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain
and a way for the thunderbolt,
²⁶to bring rain on a land where no man is,
on the desert in which there is no man,
²⁷to satisfy the waste and desolate land
and to make the ground sprout with grass? Job 38:25-27.**

Here God speaks of the erosion caused by intense rainfall. He even says He causes rain to fall on the desert and that it sprouts with grass. Just how frequently this would have happened in Job's day is explained by meteorologist Dr. Larry Vardiman whose specialty is hurricanes. He and an

associate modeled a hypothetical tropical cyclone in the Arabian Sea (Persian Gulf), raising the sea surface temperature to 95°F which would have happened frequently in the warmer latitudes during the Ice Age.

The model produced what he called a hypercyclone or hypercane. It was 3000 miles in diameter and stretched from the Western Mediterranean through the Middle East. Lasting 18 days it produced 15 inches of rain on current desert regions that now may not see rain in a decade. Over Pakistan it dropped 300 inches of rain. Vardiman concluded that due to Ice Age storms permanent vegetation would have covered much of what is now desert in Africa and the Middle East for 1000 years.³⁹ Separately, space imaging of the Sahara Desert shows depressions that were once lakes and archaeological exploration has found recent remains of aquatic creatures in those desert formations.

Meaning of Peleg's Name

In his later writings Northrup adamantly taught that Peleg's name meant more than "divided." He insisted that it included the agent of the division—water; "Peleg," he said, meant "divided by water." He supported his view from geology and chronology, but the underlying Hebrew was his major argument. Here is the gist of it:

Most ancient Hebrew words are built on roots of three consonants which form a verb. Not until the work of the Masoretic scribes between 500 and 800 AD were the unwritten vowels sounds and breathing marks added to the text. Peleg's name is built on the root verb PLG which broadly is translated "to split, to divide." Strong's Concordance lists 17 occurrences of the noun built on this very root found in the Old Testament. Seven times the noun is used as a proper name and is always translated as the name "Peleg" in the English. The other ten times the noun refers to a stream, brook, river or channel and is translated as such. Strong assigned the word number 6378 to the noun when it is used in a general way for a flowing stream of water (Isaiah 32:2, Job 29:6, Psalm 1:3; 119:136, Proverbs 5:16, Proverbs 21:1, Lamentations 3:48, Isaiah 30:25, Psalm 65:9 and Psalm 46:4) and 6379 when it refers to the son of Eber.

To cite just one of these ten verses, familiar Psalm 1:3 says "He (the man who delights in the law of the LORD) is like a tree planted by streams of water." The noun "streams" is the noun form from the root PLG. Since it is possessive plural, the form is PALGE. How did the Hebrews associate a river, stream or canal with the concept of dividing? Depending on the size of those flows, they more or less divide or separate people on one side from people on the other. Here now is a most remarkable use of the noun. The very form of Peleg's name, the masculine nominative singular form, is found in Psalm 65:9 which reads "The river of God is full of water." "River" in this verse is PELEG, the same form as the personal noun for a son of Eber, PELEG.

Additionally, the three-consonant root PLG has an even more basic root, the primary two-consonant PL collection of words. Besides PLG eight other PL verbs are found in the ancient Hebrew. All in some way are associated with "divide." For instance, one, PLT, means "to escape." One might wonder what that has to do with "divide." If the prisoner escapes, he is divided from his prison and captors. Another, PLL, means "to intervene." When someone or something intervenes

³⁹ Larry Vardiman, "A Well-Watered Land: Effects of the Genesis Flood on Precipitation in the Middle East," *Acts and Facts*, June 2012 (40-6): 12-15.

the previous condition is split or divided. Consequently, the choice of the three consonant PLG within this group for a name speaks not only of a division but implies a division somehow associated with water.

Northrup compared the Hebrew with other languages. First, he looked at other Semitic languages and then at non-Semitic languages. He wrote, "In the related Semitic languages, Arabic and Ethiopic, the root PLG means 'river.' In Arabic the root is modified to PHALAG."⁴⁰ In searching Classical Greek he found no less than 18 different nouns bearing the same foundation (PLG) and all referred to the sea in some way. He observed that even in English this letter sequence is found in such words as archipelago, pelagic depths and pelican which is from an associated root, PLK, and refers to the bill of the pelican that divides the water to catch his prey.⁴¹

In his paper on the rock record Northrup gave the following translation of the verse which tells why Peleg was given his name:⁴²

And unto Eber were born two sons. The name of the first was Peleg ["divided by water"], for in his days the earth was divided [by water]. (Brackets by Northrup.) Genesis 10:25.

In this reference he explained the meaning of Peleg as follows: "Both the name 'Peleg' and the word 'divided' are built upon the Hebrew root that consistently is used of water division. This is true both in Hebrew and in Classical Greek. In the latter there are about 18 nouns based on this root and each one has much to do with the ocean." Northrup then took certain creationists to task with, "Some creationists have made the terrible mistake of jumping to the conclusion that this verse [Genesis 10:25] refers to the division of the languages at Babel, an event that is described when chapter eleven [of Genesis] fills in important details that were only referred to in chapter ten. The researcher should note that this is a common approach in the Hebrew language." The confusion comes because Scripture speaks of both a division of mankind into languages (Genesis 10:5 and 10:32—which employs an entirely different Hebrew verb root, "to spread") and a division of the land surfaces of the earth by water (Genesis 10:25—the PLG verb root, "to divide").

To summarize, Genesis 10:25 contains the three Hebrew consonants (PLG) twice, first as a proper name and then as a verb. In both cases Northrup placed brackets after the Hebrew word to show his understanding of its relationship to water. In the first instance he defined the Hebrew noun used for a person's name as Peleg or "divided by water" and in the second instance he defined the Hebrew verb PALAG as "divided by water." Thus, Northrup wrote time and again, "Peleg was named 'divided by water.'"⁴³ In another paper he wrote, "This ["divided by water"] is the major meaning of the word Peleg, surprisingly borne out in cognate and non-cognate languages."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Bernard E. Northrup, "The Grand Canyon and Biblical Catastrophes," 16-20.
http://www.chafer.edu/files/grand_canyon.pdf?r=99928500.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bernard E. Northrup, "The Witness in the Record of the Rocks."
www.ldolphin.org/rockrecord2.html.

⁴³ Northrup, Grand Canyon.

⁴⁴ Bernard E. Northrup, "The Genesis of Geology." www.ldolphin.org/genages.html.

More recently Dr. John Morris and Dr. James Johnson wrote a paper in which they agreed with Northrup to a point. Like Northrup they felt the division of Genesis 10:25 was geological and geographical, not linguistic. They spoke of Northrup's work at length. While Northrup felt this division by water occurred when the great single continent was broken up, they felt it was accomplished when the ice from the Great Ice Age melted and separated the continents by water.⁴⁵ Other creationists have also tagged Peleg's name as marking the end of the Ice Age when the melting ice sheets raised sea level 400 feet and covered the land bridges which had connected continents thus dividing the earth by water. That explanation seems a better fit for the meaning of Peleg's name ("to divide by water") and the time in which he lived—39-59 generations after the Flood.

Northrup's explanation required more years between the Flood and Job's ordeal than the Masoretic Text allowed. So he turned to the Septuagint chronology. In the LXX he calculated that 531 years elapse from the Flood to the birth of Peleg which together with the additional time in Egypt less Ussher's early date for Solomon's temple supplied 645 years of breathing room. That would be an ice age in record time but it would have to do. The Ussher followers cram the Great Ice Age into even fewer years which possibly compromises their science in order to preserve their interpretation of Shem's genealogy as complete. It would seem that the Masoretic Text numbers together with the hidden beauty of Hebrew genealogies give a better explanation for the missing years, especially since there are far more than 645 years.

Northrup served on the faculties of Bible colleges and seminaries from 1953 to 2005 and addressed these issues for nearly 50 years. He died in 2008. During his years he made important contributions to the thinking of those who have attempted to harmonize what God said in His Word with what He did to the surface of the earth. Northrup declared these ideas in lecture after lecture and wrote them in articles but not in any permanent book. A decreasing number of web sites contain these articles. Since he expressed ideas that are contrary to current thinking, even his sound ideas may eventually be lost to the body of Christ. Nevertheless, Northrup would be pleased to know that most creationists have come to recognize both centuries of major geologic activity after the Flood and much geologic activity before the Flood as well.

Now you can see why I was so delighted to discover Dr. Bernard E. Northrup. While I was certain that Job lived long before the Patriarchs, Northrup with his ice age observations in Job provided a powerful argument for Job living long before them. His observations on geology and the Ice Age require the many generations that are omitted between Eber and Peleg.

Restatement of the Ice Age Argument

Our case that Job lived during the Great Ice Age remains so novel to many it bears a second look. While Job, his friends and even God made numerous references to an ice age, no commentator in the past knew what they meant. Why? Ice age knowledge is a new discovery in science. Only in the 20th century did scientists begin to develop an understanding of the subject. Even today it has more questions than answers. What then of the numerous ice age conditions found in Job's pages?

⁴⁵ John D. Morris and James J. Scofield Johnson, "Rightly Dividing the Word about Peleg," (Dallas TX: Institute for Creation Research, 2009): 1-29. <https://www.icr.org/i/pdf/technical/Rightly-Dividing-the-Word-about-Peleg.pdf>.

They have been ignored, spiritualized or disregarded! Consequently, believing Shem's chronology was complete, commentators for the last 2000 years placed Job between Abraham and David, 500-1500 years too late.

Secular science has developed over 60 models for an ice age. There are so many because none work. They will be surprised when they finally realize that two opposite conditions are needed for an ice age, much heat and much cold. Noah's Flood provided both abundantly. Creation scientists realized this truth as they studied the Flood. The Flood pumped heat into the world's oceans when "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth." That heat evaporated enormous amounts of water which fell as snow and eventually produced two-mile thick ice sheets. Then ash in the atmosphere kept the summer sun from melting the growing ice sheets. So how did the Flood cause oceans to become 40° warmer and summers 40° colder and for these conditions to last for centuries?

Although there is much mystery about the fountains of the deep, it is no secret that it is a lot hotter as you descend towards the center of the earth. Whatever those fountains poured out heated the ocean. Additionally, scientists discovered a 45,000-mile fault on the bottom of the deep oceans. Molten rock that poured out of this fault also heated the ocean. But how could so much heat remain in the ocean for centuries? The Flood caused the breakup of the one continent. Over the centuries the pieces moved to their present location to become separate continents and islands. As the pieces (or plates) moved, rock ground on rock to produce friction that contributed to the ocean's heat.

Continual tectonic activity released volcanic ash which formed a thin layer high in the atmosphere. Scientists have learned that volcanic ash impedes the flow of heat but not light. The ash in the sky reflected enough of the sun's heat back into space to drop summer temperatures by up to 40° and over many years allow sufficient winter snow to accumulate to form those ice sheets. Hence the Flood also supplied the opposite needed condition, the cold. When the earth finally settled down, summer heat returned and much ice melted. The Ice Age was over.

Undeniable conclusions can be drawn from an ice age following the Flood. First, since there was only one Flood, there could have been but one ice age. Second, those who regard the Flood as local or regional have no mechanism to produce the Ice Age and face the same dilemma the secular scientists face. Yet secular science does not doubt that ice ages occurred. Geologists have found no end of evidence for the Ice Age and that evidence invariably rests on top of the geological formations produced by the Flood. Clearly the Ice Age followed the Flood. Finally, the Ice Age supports our contention that Job's ordeal occurred half a millennium before Abraham.

The warm ocean water grew a great plain of grass on the narrow strip of land between the Asian Artic Ocean and the mountains further inland. As the Ark's animal population multiplied elephants migrated to these distant shores, attracted by its warm climate and abundant grass. Lacking natural predators, they came to number in the millions and developed into a distinct subset of the elephant kind called Woolley mammoths. Eventually they became stranded, cut off from the world to the south. As the Ice Age wound down, the intense cold, dwindling fresh water and lack of grass spelled their demise. For centuries explorers thought they had drowned in the Flood. Recently, more careful examination shows they were buried in loess, the dust produced by rock grinding on rock. Now their extinction is attributed to that final period of the Ice Age when the ocean became cold and grass no longer grew along those artic shores.

While Scripture focuses on the Flood's water covering the entire earth and killing all air-breathing life outside the Ark, God also said that He would destroy the earth: "Behold, I will destroy them [living things] with the earth." Genesis 6:13. Because Scripture focuses on the destruction of life, this is the focus of *Hidden Beauty* as well as commentators in general. Of significance, however, is the destruction of the earth which refers to the impact of the Flood and its aftermath on the earth's surface. Creation scientists are adding to our knowledge of this second impact of the Flood.

Descendants of the Flood survivors built the city of Babel and its tower in Lower Mesopotamia. God judged mankind by giving each major family group its own language. Groups left Southern Mesopotamia to find land for themselves. Uz and his descendants settled in Western Arabia and established a region called "the land of Uz." As a major land owner in Uz Job would have been a member of this people group.

Following the Flood new weather patterns that produced the Ice Age brought snow and ice to the upper latitudes while rain-drenching hypercyclones ripped through areas nearer the equator, even watering places that seldom see rain today. We previously mentioned the work of atmospheric scientist Dr. Larry Vardiman, a creationist who modeled these storms. With the Persian Gulf at 95° his model showed that such a storm would have measured 3000 miles in diameter, lasted 18 days and dropped up to 300 inches of rain in Pakistan and 15 inches on lands that today are desert. It is not surprising that many of Noah's descendants sought out the Lower Mesopotamian Valley and even Arabia to escape frequent snow and ice storms in the mountains of Ararat.

Some generations after Eber, his descendant Joktan found Arabia to be a refuge from much of this adverse weather. Although Arabia endured hypercyclones produced by the Ice Age, they would have been preferable to facing growing ice sheets and months of unceasing ice storms in the upper latitudes. Joktan's 13 sons populated Arabia and Job was still trading with their descendants at the end of the Ice Age. While most of Arabia is a desert today and its population is small, it may have held a substantial portion of the world's population by the time the Ice Age reached its peak. About eight generations after the birth of Job, Peleg, brother of Joktan in the broad sense of also being a descendant of Eber, was born in that general area. The ice sheets had melted. The Great Ice Age was over. Peleg was given the name which means "divided by water" because the oceans now contained the melt water from the vast ice sheets and covered the land bridges, dividing the continents by water.

It took over 2000 years for the earth to settle down and reach relative calm after the Flood. If this violence were charted the line would start high on the left side, immediately plunge to represent the first forty days of the Flood, then begin curving and reach almost horizontal after 2000 years. Only 35-55 missing generations in Shem's line provides sufficient time for this graph.

Progressive Revelation of the Names for God

One last significant argument for dating Job early needs to be included before closing this section of *HB*: the extensive presence of the noun "Shaddai," an early form for the name of God. When Abraham (Abram) was 99 years old God made a covenant with him, declaring that he would be the father of many nations, that God would give the land of Canaan to his offspring, that he would be called Abraham (father of a multitude), that Sarai would be called Sarah (mother of nations) and that God would give him a son through barren Sarah. He assured Abraham that He could do all this by using a new name—El Shaddai (Hebrew); "God Almighty" (English):

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; walk before me and be blameless, ²that I may make my covenant between me and you, and multiply you greatly.” Genesis 17:1-2.

This revelation was made about 2067 BC. Then 600 years later when God called Moses, about 1447 BC, He made Himself known as Jehovah/Yahweh (depending on vowel pointing) which is translated LORD in most English Bibles and means “I am,” the self-existent one, the One who always existed. In Exodus 6:2-3 God actually distinguishes when these two names were revealed:

²God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD [I am—the eternally existing one; Jehovah]. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by my name the LORD [Jehovah] I did not make myself known to them.” (Brackets ours.)

Concerning El Shaddai, God’s name first given to Abraham, El is the masculine singular form for God while Shaddai is a word with an uncertain origin. The meanings of possible roots in various languages include power, breast (nourishment) and mountain but it is commonly rendered “Almighty.” What does this have to do with Job?

Shaddai was a name for God before He revealed Himself as El Shaddai to Abraham. Shaddai is found by itself about 41 times in Scripture and 31 are in Job. The compound name (El Shaddai) is found six times between God’s revelation to Abraham and his revelation to Moses 600 years later but according to Exodus 6:2-3, it was used frequently. It is found once later in the Old Testament—in Ezekiel 10:5 when the Shekinah Glory departed the Temple. Once the strongest word for God, LORD/Jehovah, was given, the lesser words, Shaddai and El Shaddai were used infrequently. Since the early word for God, Shaddai, is found abundantly in Job, it suggests that Job lived before Abraham. This progression is difficult to see because Moses in his work of compiling and editing inserted the strongest name, LORD/Jehovah, when appropriate in both the books of Genesis and Job.

Takeaway from Job: Creation, a Pathway to Faith

Biblical inerrancy does not allow relegating the book of Job to allegory or myth. It speaks of real people with real experiences. Job’s friends had educated minds and spoke from a wealth of knowledge and experience. Their early place in the post-Flood history of mankind helps future generations to understand more clearly that God has always instructed men in His ways. Ultimately the book of Job shows God’s love and concern for all His creation, especially those made in His image.

But think on this: God has an ongoing relationship, almost unmentioned in Scripture, with the holy and fallen angels. Man needed to be aware of this relationship because it affects man. God holds assemblies for the entire population of heaven and on two reported occasions, man’s devotion to God was in question. Satan, our accuser, is galled by our love for God. To get this idea out God threw His most prized human servant under the train. Then to restore the trust of that servant, He made a personal visit to him and allowed his four detractors to witness it. If that wasn’t enough, the visit was not to sympathize with that servant but to give a science presentation on creation and God’s providential care of it, the likes of which is unequalled in biblical revelation or human history.

But what about Behemoth and Leviathan? If the contest of heaven in chapter one and two of Job reflects the heavenly conflict begun before creation, certainly God’s reminder to us of the evil of

Satan via literal dragons in His animal kingdom is not so hard to swallow. Such unity of Scripture is its beauty. This relationship between Job and Genesis, dragons in Genesis and Revelation, is but an early example of the Bible's ongoing saga regarding sin and God's answer for it.

So, on the one hand, finding this truth about God's interaction with the leader of the fallen angels in the book of Job challenges creation folks to believe that Job lived when Scripture places him—after the Flood but considerably before Abraham and even some generations before Peleg. Clearly, generations are omitted in Shem's genealogy. As Hebrews 1:1 declares, God has revealed Himself "at many times and in many ways."

On the other hand, believers who say "how old the earth is doesn't matter" need to move beyond that and see the importance of understanding all Scripture so that they may be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:17). This includes these foundational truths of Satan, revealed in the Book of Job—his nature and tactics illustrated by living, dangerous dragons which were not myths and did not die out or even live 65 million years ago but still populated the earth in Job's day four and one half millennia ago.

Is it too much to believe how highly God considers creation in helping our faith? Of course, unbelievers maintain the book of Job is late and a product of the human mind. Yet how do they explain how man could formulate the science questions God Himself posed in chapters 38 and 39? They are the stuff of modern science, today's science. Some are even the stuff of tomorrow's science. Absent in Job are mythical exaggerations and errors characteristic of ancient secular writings.

Nevertheless, believing in God can be hard. In our entire lifetime we will never see Him. In fact, in our lifetime billions of people will live and never see Him. Then God says that even one sin keeps us out of heaven. He says His son was judged on a cross for all our sins so that when we receive this substitute, God can forgive our sins and give us eternal life. That is very hard to believe. But while we can't see God, and His salvation message is foreign to human experience, we can see creation. We see His creation from the time we wake until we go to sleep. We see people, animals, insects, mountains, oceans, forests and the sky with sun and stars. Creation is that bridge to faith in the unseen God and His remedy for man's sinful condition. If the enemy wants to destroy us today, he has to get us to think that creation has always been around, or that it made itself, or that it came to be in some other way than by the will and design of the Creator. A vast enterprise works to keep such ideas circulating. But holding evolutionary belief is becoming more and more ridiculous.

Current science acknowledges DNA as the blueprint for life found in the cells of all living things. But it is going haywire. Mutations keep accumulating. Science knows some are really harmful and will take the life of that living thing apart from heroic coping efforts. What happened to natural selection? Obviously it is a pipedream. So believing in God and His salvation should not be that difficult—it is mostly a matter of getting the right information. At the least is taking the book of Job at face value. After all, creation is the link between the seen and the unseen.

Literary giants have heaped their accolades on the Book of Job. Alfred Lord Tennyson called it "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature." Thomas Carlyle said Job was "one of the grandest things ever written." Father of the modern creation movement Dr. Henry Morris II called it the most remarkable book in the Bible. By confirming the absence of names in Shem's genealogy, it has become even greater, grander and more remarkable.

PART V - FINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ABBREVIATED GENEALOGIES

Chapter Twelve

Biblical Earth Movements After the Flood

The Bible commends faith. But Scripture also requires a correct object for faith. Christians are well aware of the disasters resulting from faith in Jim Jones and Joseph Smith. Faith in Jones took the lives of 900 individuals while faith in Smith perpetuates a false gospel. This book seeks to show that a complete faith that accepts the global Flood of Noah's day must include the way Scripture used Hebrew genealogies. This chapter addresses the over simplified belief that major earth movements were complete by the Flood's end. The most graphic representation of such over-literal faith has the ark passengers descending from the top of Great Ararat which is 16,900 feet above sea level. Meanwhile it overlooks such events as the fire of God which took Job's 7000 sheep over a thousand years after the Flood, the deepening of the Syro-African Rift in the Jordan Valley 2000 years after the Flood and even such secular memories as the lost city of Atlantis.

Scripture identifies two events that brought on the Flood: "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth" and "the windows of the heavens were opened." Genesis 7:11. As a result, rain fell on the earth, ocean floors rose and continents sank until the ark floated (7:18). Through these processes the water continued to rise until "all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered." Genesis 7:19. After 150 days of rising flood waters, God took actions which stopped the Flood and removed the water. Scripture summarizes with "The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed, the rain from heaven was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually." Genesis 8:2-3. This, too, was not immediate but was a process.

Scripture gives the following detail of timing: The rain began "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month." Genesis 7:11. At day 150 God closed the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven (Genesis 8:1-2). At day 314 the waters were dried from off the earth (Genesis 8:13). But the ground was dangerously wet. At day 370, the earth had dried out (Genesis 8:14). "Then God said to Noah, 'Go out from the Ark....' So Noah went out, and his sons...everything that moves on the earth went out." Genesis 8:15, 18. The Flood itself was a process that involved time, over one year.

The above verses assure us that four families and all the various kinds of air-breathing land creatures had been preserved in the Ark. They also record the timing and receding of the Flood. The Flood was the most earth-changing event in all history. But to take from these verses that all earth movements ended on day 370 of the Flood is an overreach of faith. The following pages will cite numerous instances of continuing earth movements.

Location of the Ark

"The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat." Genesis 8:4. Since the highest peak in the Ararat range is Great Ararat at 16,945', tradition and many Christians declare Great Ararat as the landing place of Noah's ark since the Ark came to rest several months before any other mountains were visible. But further information gives a very different picture. First, Great Ararat and Little Ararat (12,782') which is eleven miles distant are volcanoes. In fact, the entire region is volcanic. The plain to the southwest of Great Ararat rises to 5000 feet above sea level while the broad alluvial plain north and east of Great Ararat rises to 3300 feet above sea level. Most importantly, the editor

Moses wrote about 1400 BC, so the Ararat Range had two and a half millennia after the Flood to rise to the height of a mountain range.

For the entire ark contingent of thousands of creatures plus the eight adults to climb down from the mountain and settle in some valley is an idea generated by over-literalism. Noah and his family would have used supplies on the Ark to reestablish life. Making hundreds of trips back up the mountain for all those supplies and materials would have been impossible. What actually happened? God provided a hill higher than the other hills for the Ark's landing. Noah's family established a community on or near that hill and began farming. As time passed volcanic eruptions in the area persuaded the family to seek a safer habitat. As they safely exited the area volcanic activity began forming mountains. As recently as 1840 AD Great Ararat erupted and lava flowed to increase its size. Today the Ararat range with its high plateaus is the result of 6000 years of volcanic activity.

Collapse of the Jordan Valley

Two thousand years after the Flood, the Jordan Valley still resembled the fertile Nile River Valley. Scripture even likens the Jordan Valley to the Garden of Eden. This disclosure comes at the time Abraham and Lot parted company because their herdsmen were fighting over the available land. Then a violent act of nature left the valley desolate. Here is how the area looked before this happened:

⁸Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." ¹⁰And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. Genesis 13:8-10.

In Egypt the Nile overflowed its banks each summer as it carried water to the sea from the winter rains to the south. In doing so it fertilized the soil with a layer of thick, rich silt and replenished ground moisture, providing life-giving moisture to crops to be planted and causing life to flourish in this dry area. Without life-giving water ancient Egypt with its pyramids, temples and tombs would not have existed. The same was true with that first garden God planted for Adam. A river flowed through the garden and divided into four rivers, so great was the quantity of water God supplied.

In the same way the land Lot chose thrived because it had an abundance of water. Scripture uses two words to describe the unusual quantity of water. When it says the land was watered, it adds the adverb "well." The land was well watered. But that still was inadequate so the word "everywhere" was added. Lot saw the Jordan Valley to be "well-watered everywhere." It wasn't just the river that watered the valley because the valley was broad, a plain. In addition to the generous amount of water supplied by the river, it received an abundance of rain. Consequently, this valley was green, lush, ideal for Lot's herds. Then Scripture adds those two other lands known for their abundant watering. The Jordan Valley was watered like that original garden God planted for man and like the well-watered land of Egypt in that day.

Following this highly favorable description of the Jordan Valley, Scripture adds an onerous parenthesis: "This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." Just 20 or so years after Lot chose the lush Jordan Valley, God told him to leave it immediately and flee to the eastern hills.

The next morning the destruction began. It was an awesome earth movement. The two sides to the valley moved in such a way that the valley dropped enough to become the lowest place on earth. The event was accompanied by, an unleashing of molten lava called “fire and brimstone.”

Lot first took refuge in a town on the edge of the pentapolis. But then he moved to the hills God originally told him to flee to. While his time in that small town may have been short, maybe just long enough to get some rest, it shows that this earth movement was a process. It progressed over time. In the morning it took Sodom and Gomorrah. As it crept closer to the nearby town Lot had begged to stay in, Lot changed his mind and journeyed into the hills, out of the valley. Whether this was a day or a week, it indicates that a process was going on. In the end Lot became a cave man and his two daughters spoke of a scarcity of men. This speaks of the desolation of the area.

The event took most life in the area, caused the floor of the plain to drop well over 1000 feet and left the area a permanent blight on the face of the earth. Abraham lived on a 2600’ high plateau above this inferno. Even though he had lived there for 15 or so years and had good relations with the resident Amorites, he moved away. Why? Scripture doesn’t say but most likely the continuing smoke, fire and brimstone, earthquakes, etc., compelled him to find a quieter area for his people and vast herds and flocks.

The formation that this event produced or enlarged is called the Syro-African Rift. While the tearing away of these two enormous chunks of earth on either side of the broad plain may have started at the time of the Flood, the work was not completed until 2000 years later. Because Scripture documents so completely the before and after, this represents an undeniable earth movement long after the Flood. Historically, few have really taken Scripture’s “before” description seriously. These 500 or so words are given to help believers grasp the gravity of this event. It was not just a volcanic eruption. It was the movement of two enormous blocks of the surface of the earth and it mostly happened over a period of years in as much as Lot is left living in a cave and his two sons remain in those hills rather than moving to that formerly fertile valley. Today, apart from irrigation, that area is barren and even features a sea of salt. While there had been eruptions before and an area of tar pits was not hospitable to man, it only became desolate with this event.

Major Earth Movements Cited in Job

Entirely overlooked and explained as poetic license are the eye-popping earth movements found in the Book of Job. The best known is the volcanic eruption that took away his sheep. Job 1:16 relates the event: “...There came another (messenger) and said, ‘The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and I alone have escaped to tell you.’” The messenger had a term for the event. It was a part of his vocabulary which indicates that it happened frequently enough that it was a part of that area’s vocabulary. He called it “the fire of God.” This was 1500 years after the Flood. While not an earth movement as such, vulcanism commonly accompanies earth movements.

Job had 7000 sheep. A rule of thumb was one shepherd for each 100 sheep which were kept in separate flocks and scattered widely so as not to overgraze. With the keepers would have been supervisors and support and possibly even older sons maybe several hundred servants in all. Job’s ranch is described in chapter nine. It was mostly desolate and rocky, covering possibly 1000 square miles. *HB* estimates that his sheep required about 15 square miles of grassland. The grassland would be scattered over the ranch. So for this volcanic eruption to be 100% lethal, a volcanic event that today happens maybe once a century had to have occurred.

Another messenger arrived to report “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. And behold a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” Job 1:18-19. These ten children of Job are called “young people.” That is a relative term. They are young in comparison to Job who was a generation older. They were his young people. Actually, they were semi-retired and spent much of their time enjoying each other’s company.

Further they were not in a tent but in a house. His children would have imitated Job’s care in what he did, so this house would have been well-built. It would have been made of stone so it would be cool during the hot weather. It would also be strong because strong winds characterized the storms of the time. Today the force of winds is rated according to wind speed and atmospheric pressure with a category five condition being the strongest. Satan managed to produce a wind speed and atmospheric pressure that collapsed the entire stone house. At the party were all ten of Job’s children, so it is likely that other family members were present as well as a host of servants. The collapsing house killed every last person in it except for a single servant.

The event could have been accompanied by an unmentioned earthquake. The fire of God and a wind greater than those of today indicate a time of increased natural disasters and is consistent with greater earth movements than today. By our estimates Job was born about 1400 years after the Flood, in the final days of the Ice Age. Since these two events (the Flood and the Ice Age) are unique to the entire history of the earth, we can more readily accept other statements in the book of Job that are dismissed as exaggerations or figures of speech.

Repeated references are made to lightning and thunder. Job, Elihu and God Himself all mention lightning and thunder and the thunder is said to be the voice of God. Elihu said the most about them:

¹At this my heart trembles and leaps out of its place. ²Keep listening to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. ³Under the whole heaven he lets it go, and his lightning to the corners of the earth. ⁴After it his voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice, and does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard. ⁵God thunders wondrously with his voice... Job 37:1-5.

Job asked, “The thunder of his power, who can understand?” Job 26:14. Later, God asked Job, “Can you thunder with a voice like his (God’s)?” Job 40:9. Indeed, God is the creator of all so He is the creator of the sound caused by His creation. In this way the idea of thunder being the voice of God is acceptable. No one would question that Elihu, Job and God are pointing to literal lightning and thunder. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that when a speaker in Job refers to an act of nature, the speaker is referring to a literal event.

Now, let us apply that idea to the following verse: “How can a man be right before God? ...He who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger....” Job 9:2, 5. God moved mountains in Job’s day? Yes. Further, Job adds that they are turned upside down. It was not difficult to accept that the speakers above were pointing to literal lightning and thundering. But to accept that Job was speaking of literal mountains being removed and even overturned pictures a world far different from today. Today that rarely happens. But in Job’s day it was a part of life. Over a thousand years after the Flood, mountains were commonly overturned. Here was evidence beyond dispute that God was powerful and no man could oppose his power.

But maybe this is overreach. Maybe some mountains appeared upside down, so the idea was spread that God had overturned them. Possibly, except Job is not done speaking. He began this response by agreeing with Bildad on God's power. His next statement seems to confirm that in his day mountains were overturned. He says in verse 6 "Who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble." Here is the cause of overturned mountains—earthquakes. But who hears of an earthquake that shakes the earth out of its place, that causes the entire planet to shake today? When these earthquakes occurred in Job's day, the people in his part of the world attributed them to God and they showed God was so powerful that it was hopeless to think of opposing Him. Without question there was much earth movement during the Flood, but it obviously did not end with the Flood.

In the discourse of Job chapter 14, erosion is used to illustrate how Job's hope is being worn away. But the erosion Job speaks of is far greater than current erosion rates. Job says, "But the mountain falls and crumbles away, and the rock is removed from its place; the waters wear away the stones; the torrents wash away the soil of the earth; so you destroy the hope of man." Job 14:18-19. In Job's day erosion caused entire mountains to crumble. This is super erosion. It was not confined to the waters of the Flood. Such erosion was still happening in Job's day, possibly 1500 years after the Flood. The Ice Age generated such rain storms. They were so powerful they are called hypercanes, a super hurricane. One was modeled. It showed up to 300 inches of rain would fall in 18 days.

These places and acts of nature in Job must be genuine since no one questions the following natural elements found in Job: land of Uz (1:1); the earth (1:7); deep darkness/thick clouds (22:13-14); cold (24:7); drought/heat (24:19); full moon (26:9); snow (37:6); ice (37:9); hail (38:22); dew (38:28); frost (38:29); ocean surface frozen (38:30).

In conclusion the Flood did not complete the reshaping of the world. This process continued for centuries and even millennia after the Flood. Any other take on the statements above is a rejection of those portions of Scripture and a denial of inerrancy. Scripture urges sound faith. Sound faith recognizes earth movements after the Flood that continued for a considerable time but slowly diminished to the frequency of modern times.

Processes During the Flood

The following section is provided as a reminder that even during the Flood, God used processes. For starters, the Flood took months to cover the highest mountains/hills, not an instant. No known commentary discusses how fast the water would have to rise and for good reason. To do so one would first have to know the elevation of the highest mountain before the Flood as well as how much of the rising water was due to rainfall, to the lifting of ocean floors and to the sinking of continents. None of these facts are available. But it is sobering to realize that rainfall as fast as one inch an hour would only produce a rise of two feet in a day or 80 feet in 40 days.

According to the Guinness Book of Records, the most rain in 24 hours ever recorded was 71.8" (i.e., six feet). It fell on January 7-8, 1966 during a tropical cyclone at the 9600' level of a French territorial Island in the Indian Ocean. That is approximately three inches an hour. If that record rate continued for the entire first forty days of the Flood, it would only raise sea level by 240 feet, hardly enough to cover mile-high mountains. More likely the amount of rain that fell per hour was many times the modern record. If 12 inches fell per hour, sea level would rise 960' in 40 days. But imagine what that would do to the roof of the Ark.

Sinking land masses and rising ocean floors is another possible way to raise sea level. The opening of the fountains of the great deep is listed first in the biblical text while the opening of the windows of heaven is mentioned second. The windows of heaven gave rain but Scripture does not tell what the fountains of the deep gave. Possibly they involved massive molten rock pouring up from the mantle into ocean floors, thereby raising sea level in a second way. This would explain why ocean floor crust is generally younger than land crust. Secular geologists find former mantle rock in many places on the surface of the earth, so in the past, magma did rise to the surface of the earth's crust. The ocean floor is only a dozen or so miles above the mantle whereas the surface of land generally is about five times as much. This would be another reason for much of the magma rising into the ocean rather than on land. Maybe those fountains raised sea level considerably more than the rain from the windows of heaven.

Without question unimaginable earth movements occurred during the Flood. But accounts in Scripture indicate earth movements continued after the Flood. While their frequency and intensity decreased with time, the record of Scripture leaves little doubt but that they did continue. Their activity is clearly seen in the physical appearance of today's earth surface.

Chapter Thirteen

Peleg, Joktan and the Table of Nations

For two hundred pages this book has suggested that Hebrew genealogies are mostly about identification, not succession, that they are often condensed, that 35-55 generations are missing between Eber and Peleg and that Job was born 8-9 generations before Peleg. Now Genesis ten appears, a fly in the ointment, two brothers to smite this tidy scheme. One brother continues the line to Christ; the other populates Arabia. They are placed in the fourth generation after the Flood.

Two Brothers

²⁵To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. Genesis 10:25-29.

Not so fast. "Brother" is one of those elastic relational words used in both narrow and broad senses. The narrow sense would mean these two brothers had the same immediate father and lived at the same time. The broad sense would merely mean they both descended from the same forefather. Nehemiah 5:1 uses "brother" that way. Poor Jews called rich Jews brothers. They were brothers in the sense that they were all descendants of Abraham who lived 1500 years earlier.

Similarly, Peleg and Joktan were brothers in the sense that Eber was their forefather. Genesis ten does not spoil the view of this book but provides another example to illustrate it. Both Peleg and Joktan descended from Eber. Peleg was born 35-55 generations after Eber but is named first due to importance (he continued the line to Christ). Much earlier Joktan and his descendants populated much of Arabia when Ice Age storms provided the water to cover it with vegetation. Out of the millions born during the 35-55 generation gap, Scripture names only a few—Joktan and his 13 sons (who may also have been "sons" in the broad sense) and those found in the Book of Job. This early populating of Arabia provides background for Job, the Patriarchs and Israel.

Table of Nations

The story of Peleg and Joktan appears in Genesis ten which is commonly called the Table of Nations. That is a misnomer. It does not record the rise of each nation after the Flood. It is neither a record of the repopulation of the earth, a genealogy nor a chronology. Rather it appears for a specific purpose and therefore is very selective. It was provided to inform Israel of the background of her neighbors as the following will show.

Selectivity of the Table of Nations

First, the Table of Nations was extremely selective. On the Ark were Noah and his wife plus their three sons and three daughters-in-law—eight adults but no children. After the Flood those three sons fathered 16 named sons (5.33 sons per father) and presumably about that many daughters. This record of first-generation sons is most likely complete. But with the second generation the record becomes selective. From Japheth's seven sons, just seven grandsons are named or just one son per father. Of Shem's five sons, only five grandsons are named. Again, just one son per father. But of Ham's four sons, 26 grandsons are named (over six sons per father). Many reasons are suggested for this such as not enough daughters to go around, untimely deaths, a

preference for remaining single or even violence. Like Adam and Eve's oldest, they all possessed old sin natures. But most likely the other nine had sons that are not mentioned due to selectivity.

If the record of second-generation sons suggests selectivity, the record of third-generation sons shouts it—only three sons are recorded and two might be “sons” in the broad sense. Looking at this account another way, the 36 first generation sons should have produced 80 second generation sons. Those 80 should have produced 400 third generation sons. Instead of 400, just one third generation son is certain.

God commanded the Ark survivors to fill the earth with people. Either the record is extremely incomplete or the human race was heading towards extinction. Since repopulation was happening, the record is the problem. It is selective. The fourth generation is even worse—only two sons are named—the two brothers—and neither were truly fourth generation sons, so in effect, no fourth-generation son is listed.

Looking at this selectivity another way, Ham had four sons and sons are listed for three (75%). Shem had five sons and sons are listed for two (40%). Japheth had seven sons, but sons for just two are listed (29%). What became of the unnamed offspring of the other nine first-generation sons and 34 second-generation sons? Though not mentioned in Genesis 10, we know much about some from history. The Medes descended from Japheth's son Madai. Descending from Shem's sons Elam and Asshur were the Elamites and infamous Assyrians of Isaiah's day. But not all are so obvious. The identity of some is disputed; others remain unidentified. Without question the Table of Nations is selective.

Purpose of the Table of Nations

The Table of Nations is selective because of its purpose. These post-Flood people began to form people groups and nations. The record focuses on those nations that impacted the Hebrews. This is the reason for the Table of Nation's specific content. Nearness to or impact upon the Hebrews was the primary reason in deciding which names to include. The most space was given to Ham and his progeny. Both the Promised Land that God gave to Abraham's descendants and the surrounding nations were mostly occupied by them.

Ham's son Canaan first settled the land of Canaan. No less than 11 sons are listed for him. These names occur again and again through Scripture as Israel struggled with them. Ham's son Egypt and his seven sons settled the land of Egypt. That land also had a major impact on the Hebrews. In Egypt Jacob's sons and grandsons grew to a population exceeding two million souls. Egypt eventually enslaved them. Descendants of Ham's oldest son, Cush and his six sons, are listed because they populated areas near Goshen where the Hebrews sojourned in Egypt for 430-years. Moses, the editor of Genesis, would have been very aware of Egypt's Cushite neighbors. No sons are listed for Ham's other son Put most likely because they settled in lands more distant from Israel.

While Shem had five sons the sons of only two are mentioned. Shelah continued the line leading to Christ and while Aram and his four sons provide context for the history of Israel. This makes sense since Aram was the father of the Aramaeans who populated Syria among other places. The Aramaeans were very significant in the life of Israel. By the time of Christ, the Aramaic language had replaced Hebrew in everyday life. Aram was also the father of Uz who established the land in which Job lived. To have possessed a large amount of land in Uz, Job would have had to be a direct descendant of Uz. Shem's other three sons, Elam, Asshur and Lud, contributed huge populations to the Near East and all are named before Aram but, amazingly, nothing is said of them.

Sons of just two of Japheth's seven sons are named. From Gomer came many European peoples; but maybe Gomer's three sons are listed out of respect to him as Japheth's firstborn. Another, Javan and his four sons, leads to the Greeks and other Northeastern Mediterranean peoples. These would be significant in later Hebrew history as the Israelites interacted with those bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Puzzling is the naming of Cush's descendants, Sheba and Dedan who are said to come from Cush's son, Raamah. Possibly Sheba and Dedan were named because they settled in Arabia and later intermarried with the descendants of Joktan and Abraham. They also are found in the Book of Job.

Since God would give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan, they needed to know about their neighbors and close relatives. Nearness to or impact upon the Hebrews was the primary reason in deciding which names to include in the Table of Nations. Yes, the Table of Nations was both selective and deliberate.

Other unique features of the Table

While the firstborn is usually named first, the Table places the record of Shem's descendants (Genesis 10:21-31) after those of Japheth (Genesis 10:2-5) and Ham (Genesis 10:6-20). Several times Scripture deals with less important sons before getting to the most important son, the heir. Ishmael's genealogy (Genesis 25:12-18) precedes Isaac's genealogy (Genesis 25:19 and following). Esau's genealogy (Genesis 36) comes long before Jacob's genealogy (Genesis 46).

The amount of space given to the descendants of each of Noah's sons also is telling. Nine verses of names are devoted to Ham's descendants (10:6-8, 13-18). Three verses of names are devoted to Japheth's descendants (10:2-4) and seven verses of names are devoted to Shem's descendants (10:22-24, 26-29). In the midst of the 70 descendants found in Genesis ten, considerable space is devoted to three developments. First is the rise of Nimrod and the expansion of his power (10:8-12, 5 verses). Second is the territory of the Canaanites (10:19, 1 verse). Third is Eber's two "sons" (10:25-30, 6 verses). Thus in 28 verses of Genesis ten, 12 verses are devoted to an explanation of certain names rather than listing names.

The broad use of "father" is clearly seen in Genesis 10:21 which says "To Shem, also, the father of all the children of Eber...." In this sense all the children of the grandson (Eber) were the children of the grandfather (Shem). When did Shem initiate this line leading to Eber's children, Peleg and Joktan? It began two years after the Flood when he fathered Arpachshad. The time two years) was when he began the line, not when he fathered Peleg just as the time in Genesis 11 was when the line was continued, not particularly when the named son was born.

Possibly Arpachshad enjoyed the unique honor of being the first person born in the post-Flood world. While Scripture doesn't say that, it does say he was born two years after the Flood, i.e., after the beginning of the Flood (Genesis 11:10) and does not indicate that another person was born before him. Surprisingly he is named third, not first, in the list of Shem's five sons in the Table of Nations. Elam is the first name and Asshur is the second. Both had an enormous impact on the Near East in their day.

Elam appears again and again in Scripture. By the time Abraham arrived in the Promised Land, Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, had extended his scepter all the way to Sodom and Gomorrah, one thousand trade-route miles west and south of Elam (Genesis 14:4). Fifteen hundred years later

Elam would be a major part of the Persian Empire that ended the Babylonian captivity. Asshur fathered the Assyrians that continued to be a great and powerful people in northeastern Mesopotamia. In terms of prominence these sons dwarfed Arpachshad. Maybe that is why he is listed third even though he was the firstborn. Clearly, birth order does not always dictate the order in which sons are listed in Scripture.

Sons were sometimes named for famous forefathers or relatives. Two clear cases are found right here in the very beginning of the repopulating of the earth after the Flood. Cush's oldest son was named Seba (very close to "Sheba") and his second was named Havilah. Cush had a grandson named Sheba while one of Joktan's 13 sons was also named Sheba. Joktan named another of his 13 sons Havilah. Because the same names were used over and over in Bible days, one must be careful when identifying people in Scripture.

The Table names 13 sons for Joktan and 11 for Canaan. Frequently those with many sons had multiple wives. While Jacob fathered 12 sons, they came through four wives. Abraham's brother Nahor had eight sons by one wife and four by another. Abraham himself had eight sons by three women. Esau had three wives to bear his 12 sons. King David had even more wives for his many sons. How many wives Joktan had in fathering 13 sons or Canaan had in fathering eleven sons is not stated. It would be conjecture to say all the sons of each father in this Table came from one wife. In determining population growth, it would likewise be a mistake to average the listed sons and then conclude that all males had an average of that many sons.

After naming five sons and two grandsons of Cush in Genesis 10:7, verse eight says "Cush fathered Nimrod." Nimrod was not named in the list of Cush's sons but separately said to be fathered by Cush. This is a device for sake of emphasis. Scripture continues by devoting more text about Nimrod and his kingdoms than it does to the entire paragraph on Japheth. Nimrod's Babylon has opposed God from this early time all the way through the Book of Revelation and to the present day. Abraham's seed needed a strong warning about this kingdom that wars against God and therefore against Israel. Here is the warning right in the middle of the Table of Nations. Genesis ten is far more than a record of the repopulation of the world after the Flood.

While this chapter is short (just four pages), it is extremely important because it corrects a common misunderstanding about Genesis ten that obscures the 35-55 generation omission between Eber and Peleg. Genesis ten is not a Table of Nations. Rather, it relates the origin of people groups that would impact Israel in its mission of producing the Messiah.

Critical to that purpose were Peleg and Joktan (Genesis 10:25-30). In the past expositors noted that Peleg's name meant "divided." They concluded his name referred to the division of languages when God judged those building the Tower of Babel. A careful study of his name indicates the division is associated with water, not languages. Thus, he was named at the end of the Ice Age when the two-mile-thick ice sheet in the earth's north and south had melted, raising sea level to divide the continents and islands by water. Joktan was important because his descendants established one of the earliest population centers during the Ice Age—Arabia. Scripture not only states that he had 13 sons but names each of them in Genesis 10.

Chapter Fourteen

Historical Errors Obscuring the Condensing of Shem's Line

Observed throughout this book is the fact that noted scholar and Archbishop James Ussher was derailed by his sources. While some folks maintain he had better sources that have been lost since his day, just the opposite is the case. He adopted a wrong date for the Flood because his sources failed him. Today's Bible students need not be bound by his inferior sources and resulting weak interpretations. This chapter looks at historical errors which led to his incorrect Flood date while the next chapter identifies errors of interpretation that resulted from forcing the incorrect Flood date on Scripture. While most of these bad ideas have been mentioned, several will be examined in considerable detail. But to start, here is one not previously told, a humorous one involving the Father of History himself, Herodotus.

1. Inflated Numbers Regarding Pharaoh Khufu's Tomb

History reports that 100,000 slaves labored 20 years to construct Pharaoh Khufu's tomb called the Great Pyramid located near Cairo Egypt. The famous Greek historian Herodotus whom Cicero called the Father of History memorialized this historical blunder. Although born in Turkey during the Persian Empire Herodotus became a contemporary of Socrates in democratic Athens. About 450 B.C. he toured Egypt and saw the Great Pyramid. His Egyptian guide told him 100,000 slaves labored 20 years to build the pyramid. Herodotus marveled at the ego of a man who would expend such vast resources to build his tomb. He said the Egyptians still hated Khufu for forcing them to raise the pyramid and could barely bring themselves to speak his name. The historian carefully preserved those statistics for posterity. For 24 centuries his statistics were repeated as fact millions of times over.

Now the truth is out—no slaves, no 20 years and no 100,000 workers. Herodotus swung three times and struck out. In recent years new ways have been found to get at the facts of pyramid construction such as studying the remains of villages where the pyramid workers lived. An architectural firm that provides project management services for massive projects around the globe worked with archaeologists to research the issue. Their findings were published in the June 1999 issue of *Civil Engineering Magazine* under the title *Program Management B.C.*⁴⁶

Working closely with leading Egyptologists in both Egypt and the United States, the team concluded that a paid full-time work force of 14,000 completed the Great Pyramid in under ten years. Five thousand of these were highly skilled—miners who extracted stones from quarries; stone cutters who shaped each block on site; masons who prepared the mortar; carpenters who built the transport sledges and other tools; scribes who recorded everything; soldiers who organized and supervised the work force; and most importantly, the officials and planners who brought the largest structure ever made by man within one tenth of a degree of true north—three years to prepare the site, five years for construction and two years for the finishing touches.

Assisting the full-time professionals, skilled craftsmen and general labor force were the 26,000 seasonal workers who transported the two and a half ton stones from the nearby quarries to the

⁴⁶ Craig B. Smith, "Program Management B.C.," *Civil Engineering Magazine*, June, 1999: 10 pages. <http://www.ekt.bme.hu/CM-BSC-MS/ProgramManagementBC.pdf>.

site and then moved them up to their place in the pyramid. Debate surrounds these temporary laborers. Pharaoh was believed to be a god and, therefore, all his subjects would benefit from his successful advance into the afterlife. On the other hand were tax levies. Farmers idled by the annual inundation of the Nile provided a large labor force. Regardless of how willingly they worked on the pyramid, they were well cared for by ancient standards. Regulations have been found covering the maximum amount of work allowed per day, the wages received and holidays each worker was entitled to. They were well fed. Their rations included two jugs of beer a day. Animal bones in garbage dumps brought the calculation of 4000 pounds of fresh meat provided daily. They probably ate better for this short time than during the entire rest of the year.

A recent movie used a half-mile ramp on which to move the huge stones up into place. It's a good thing Hollywood was not in charge of the project because their method would have taken more material for the ramp than for the pyramid! Archaeologists discovered remarkable efficiencies—the ramps would have been a part of the pyramid itself—switchbacks or spirals up the sides. Rather than using the huge labor-intensive stones to fill the pyramids, less expensive methods were employed. One was forming chambers inside the pyramid and filling them with sand. Another was building the pyramid on a rock outcropping. A third was filling the interior with mud brick. These earlier pyramids received more care than later pyramids which were smaller, less well built and often hastily constructed.

As to Herodotus, modern historians are remarkably forgiving, explaining that it shouldn't be surprising that he got it wrong because by the time he visited the site the structure was already twenty centuries old and much of the truth about it was shrouded in the mists of history, concluding, "Indeed, many of the stories Herodotus relates to us are probably false!"⁴⁷ Of how many ancient authorities whom Ussher consulted could this be said?

This obvious historical blunder, while totally secular in nature and unrelated to the Bible, has an application to our subject, Ussher's 2348 BC Flood date. Clearly it is a matter of sheer faith to claim that Ussher had better sources than are available today. Herodotus' blunder, repeated for over 2000 years, advises us to take Ussher's writings with caution. It also has a second application, one to do with early post-Flood populations which will be addressed in a later chapter.

2. Deficient Text of Exodus 12:40

Biblical scholars of the past failed to recognize the many missing generations between Amram and Aaron partly because of a deficiency in the Masoretic Text of Exodus 12:40. This error in the transmission of the text allowed the view that 430-years elapsed from Abraham's arrival in Canaan until the Exodus and that Israel was in Egypt only 215-years. Ussher was a victim of his times and perpetuated that mistake in his chronology. Two centuries later Keil and Delitzsch could write that hardly an eminent Hebraist remains that still holds to the wrong text of Exodus 12:40.

Nearly 150 years since Keil and Delitzsch issued their commentary on Exodus, devout Christians are still writing books stating that the deficiency in the text of Exodus 12:40 is the correct translation. They stand with the KJV which reads "Now the sojourn of the sons of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years" (KJV). Because this translation says that the sons of Israel sojourned 430-years, not that they sojourned in Egypt 430-years, they argue that the location

⁴⁷ "Khufu's Great Pyramid." www.unmuseum.org/kpyramid.htm.

of the sojourn was Canaan as well as Egypt. From this incorrect rendering they spin an entire web of misinterpretations to conclude that the Flood happened in 2348 BC or so. It took about twenty errors to end up with that conclusion and that is why this book is so long. Each error is a battle in this web of errors leading to that faulty date.

The correct text should read something like the ESV: “The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years” (Exodus 12:40). Hundreds of English translations read this way. Obviously, this reading leaves no room for ambiguity. As to how this affects our subject, once the text of Exodus 12:40 was clarified all could see that more generations than Kohath’s and Amram’s stood between Levi and Aaron. With this, biblical scholars recognized the practice of abbreviating Hebrew genealogies.

Some might be shocked, thinking that we are criticizing the Bible. This historical error and the next two pertain to the transmission of Scripture, not the writing of Scripture. The doctrine of inerrancy pertains only to the original authors who were enabled by the Holy Spirit to be without error in what they wrote. Through the ages the Scriptures have been copied by generation after generation of scribes, mostly as faithfully as possible. But scribal errors as well as deliberate changes, which will be seen next, entered the original writings on occasion to produce the incorrect views and interpretations we address. Nevertheless, the standard Bible translations through the ages have always been adequate enough to lead people to Christ and teach them how to live a godly life.

3. Addition of “and in the land of Canaan” in the LXX

Due to the above early corruption of the text of Exodus 12:40, it is not surprising that “and in the land of Canaan” was added to the LXX so that the 430-year sojourn would clearly span both the time in Egypt and the time in Canaan. Below is an example of how a verse in the LXX OT went through two languages to get to English. First the Hebrew text is reproduced. Next, the Hebrew was translated into the Koine Greek to produce the Septuagint (LXX) about 250 BC. Then the Greek LXX was translated into English in modern times. Much earlier many other translations of the LXX were made like the Latin translation which Ussher used.

. Here is how the LXX reads to this day (underlining ours):

The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt and Canaan was 430-years. (English translation of the LXX.)

E de katoikEsis tOn uiOn IsraEl, En katipskEsan en gE AiguptO kai en gE Canaan, etE tetrakosia triakonta. Exodus 12:40. (LXX translation from Hebrew.)

Ἡ δέ κατοίκησις των υιών Ισραηλ, ἦν κατώκησαν ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῇ Χανααν, ἐτή τετρακόσια τριάκοντα, (LXX translation-Greek letters with some pointing missing)

The words “and in the land of Canaan” were added at some unknown point. The phrase was either in the version of the Hebrew text used for the LXX or was added at the time that Hebrew text was translated into Greek. Since the Hebrew Masoretic Text of Exodus 12:40 bore its own corruption in Ussher’s day, it more likely existed before the LXX was translated. Thus, it was a stumbling block from before 250 BC until modern scholars were finally able to get to the bottom of the corruption and establish the correct text within the guidelines of modern scholarship.

So whether the Church Fathers were using the LXX which included “and in the land of Canaan” or the Masoretic Text with its textual deficiency, the result was the same: Israel was in Egypt 215-years, not 430-years; the Levi genealogy of Exodus six was complete; Hebrew genealogies do not contain gaps; the Flood happened about 2348 BC. Between the corruption of Exodus 12:40 in the Masoretic Text which would have occurred before 250 BC and this deliberate addition in the LXX, the belief that Hebrew genealogies were complete prevailed and continue to be an article of faith to many in the creation movement today. By believing that the total time in Canaan and Egypt was 430-years, the very words of God in Genesis 15 and Stephen in Acts 7 plus numerous events in the lives of Abraham and Jacob had to be interpreted in unusual ways.

Further, these errors led to the misidentification of Abraham’s birth country. As a result, most everyone located Abraham’s birth place, Ur of the Chaldees, somewhere near Haran in north western Mesopotamia—the LXX, Josephus, the Church Fathers, even the so-called prophets Muhammad and Joseph Smith. Then came discoveries at an Ur 700 miles to the southeast in Babylonia. Here was a city “worthy of Abraham” wrote archaeologist Leonard Woolley. Most concluded this really was the country God asked him to leave. More recently scholars have had second thoughts. Claus Westermann sums up the case: “[In the Bible] there is not a trace of any connection with Ur in the south; there is only the name.”⁴⁸

Of course our interest is what the Bible says, which is considerably more than Westermann acknowledges. Like the controversy over the correct OT text in chapter eight, this issue is not easily settled but we would concur with Alan R. Millard who wrote “The case for identifying [Abraham’s home town] with...southern Babylonia remains strong, although the available information precludes certainty.”⁴⁹

4. The Mislocation of Ur

The call of God to Abraham (originally Abram) contained four elements. God said to “**Go from your country** [1-Abram must leave his country, the land he lived in, behind], **and your kindred** [2-he must leave his relatives behind] **and your father’s house** [3-he must leave his immediate family behind] **to the land that I will show you** [4-destination not disclosed; divine leading required].” Genesis 12:1. Four times the Old Testament names Ur of the Chaldees in speaking of this country Abraham was to leave:

Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. Genesis 11:28.

Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. Genesis 11:31.

And he [the LORD] said to him [Abram], “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” Genesis 15:7.

⁴⁸ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 139.

⁴⁹ Alan R. Millard, “Where Was Abraham’s Ur? The Case for the Babylonian City,” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 27:3 May/June 2001: 52.

You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. Nehemiah 9:7. (Emphasis ours.)

Of the three Genesis passages only the words of God in Genesis 15:7 specifically states that Abraham was brought out from Ur of the Chaldees. The Nehemiah verse merely quotes Genesis 15:7 and contains no new information. Genesis 11:28 says that Abraham's brother, Haran, died in Ur of the Chaldees which was the land of his kindred. Since Abraham was one of his kindred, it would also be Abraham's land. In a similar fashion Genesis 11:31 speaks of Terah taking his family including Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan. So in a roundabout way four verses do state or imply that Abraham's country was Ur of the Chaldees. (The ESV renders "Chaldees" "Chaldeans.")

Now for the historical blunder. The Septuagint (LXX) changed "Ur of the Chaldees" to "land of the Chaldees" in all four passages. This substitution is repeated in the Samaritan Pentateuch. The well-established history of the Chaldeans exposes this to be an error. Thousands upon thousands of cuneiform documents have been discovered in Mesopotamia, mostly in the last 100 years. Only in modern times have scholars learned to decipher them. Important here is the general record of Chaldean migration. Documents place them in Northern Mesopotamia in the second and third millennia BC. Not until after 1000 BC did they come to be a dominant people group in Southern Mesopotamia.

The Ur of Southern Mesopotamia also has a documented history, in its case going back before 3000 BC. Some claim it may have been the first city in the world. By 2800 BC it had a centralized government. By about 2100 BC, for a brief time, it was the wealthiest and most powerful city-state in Mesopotamia. Its location on the Euphrates River close to the head of the Persian Gulf accounted for its great wealth as it conducted trading from India to East Africa and controlled shipping entering the Euphrates. Semitic peoples added to its Sumerian population during its growth years. Thus, the Semitic origin of Terah and his relatives fit this country's population profile. But erosion from the Tigris and Euphrates moved the mouth of the Gulf further and further to the east. As Ur's prime location slipped away, so did its key to prosperity. Its population declined. Then the Euphrates shifted course and every direction from Ur turned to desert. Today the ruins of Ur are in a vast desert plain 140 miles from the Persian Gulf.

Meanwhile many other locations in Mesopotamia adopted the name "Ur" or something close—Ura, Ure, Uri and Uri'm, etc., etc. Finally, there was a day around 400 BC when the original Ur was abandoned. By the time of the LXX, the location of Abraham's Ur was forgotten but the history of the Chaldeans was known. It was common knowledge that back in Abraham's day the Chaldeans dwelt in Northern Mesopotamia. So those producing or responsible for the LXX changed "Ur of the Chaldees" to "Land of the Chaldees" thinking "land of the Chaldeans" would be clearer than "Ur of the Chaldeans. Thus, readers would look for an Ur where the Chaldeans lived in the days of Abraham—in Northern Mesopotamia. Scholars then looked at the many Ur's available and decided it should be one around Haran (today spelled Harran) since Abraham's party settled in Haran on their way to Canaan.

Sanliurfa Turkey, today called the City of Abraham, was the most popular choice. Josephus preferred that site. A travel blog states "In everyday conversations, Sanliurfa is shortened to Urfa. The extension of the name happened in 1984 to recognize the part Sanliurfa played in the Turkish war of independence [1919-1923]. 'Sanli' means glorious...it is popular with Muslims because the

town is thought to be the birthplace of the prophet Abraham.”⁵⁰ Muhammad incorporated that identification into the Koran along with stories of specific things that happened to Abraham in Urfa. So the entire Muslim population of the world is more or less duty bound to support this location as the city where Abraham was born. Sanliurfa is a mere 23 air miles northwest of Harran (the modern spelling for the biblical “Haran”).

This historical inaccuracy also tripped up self-declared prophet Joseph Smith. He saw Egyptian manuscripts which he said were written by Abraham and Joseph. He translated these hieroglyphics and called the one with Abraham’s writings *The Book of Abraham* which was later designated by his Church as Scripture. In it are extremely unbiblical ideas such as numerous references to the “gods,” creation of the universe from previously existing material and that after sacrificing five virgins one of the Egyptian priests tried to make Abraham a human sacrifice but that an angel delivered him. This was said to have happened in Urfa, Abraham’s birth place and home town so he fled to nearby Haran. Smith’s manuscripts disappeared for 100 years then fragments were found and positively identified. Both Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists examined them. They were first century funerary texts and had nothing to do with Abraham.

Mormon apologists continue to defend the idea that Abraham’s Ur of the Chaldees was none other than Urfa as the histories of Smith’s day taught. After all, a true prophet couldn’t be wrong. Brigham Young University apologist Paul Hoskisson presents an impressive case for Urfa being the correct location for Abraham’s Ur of the Chaldees.⁵¹

Modern Harran lies in the middle of a large, fertile plain divided up into visible fields of green crops as seen in Google Maps. It has a population of 10,000 while the Harran district numbers 87,000. Sanliurfa has a population exceeding two million and is located on the northwest rim of the Turkish Harran District plain. The driving distance from Harran to Sanliurfa is 30 miles by the main highways none of which are direct. Today no visible physical obstacle would prevent Abraham from travelling directly from Sanliurfa (Ur) to Harran (Haran), but the topography may have changed greatly over the last 4000 years.

One obvious difficulty with this location for Abraham’s Ur is that it did not receive the name Urfa until Turkish times. The Greeks called it Odessa while Syriac Christian literature called it Orhai. Another difficulty is the disproportionate distance between Sanliurfa and Haran (25 miles) and the distance between Haran and Shechem Canaan where Abraham journeyed next (560 miles). It seems unproportionate for the first stage of the journey to be a mere 1/22th of the distance of the second stage. Strange, for sure. But if the first half of the journey began at the southern Ur which is 700 miles from Haran, that would be proportional (700 for the first stage of the journey and 560 for the second stage). But these difficulties have not stopped those who oppose the southern location. Nevertheless, this author cannot find any reason to support Odessa/Urfa/Sanliurfa as Abraham’s city of birth.

⁵⁰ Natalie (a freelance travel blogger), “Sanliurfa (Urfa): The City of Abraham in Turkey.” <https://turkishtravelblog.com/sanliurfa-urfa-city-of-abraham/>

⁵¹ Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Chapter 7: Where Was Ur of the Chaldees?” H. Donl Peterson and Charles D. Tate Jr. *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989): 119–36. <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/pearl-great-price-revelations-god/where-was-ur-chaldees>.

So, what difference does it make, whether Abraham's country was a northern Mesopotamian area like Sanliurfa or the southern Mesopotamian city-state of Ur? It has to do with the purpose of God, all God said He would do through Abraham in the original call. It is hard to see how that purpose could be realized if Abraham moved just 25 or 30 miles from his homeland, kindred and relatives where those idolatrous influences prevailed.

Abraham did not reach Canaan until he was 75 years old. Those years were divided between Ur and Haran. We spent much of chapter three visualizing those years, first 55-60 years in Ur, then the next 15-20 years in Haran. Within that time period was his first experience of daily dependence on God as he followed God's leading for the 700 miles from Ur to Haran. Then in Haran he began learning about the true God. Hebrews says he journeyed to Canaan by faith (Hebrews 11:8-10). That faith in the true God was established in Haran. There he began building altars as demonstrated by his building two altars immediately upon arriving in Canaan. There he won over his father's house or at least a substantial portion of it to the true God. There he trained 318 born in his own house to be as skillful as any soldier in the army of Ur.

Since God was going to make of Abraham a people for Himself, Abraham could not reach Canaan until his father was out of the picture. Hence God kept the Abraham travelers far away from the destination until Terah died. Further, Abraham could not begin building the strongest possible relationship with God until he was totally away from the influences of Ur that continued from his birth until the move to Haran. Seven hundred miles did the trick. Then when his father died Abraham was prepared. God renewed the call and Abraham immediately followed Him from Haran to Canaan. The biblical evidence is convincing, that the location of the city of Ur, which Abraham left, was located in southern Mesopotamia, many miles distant from Haran or Urfa.

But even before the change in the LXX, there was an earlier change in the Hebrew text. Merrill F. Unger believes that the original text, the only inspired text, simply read "Ur" and nothing more. Then it was changed by later scribes to "Ur of the Chaldees" as Chaldeans came to settle in and control southern Mesopotamia. Nebuchadnezzar was a Chaldean. So, to point to the right Ur, scribes changed the text in all four places. But Middle East scholars correctly observe that never, in any cuneiform document discovered to date is "Ur of the Chaldees" mentioned. Never. If Moses were using materials from Abraham or his son Isaac or grandson Jacob, those people would have been filled with stories of the glory of the Babylonian Ur and the word "Ur" would be sufficient in their thinking to identify Abraham's home country. Here is how Unger explains this first change of the original text:

It was [not an anachronism, as many critics contend, but was] rather an instance of numerous archaic place names being defined by a later scribal gloss to make clear to a subsequent age where and what these places were when their history and locality had been forgotten.⁵²

When might this scribal gloss have happened? Most likely it happened as the Southern Kingdom of Judah got more and more into idolatry and its history became more and more confused. It could have happened any time in the 300 years preceding the end of the Babylonian Captivity. This was over a millennium before the tradition of the care given the text by the Masoretic scribes.

We started off with the change made in the LXX. But, as just shown, we believe the text was changed twice, first as Unger explains, then as we recounted, after the demise of Sumerian Ur. But

⁵² Unger, *Dictionary*, 1127.

even further, we came across seven so-called biblical arguments (and undoubtedly there are more) plus non-biblical arguments from modern scholars to support the Ur near Haran and now these must be addressed.

Arguments against a Southern Ur

In defending the southern Ur Millard lists five arguments given against it and answers each.⁵³ First, “it is said that the southern Ur is too far from Haran.” Millard argues that merchants and others routinely traveled long distances, that they were using major trade routes and gives illustrations. We think the biblical answer is that God was using this long distance to help Abraham learn to follow Him day by day and to get the party so far from Ur that it could no longer be an influence on them. Moving from Urfa to Haran, a distance of 25 miles, hardly accomplished God’s specific command for Abraham to leave his country. Urfa and Haran were all part of the same neck of the woods.

Secondly, they dismissively note the route from southern Ur to Canaan via Haran is quite roundabout. Cyrus Gordon states this objection more bluntly: he refers to Genesis 11:31 which says they went out from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan and then reasons “by no stretch of the imagination would anyone go from Sumerian Ur (in southern Mesopotamia) to Canaan via Haran. A glance at the map shows that Haran is much too far out of the way.”⁵⁴ The most obvious problem here is the view that Terah knew before leaving Ur that the destination was Canaan. Such thinking completely disregards the clear words of Scripture that Abraham was to leave Ur and follow God’s direction. He had no idea where God was leading him or where the destination was. Hebrews says it even more clearly: “And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8).

Third, Millard addresses the argument that Abraham’s nomadic lifestyle is inconsistent with the urban setting of the southern Ur. Abraham had certainly enjoyed all the comforts of Ur. Millard then gives many sound answers, mostly centered around Abraham’s new purpose in life. The bottom line is that Abraham looked for a better city, one whose builder and maker was God (Hebrews 11:10).

Fourth, arguments from the phrase “beyond the river” or “crossing the river.” It is true that if one journeyed directly from Ur to Canaan, one would not cross the Euphrates River. In chapter three we explained that the saying of crossing the river was like waving one’s arm to indicate a great distance. By following the leading of God, Abraham did cross the river, in fact he crossed it twice—first to journey to Haran and then to journey from Haran to Canaan. The statement is an expression for a great distance. Millard says “For anyone living in the Levant, Babylonian Ur would have lain conceptually ‘beyond the river,’ whatever the precise geography.”

Fifth, the Sumerian Ur is never called “Ur of the Chaldees” in any of the numerous references to Ur in the cuneiform tablets. We answered this objection above.

⁵³ Millard, “Where Was Abraham’s Ur?” 53.

⁵⁴ Cyrus H. Gordon, “Where is Abraham’s Ur?” *BAR* 3:2 (June 1977), 21.
<https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/3/2/5>.

Sixth, a more serious objection not directly listed by Millard but advanced by Cyrus Gordon is that “Genesis 24:4, Genesis 24:7, Genesis 24:10 and Genesis 24:29 tell us that Abraham’s birthplace was in Aram-Naharayim where Laban lived.”⁵⁵ This is completely untrue. Rather than Abraham telling his servant to go to his “birthplace” to find a bride for Isaac, Abraham tells him to “go to my country and to my kindred” (Genesis 24:4). In 24:7 Abraham continues with “The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you.” Then in 24:10 “[The servant] arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.” In 24:27 “the LORD has led me to the house of my master’s kinsmen.” In 24:40 “[My master had said] you shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house.” Nowhere does the word “birthplace” or similar word appear. Gordon has overstated his case.

Nevertheless, there are words in the passage that need clarifying. When the original call came, Abraham did leave his country (Ur) and kindred (relatives). But his father refused for his household to be separated and in effect he and his household accompanied Abraham on the journey to the land of promise. When the leading of God stopped, the party looked for a place to live. Haran was nearby. It was particularly promising because it bore the name of Terah’s oldest son who had died in Ur. We suggested in chapter three that Terah had some earlier connection with this major trading center, possibly getting his start there and to commemorate the wealth he had gained there, he named his first son after it.

Now, a century later as Terah accompanied his son Abraham who was born when he was 130, he found himself in the vicinity of Haran. He had to make a home somewhere. He chose Haran. There they lived for the next 15-20 years. At some point Abraham’s brother Nahor moved to that general area with his 12 sons. Then another century passed. Terah had died long before in Haran and now Abraham himself was 140 years old. He had lived in Canaan for 65 years after living in Haran for 15-20 years. His brother Nahor was a grandfather and the scion of a large clan in the Haran area. The southern Ur had ceased to be Abraham’s country nearly a century before. So, in sending his servant to find a bride for Isaac, he refers to the area around Haran as his country and certainly that is where the remainder of his fathers’ house was and where his brother Nahor had moved to.

So the references in Genesis 24 in no way declare Abraham was born in the Haran area but they do recognize that he had moved from Ur to a new country and his kindred came to settle there. Those who make this mistake, for the most part, even wonder if Abraham was a real historical person and therefore have little confidence of the details of his life provided in Scripture. So Genesis 24 is not evidence for Abraham being born in a northern Ur. Gordon’s assertion that “the Biblical evidence is by itself conclusive in placing Ur of the Chaldees in the Urfa-Haran region of south central Turkey, near the Syrian border, rather than in southern Mesopotamia where it is located on so many ‘Biblical’ maps”⁵⁶ cannot possibly be conclusive since his only evidence from the Bible is the distortion of the biblical reports.

Seventh, the order of events in Genesis supports the northern Ur. Genesis 12 comes after Genesis 11 that reports the move to Haran. So the call came after the move. We answered this

⁵⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 20.

argument in chapter three as well. It can be summarized as follows: often Scripture finishes one subject before beginning another, especially in Genesis. The fact that the call is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 does not mean that it came after the events of chapter 11. Rather, the Abraham section of Genesis begins with the call because the call is the very reason for the thirteen-chapter section on Abraham beginning with Genesis 12:1.

Eighth, Woolley's "glamorous/spectacular" finds in southern Ur swayed public opinion. Granted. His successful excavations certainly pushed thinking in the direction of his Ur. But this does not deny the biblical support that we have offered for it being the true location of Ur.

Biblical Arguments for a Southern Ur Overlooked by Scholars

Now we must offer a final support from Scripture, one that does not even appear in the scholarly articles so far examined. Stephen says Abraham moved to Canaan after his father died (Acts 7:4). Those who adamantly declare that Levi's genealogy in Exodus six is complete are forced to say the record correctly reports what Stephen said, but he was confused and misspoke. They are defending a 215-year sojourn in Egypt. A 430-year sojourn in Egypt means that Levi's genealogy in Exodus six is incomplete.

While this interpretative device (that Scripture correctly reports people's verbal errors) is sometimes needed, much other evidence must exist to require its use. No such compelling evidence can be found except the many incorrect interpretations that require this one for the sake of consistency. To the contrary Scripture says Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5) and it speaks of his wisdom (Acts 6:10). His words must be accepted as inerrant and consistent with what the Old Testament says.

Leaving Haran after his father died at the age of 205 also means Abraham was not the oldest son of Terah. Terah began fathering sons at the age of 70 but Abraham was not born until he was 130. This fact also is rejected by Ussher supporters. Stephen cites God in saying that Abraham's offspring would be afflicted in a land belonging to others which is also incorrectly interpreted to mean in Canaan as well as Egypt by the Ussher view even though God promised Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

But Stephen's belief in a southern Ur is seen in his clear distinction between Abraham's original country and living in Haran. Acts 7:2-4 records him beginning his comments with ²"The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ³'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.'⁴Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran." Stephen clearly says that God appeared to Abraham when he lived in Mesopotamia and told him to leave that country. Later Stephen calls it "the land of the Chaldeans" (7:3). Then Stephen says Abraham did as God directed and lived in Haran.

So in Stephen's mind Haran was outside the country Abraham left. Mesopotamia was a vast area, so in journeying to Haran Abraham would have to travel a vast distance to leave this vast country. The idea that Abraham traveled 25-30 miles from Urfa to Haran in obedience to God violently conflicts with what Scripture actually says.

In spite of the two changes to the text, Stephen still had the right concept. Abraham left his country of birth for an entirely new country that eventually became "his" country and, after his

father died, God's leading reappeared and Abraham took the vast wealth that he had inherited from his father to Canaan.

While the location of Ur was lost for centuries of history, Christians today need to focus on the fact that this portion of Scripture now makes sense. Consequently, knowing the right location of Ur helps correct interpretative errors in the life of Abraham. In the same way the growing body of accurate information related to the Old Testament helps us to see the abbreviating of Shem's genealogy and solving the strange situation of two brothers separated by many generations, examined in the preceding chapter.

Chapter Fifteen

Interpretative Errors Supporting Ussher View

Those who hold a late date for the Flood misinterpret numerous verses to support their view. For convenience and quick reference this brief chapter collects them in one place. Only the error and correct view is stated. While multiple chapters may discuss some, an effort has been made to organize them according to the chapter that discusses each error the most. See the chapter for a full explanation. No single writer embraces all of these misinterpretations. Rather, they are found throughout creationist literature. But generally, the most errors come with the most dogmatic incorrect positions. While not exhaustive this list covers the significant misinterpretations we have found.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapters 1-2 (Levi Genealogy; Four Witnesses)

1. **Error:** Levi's genealogy in Exodus 6 and Numbers 27 (Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron) is complete.

Correction: 8-12 generations are omitted between the third and fourth names, i.e., between Amram and Aaron.

2. **Error:** Israel sojourned in Egypt 215-years.

Correction: four witnesses testify to a 430-year Egyptian sojourn—God, Moses, Stephen and Paul.

3. **Error:** The Apostle Paul testifies to a 215-year Egyptian sojourn in Galatians three and he is the most important writer in Scripture. There may be uncertainty about what the other writers meant but Paul is clear.

Correction: the first witness to 430-years in Egypt is God himself, the giver of all Scripture. What the Apostle Paul said can be interpreted to agree or disagree with God's words in Genesis 15.

4. **Error:** The 400 years of affliction and servitude of Genesis 15:13 included Abraham as well as his descendants.

Correction: God assured Abraham "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age" (Genesis 15:15).

5. **Error:** The affliction of Genesis 15:13 was as mild as Abraham's and Isaac's friction with the Canaanites or the mocking of Ishmael at the time of Isaac's weaning.

Correction: God revealed a far more severe affliction. It began with a "dreadful and great darkness" falling on Abraham. This nightmare conveyed the real character of the 400 years of racial prejudice and exploitation to be endured by his descendants in a foreign land.

6. **Error:** Israel returned to Canaan in the fourth generation as God said (Genesis 15:16). The four generations may have begun with Levi or Kohath or maybe they were just four generations in general.

Correction: No four-generation scheme works. Here "generation" would be referring to lifetimes, i.e., in four lifetimes Israel would return to Canaan.

7. **Error:** The King James Version of Exodus 12:40 allows for a 430-year sojourn in Egypt and Canaan while the Septuagint states it.

Correction: The correct text of Exodus 12:40 was uncertain until recent times. Now it reads, "The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years."

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapter 3 (Abraham)

1. **Error:** Abraham was the oldest of Terah's three sons.

Correction: Terah fathered his first son at the age of 70; Abraham was born when he was 130.

2. **Error:** In Acts 7 Stephen faced a hostile crowd. Maybe he was rattled or had a memory lapse but his words about Abraham are incorrect.

Correction: Stephen was "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:55). He spoke with "wisdom and the Spirit" (Acts 6:10). He affirmed that God's call came in Mesopotamia, that Abraham moved to Haran, that after his father died, God led him to Canaan and stated that God's 400 years of enslavement and affliction would take place in a land belonging to others.

3. **Error:** Abraham's country was Urfa or some other Northern Mesopotamia place near Haran.

Correction: Abraham's home country was 700 miles SE of Haran, a place called Ur.

4. **Error:** God's call came to Abraham after his father died and he immediately followed God to Canaan.

Correction: God's call came when his family lived in the Southern Mesopotamian city-state of Ur.

5. **Error:** Lot was Abraham's young nephew.

Correction: More likely Lot was senior to Abraham.

6. **Error:** In Acts 7:4 Stephen is saying that 60 years after Abraham arrived in Canaan his father died. He returned to Haran and brought his father's body to Canaan for burial.

Correction: When Abraham's father died, God led him to Canaan.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapter 4 (Jacob)

1. **Error:** Jacob was a wimp, a mama's boy and basically dishonest.

Correction: This line of thinking derails a true understanding of Jacob's many fine qualities and adds to the confusion that results in support for a 215-year Egyptian sojourn. Jacob submitted to the daily routine of successful ranching while his twin brother preferred the excitement of the hunt. Jacob showed faith in God's promises while his brother took them lightly. Jacob continued to grow in faith through the years and God richly rewarded him.

2. **Error:** Jacob received his two wives at the beginning of the 20-year stay with his father-in-law.

Correction: Jacob served Laban seven years before receiving not one but both of Laban's daughters in marriage.

3. **Error:** Jacob's 11 sons were born in the order listed.

Correction: Since these children were born in a ten-year period, as many as three mothers were pregnant at the same time. So the writer listed them by mother in two groups, before and after the resting period of Leah.

4. **Error:** After a 20-year association with Laban Jacob without even saying goodbye sneakily fled his father-in-law's ranch with his family and possessions.

Correction: God told Jacob to return to Canaan. Jacob knew Laban would never let him go with his wives and children because in Laban's mind they belonged to Laban, not Jacob. So Jacob had to flee when the opportunity was most favorable. Jacob exercised good, not bad judgment by obeying God.

5. **Error:** The work contract between Laban and Jacob in Genesis 30:31-34 marked the beginning of Jacob's final six years with Laban.

Correction: Laban frequently changed his contract with Jacob and the one that is recorded came just over three years before Jacob left Laban.

6. **Error:** Dinah, Simeon and Levi all had to be older than they would have been if Jacob served Laban seven years before receiving his wives.

Correction: Dinah was raped when she was about 15 while Simeon and Levi were about 22 and 21 when they massacred the men of Shechem.

7. **Error:** Rachel died in childbirth before the years in Shechem rather than after them.

Correction: After leaving Shechem Jacob's party worshipped at Bethel and settled there as God commanded. When they set out to rejoin Isaac at Mamre, Rachel died near Bethlehem while giving birth to Benjamin.

8. **Error:** When Jacob moved his family to Egypt, Benjamin had 12 living sons according to Genesis 46:21

Correction: Jacob's list included both those alive as well as those still in the womb when his family moved to Egypt.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapters 5-6 (Flexibility of Family Terms; Condensed Lists)

1. **Error:** Hebrew kinship terms express only immediate relationships.

Correction: All of the common Hebrew kinship terms are used with great flexibility. Such terms as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister and even the verb, to beget/to bear are used in both immediate and broad senses. Chapter five gives dozens of examples.

2. **Error:** Hebrew genealogies are complete.

Correction: At times they are condensed. The most obvious example is that of Ezra. He lists his own genealogy in Ezra 7:1-5 but leaves out six names in a row that are found in I Chronicles 6:7-9.

3. **Error:** The same ten names of David's genealogy beginning with Perez found in Ruth 4:18-22 and three other places is complete.

Correction: The list gives three consecutive names at the beginning of the time in Egypt, three more consecutive names at the time of the Exodus 430-years later and the three

consecutive names leading up to David some 400 years after that. About 20 names are omitted so only about one third of them are recorded.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapters 7-8 (Shem's Genealogy; LXX or MT)

1. **Error:** Shem's genealogy is complete.
Correction: It omits generations, especially between Eber and Peleg (from 35 to 55).
2. **Error:** The numbers in Shem's and Adam's genealogies provide a biblical timeline of history.
Correction: Scripture does not label them as such, nor does it say or even hint that they should be used for that reason. Of note, the Levi-Aaron list provides a clear pattern for how to understand factual information about the father before omitted generations.
3. **Error:** There is no large decrease in human longevity from before to after the Flood.
Correction: Those who lived and died before the Flood lived about 900 years, while the first three generations born after the Flood lived only half that long, about 450 years.
4. **Error:** Noah and Shem outlived many named generations born after them.
Correction: The 1300-1900 gap between Eber and Peleg means both Noah and Shem were dead long before Peleg was born.
5. **Error:** The Septuagint has the correct numbers for Adam's and Shem's lists. Further, the LXX contains the correct OT text.
Correction: The numbers in the Septuagint show deliberate manipulation. They are artificial and thus disqualified from consideration. Find 12 other reasons for the MT numbers being the correct numbers and the MT being the correct OT text (pp 135-137).
6. **Error:** The authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) were Essenes, heretics who mixed Judaism with ideas from Eastern Religions. Christ may have gotten his ideas from them.
Correction: These ideas made famous by sensationalists are patently untrue. The 900+ DSS never mention the Essenes. A list of differences separates the Qumranians and the Essenes.
7. **Error:** The DSS tell us nothing about which OT text is the correct one.
Correction: The DSS are one of the strongest arguments for the Masoretic text being the true Old Testament.
8. **Error:** The Hebrew verb "yalad" used 55 times in the lists of Adam and Shem can be translated "he had" or "he brought forth to birth."
Correction: The verb is in the hiphil stem which indicates causative action. The father's action (contributed to) causing the birth of all after him so any of his descendants could be named next while the years indicate when his immediate son was born.
9. **Error:** The Jews extensively changed their OT text after 70 AD.
Correction: The DSS show that they faithfully copied their OT text.
10. **Error:** The biblical Flood was a local event.
Correction: 80-90 times Scripture uses global language for the Flood. Nine unique features separate this flood from all other floods.

11. **Error:** The days of creation were long periods of time. God's seventh day rest continues.

Correction: Each day of creation week was a normal day. God distinguished the seventh day from the first six. It stands as a memorial to creation week.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapter 9-11 (Job)

1. **Error:** Job was a descendant of Arpachshad, Shem's first son and heir.

Correction: Job most likely descended from Shem's fifth son, Uz, since Job owned much land in Uz and a man named Uz received the land of Uz long before when the land was divided.

2. **Error:** If the doubling (42:10, 12) includes Job's years, he lived 210 years (70+140=210).

Correction: The doubling of Job's years was like the doubling of his children (10 before and 10 after). Thus, Job lived 140 years before and 140 years after his trial, a total of 280 years.

3. **Error:** Job lived between the time of Abraham and David (2100-1100 BC).

Correction: Job was born about 500 years before Abraham since his lifespan was 280 years and longevity declined 2-8 years per generation after the Flood until Moses.

4. **Error:** The purpose of the book is to explain the problem of human suffering.

Correction: The suffering of Job was permitted by God to reveal the true source of all suffering, Satan, at the earliest time. Job precedes all of the OT except Genesis 1-11.

5. **Error:** God told Job to look at Behemoth who was either mythical, or an elephant or hippo.

Correction: Behemoth was a long-necked, long-tailed dinosaur whom Job watched in the Jordan Valley long before the dinosaurs were driven out and Sodom developed there.

6. **Error:** The creature God concluded His words to Job with (Leviathan) (Job 41) was either a whale or sea crocodile.

Correction: Leviathan, the only animal specifically named in the creation account of Genesis 1 (1:21) explains Job's suffering. He was a dreadful sea monster, a serpent, created by God to represent Satan and the vicious harm he attempts to inflict on mankind.

7. **Error:** Angels were created on day one of creation week (Job 38:7) since Scripture says "God saw all that He had made and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Correction: When God pronounced that all He had made was very good, He was speaking about the physical universe. Angels are spiritual.

8. **Error:** There is no ice age in Job. Cold weather conditions are found throughout the OT.

Correction: Ice age conditions are only now being recognized and the professionals find numerous ice age phenomena in Job, such as frequent drenching rain, thunder and lightning.

9. **Error:** Peleg's name means "divided" and refers to the division of the human race into languages shortly before Peleg's birth. Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood.

Correction: More specifically, Peleg's name means "to divide by water" and is used that way in many languages. He apparently received this name when the Ice Age was winding down and the melting ice raised sea level to cover the land bridges connecting continents.

Interpretative Errors Identified in Chapter 12-13 (Table of Nations; Errors of History)

1. **Error:** Peleg and Joktan were brothers in the immediate sense that both had the same father.

Correction: They were brothers in the broad sense of both being descendants of Eber. Peleg was born as much as a millennium after Joktan whose descendants populated Arabia.

2. **Error:** The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 is a record of the repopulation of the earth after the Flood.

Correction: The Table of Nations is extremely selective giving only 36 of the estimated 80 sons born in the second generation and just three of the estimated 400 sons born in the third generation. The purpose of this record was to inform Israel about the background of her neighbors.

The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

Witnesses in a court of law take an oath “to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Why? Without the truth a court will most likely render an incorrect verdict. About fifty interpretative errors are listed above and certainly others have been overlooked. In some way each error helps to defend the practice of viewing Shem’s genealogy as a chronology. No wonder when the Flood occurred is such a mystery.

Chapter Sixteen

The Missing World between the Flood and Peleg

Chapters nine through eleven gave numerous reasons for placing Job's entire lifetime before the birth of Peleg—a truth almost universally missed by commentators. The Ussher chronology allows only 101 years for all the events from the Flood to the birth of Peleg. That period actually covered roughly 1300-1900 years by our estimates. The activity during that period was both natural and human—natural: reestablishing the earth's equilibrium; human: repopulating the earth.

Nowhere does Scripture indicate that God miraculously restored the earth to equilibrium once the Ark landed. Rather, Scripture describes events related to the Flood that involved processes. After the Flood, mountains grew, continents continued to move, oceans cooled and the Great Ice Age came and went. Creation scientists are spending lifetimes trying to understand mechanisms involved in the Flood and the processes that followed. These mechanisms took time to run their course, time which is not available in the Ussher scheme.

While Job was born nearly 300 years before Peleg, his country already had a considerable history. All this human history won't fit into 101 years. It took over two millennia for the earth to reach relative equilibrium after the Flood. All this natural history won't fit into Ussher's timeline either. This chapter explores the immense amount of activity that can't possibly be crammed into the 101 years the 4000-year creation to Christ view requires.

Natural Activity Requiring More Time

The Flood began when "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" (Genesis 7:11). This brief notice bundles a plethora of events that God said destroyed the earth (Genesis 9:11). Just what was destroyed? Not the planet; rather its surface on which all life dwells. It took forty days to unleash forces that would ravage the earth for another 110 days and resculpt its surface for centuries.

Hydroplate Theory

Recently three creation scientists with impressive credentials have developed highly attractive theories for what was happening during and/or after the Flood. The first is Walter T. Brown who graduated from West Point, earned a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from MIT and retired from the military in 1980. Since then he has worked on a mechanism he calls the Hydroplate Theory. His theory focuses on the phrase, "All the fountains of the great deep burst forth." His research explores a world of water that he theorizes was trapped in a worldwide series of interconnected, subterranean chambers 10 - 20 miles below the earth's surface. All that water, he says, was equal to half of the water in today's oceans.

The Flood began, Brown explains, when this water which was under enormous pressure broke through the miles of rock above. That initial penetration then spread at miles per second until a 45,000-mile-long crack developed in the earth's crust, blasting great fountains of liquid and rock 20 miles into the sky resulting in massive torrential rainfall. Brown suggests that some of the material even broke free of the earth's gravity and formed asteroids that orbit the sun today.

Those who study the ocean's bottom have discovered an enormous formation they call the mid-ocean ridge. Like the seam of a baseball this mountain chain stretches for 45,000 miles. As possibly

the most impressive formation on the face of the earth (up to two miles high, as much as several hundred miles wide and nearly twice the length of the world's circumference), it demands explanation. Brown says the bursting forth of the fountains of the deep explains it.

In Brown's view when the fountains of the deep shot high into the atmosphere, the water cooled and fell over the Polar Regions as ice. Ice continued to collect and spread until the upper latitudes were buried in what has come to be called the Great Ice Age. He feels that Ussher's date of 2348 BC for the Flood does not allow enough time for this and the many other processes started by the Flood. He has issued ten editions of his book, *In the Beginning*, through the years and hopes to issue one more in his lifetime. Whether he has identified the right mechanism or not, Brown has demonstrated his faith in believing what God has said about the Flood—that it was global and destroyed the earth. The body of Christ owes him its deepest gratitude for his forty some years of research and presentations mostly at his own expense.

Catastrophic Tectonic Plate Theory (CTP)

John Baumgardner has developed a second mechanism for the Flood called the Catastrophic Tectonic Plate Theory (CTP). Like Brown, his credentials are very impressive. He earned a M.S. degree in electrical engineering from Princeton. Later he completed M.S. and Ph.D. programs at UCLA in geophysics and space physics for the specific purpose of trying to find the mechanics behind the Flood. He then worked in the theoretical division of Los Alamos National Laboratory eventually developing a program called Terra which provides 3-D modeling for the earth's mantle.

To cause the Flood Baumgardner theorizes that the entire ocean floor plunged to the bottom of the mantle and was replaced by molten rock rising from the mantle in regional circular movements. In laboratory studies he learned that ocean floor rock which is primarily basaltic continues to grow more dense than continental rock which is primarily granitic. He says the Flood began when somewhere this rock became so much denser where it joined continental rock that it broke free and began plunging below the continental rock in a process called subduction. Heat from rock grinding on rock was sufficient to degrade the strength of the mantle rock below by magnitudes, allowing ocean floor rock to plunge all the way to the bottom of the 1800 mile thick mantle.

This initial point of subduction rapidly widened until the entire ocean floor adjacent to the great single continent was in the process of subduction. As the ocean floor worldwide was dragged to the subduction point, it stretched and then tore apart far from land. This tear would grow to become 45,000 miles long. Molten rock from the mantle poured up into this tear, producing the formation known today as the mid-ocean ridge. This mantle rock then flowed from the ridge behind the heavier subducting old ocean floor follow-the-leader style to become the new, lighter ocean floor. Baumgardner estimates this process ran its course during the first 23 days of the Flood.

Scripture cryptically describes the cause of the Flood in Genesis 7:11: "All the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened." While Scripture does not elaborate and no one knows exactly what this means, "Fountains...burst forth" could refer to the constant explosions of supercritical water as it was forced from molten mantle rock by pressure and heat. The Flood more than doubled surface water on planet earth. Before the Flood mountains and oceans were significantly less pronounced. As both ocean water and this newly released water from molten mantle rock blasted miles into the sky, it cooled and fell as torrential rain described in the phrase "the windows of heaven were opened." Seeing the coming wickedness of man God would have designed the ocean floors with the threshold for failure to come at His appointed time.

Going back a little, the plunging ocean floors also dragged the edge of the great continent down, beginning continental flooding. This process also displaced ocean water, raising sea level and releasing water contained in it. Flow in the mantle caused continental instability and sinking which raised sea level even further. Earthquakes constantly shook the earth and generated mile-high tsunamis that raced across the land depositing layer after layer of sedimentary rock sometimes thousands of miles across, strewn with the carcasses of dead animals some of which became fossilized. Finally, the continent was flooded. Water stood above the highest mountains.

However, by the 150-day mark sea level had dropped sufficiently to ground the Ark. Still, the unpredictability of sudden tsunamis that rolled across the land produced by endless earthquakes from the movement of continents and mantle made it impossible to disembark. It took 370 days from the onset of the Flood until these convulsions decreased to the point where with proper caution it was safe to leave the safety of the Ark. Then as the continents lifted and oceans deepened greatly, the Flood came to an end. The Ark had come to rest on land that would continue to rise until the area became known as the mountains of Ararat. Today's great mountain chains reach up to five miles above sea level. They didn't exist before the Flood when the highest mountains were possibly one or two miles high. They rose as part of the great upheaval during and following the year-long flood.

Dr. Baumgardner says that the Catastrophic Tectonic Plate theory is both scientifically sound and verified by field observation. Baumgardner has surrounded himself with likeminded creationists who continue to develop his theory. Like Brown, Baumgardner continues his research and writing and deserves the gratitude of the Body of Christ for his immense dedication to God who tells us of a worldwide flood in Noah's day.

As stated, God said the Flood destroyed the earth. He was referring to the earth's surface which was drastically altered by processes set in motion by the Flood. The most significant process to change the earth's surface was the breakup of the great single continent into pieces which moved to their present location to form today's continents and large islands. No one knows how long this process lasted, but it could have been centuries before the continents completed most of their journey. At the same time mountains rose, some formed entire mountain chains that reached for the heavens.

The One Great Ice Age

For centuries following the Flood, volcanic activity left a thin layer of ash high in the atmosphere which reduced the amount of the sun's heat reaching the earth's surface. Meanwhile, immense heat from the ocean's floors evaporated massive amounts of water which fell as rain at lower latitudes and as snow at higher latitudes. This combination of heat and cold produced the Great Ice Age. Eventually ocean water would be stored in ice sheets up to two miles thick at the continent's upper latitudes, lowering sea level by hundreds of feet.

The Flood itself retooled the face of the earth with a new landscape. Then mountains rose to give the earth a new topography as vast ice sheets reworked formations produced by the Flood and the continental breakup, providing concrete evidence that the Great Ice Age followed the Flood. Where bands of arid lands exist today, rain fell during that time, at least in many places, making that land productive. Even today's Sahara Desert enjoyed a measure of moisture for possibly a thousand years after the Flood. The Ark survivors found Lower Mesopotamia and Arabia to be something of a refuge from the growing cold of the oncoming Ice Age.

The first three generations born after the Flood in the line of Shem—Arpachshad, Shelah and Eber—do not show the stress of coping with these many hazards—continental movements, rising mountains, accompanying earthquakes, lava flows and growing ice sheets—although they immediately show the halving of lifespans following the Flood. As explained in chapter nine, before the Flood fathers were about 100 years old when they began their families and lived an average of 900 years. The first three generations born after the Flood fathered their heirs in their early 30's and lived about 450 years. Because it took hundreds of years for the Ice Age to gather strength and for the mountains of Ararat to rise, it could be that the first generations lived half of their lifetimes near the Ark before these processes began to take a significant toll on man's strength.

Missoula Flood Produced by the Great Ice Age

In the 1920's a newly minted geologist proposed that a monstrous flood swept through the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Professor J. Harlan Bretz taught at the University of Chicago during the year but headed west to conduct field studies each summer. Bretz's "flood" was a hundred miles wide, carved up an area covering one sixth of the state of Washington and ran its course in just days. That sounded like the Biblical flood. His fellow geologists accused him of "heresy," betraying all that his profession had worked so hard to establish. Since Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, published a hundred years before, geologists had been busy around the world identifying evidence proving that generally, geological formations were produced by slow and gradual processes over eons of time.

Bretz's hypothesis had one obvious flaw—no one knew where the water came from. Over time geologists began noticing evidences of a lake the size of one of America's Great Lakes in the Rocky Mountains of Western Montana. Yes, ancient shore lines were identified, etched on the sides of Mount Jumbo 900 feet above the modern city of Missoula Montana. As ice sheets up to two miles thick melted, water collected for a hundred miles in deep valleys. When the ice dam to the west failed, the water rushed to the Pacific Ocean over a path 700-800 miles distant, carving what is today called the Channeled Scabland. After 40 years of controversy the geologic community finally acknowledged that Bretz was right. The formations were carved rapidly, not over eons of time. But to this day their explanation is still colored with evolution's long ages. One formation has 39 layers. Aha! Thirty-nine floods from many ice ages and eons of time! Creationists reply that those layers were laid down as water briefly backed up, washing back and forth, depositing layer after layer, just as the Flood laid down hundreds of layers in a single tsunami over vast areas.

Massive Vulcanism and the Great Ice Age

A third creationist Michael Oard spent his working years with the United States National Weather Service (NWS), eventually serving for 20 years as a lead forecaster in the Pacific Northwest regional office at Great Falls Montana. The skills of that office involves understanding the effects of weather flowing out of the Gulf of Alaska and from the South Pacific to impact the very region where Bretz's flood occurred. The rotating of the earth causes these flows to produce cyclical periods of temperature and rain fall. Oard came to his NWS position after earning bachelor's and master's degrees in Atmospheric Science (1973) at the University of Washington and then working there as a research assistant. Loving research he used the tools of the meteorologist to understand the Ice Age.

He was amazed that the geological world had developed over 60 models for producing an ice age. Why so many? None worked. They were all based on the evolutionary time scale of slow and

gradual processes. Only a cataclysm could bring on an ice age. Further, Oard felt that meteorologists, not geologists better understood the movement of weather flows essential to producing enormous ice sheets. Upon retirement Oard moved to the eastern foothills of the Rockies and conducted field work. Through the years he confirmed much of what Bretz and his fellow geologists had found. But it looked like one colossal flood produced by just one ice age. In the 1990's he issued many monographs and in 2004 the semi-technical book *The Missoula Flood Controversy and the Genesis Flood* in which he wrote the following mechanism for how the Flood would produce an ice age:

The Flood involved unprecedented, wide-spread volcanic and tectonic activity. After the continents and mountains rose out of the waters [of Noah's flood], a shroud of volcanic dust and aerosols remained, obscuring part of the sun. This would cause the land to cool dramatically. The dust and aerosols would replenish themselves for hundreds of years following the Flood due to continued volcanism as the earth moved toward equilibrium.⁵⁷

The models of secular scientists lacked a critical element—cooling the upper latitudes sufficiently to start and sustain the accumulation of ice. Somehow heat from the sun had to be reduced significantly. Oard had found the necessary mechanism—vast volcanic activity begun by the Flood and continuing for hundreds of years providing a thin layer of volcanic dust and aerosols high in the atmosphere that would reflect back into space enough of the sun's heat to reduce temperatures to the critical point.

Yet it wasn't like daytime was semi-dark for hundreds of years. As explained in chapter ten the wave lengths of heat and light are different. Due to the length of light waves, light passed through this thin layer but the length of heat waves is such that they are significantly reflected back into outer space, lowering the percent passing through to warm the earth. Light still fell on the earth. Both rainbows by day and stars by night could be seen. Lowering summer daytime temperatures was critical for an ice age since they would have to be 30-40 degrees colder than normal in places like the U.S. mid-west city of Minneapolis Minnesota. In later years the ice itself reflected heat rays back into space. Only when the volcanoes were silent and the sun's heat could overcome the ice's reflecting work did the Ice Age come to an end. The Flood explains the Ice Age!

Extinction of Woolley Mammoths Due to the Great Ice Age, Not the Flood

A subset of Oard's studies on the Ice Age is his collection of data on the extermination of Woolley Mammoths. Many lived and died beside the Arctic Ocean especially in Siberia. Multitudes of their tusks have been mined and traded over the last 400 years. Early reports said they were buried in sedimentary deposits. That sounded like Noah's flood caused their extinction. As Oard collected reports he found most were buried in loess, not flood sediments. Loess is the dust produced as ice sheets flow over rock and grind it down. Loess pointed to extinction due to the Ice Age. If this were the case, the Woolley Mammoths would have died near the height of the Ice Age, not in the Flood over half a millennium earlier.

Here is his idea on how they died: As the elephant kind multiplied after leaving Noah's ark, some wandered north and eventually found a home along the Arctic shoreline. This separated

⁵⁷ Michael J. Oard, *The Missoula Flood Controversy and the Genesis Flood*, (Chino Valley, AZ: Creation Research Society, Monograph Series Number 13, 2004), 101.

group interbred and developed dominant characteristics unique to mammoths. Due to plenty of water, moderate climate, a vast stretch of grasslands adjoining the Arctic Ocean and lack of predators, their population grew into the millions. But eventually the ocean cooled causing the climate to become drier and colder. Lack of fresh water and grasses stressed the animals. Intense cold and unbearable weather made crossing the ice sheets to the south impossible during the winter while miles of bogs prevented moving south during the summer.⁵⁸

The mammoths were trapped. Blinding dust storms (of loess) buried those that died from hunger or exposure and buried others alive. This entire species of elephant was just one of many large mammal species that went extinct due to the Ice Age. Oard finds the Ice Age useful in another way; it provides strong evidence that the Flood was global.

Oard is clear about his view on how many and when ice ages struck our planet: “The single Ice Age occurred rapidly within a period of about 700 years following the Flood.”⁵⁹ He gives substantial evidence that the unique conditions for the one Ice Age produced by the Flood would have taken much less time than the uniformitarian view which he summarizes as follows:

The Pleistocene ice age represents 30 or more successive ice ages (Kennett, 1982, p. 747). Each ice age supposedly repeats at 100,000-year intervals for the past million years and at about 40,000-year intervals before that. In these repeating ice ages during the past million years of uniformitarian time, 90,000 years represents a glacial period, while 10,000 years are times of interglacial moderation. Uniformitarian scientists think we now live in a rapidly fading interglacial period called the Holocene.⁶⁰

While that last sentence has nothing to do with our immediate subject—the failure of Ussher and others to recognize that Hebrew genealogies are often abbreviated—in a way it is our subject. Far more than the earth being 7000 or 8000 years old, our most basic subject is that God created the heavens and the earth to establish man. Therefore, God will sustain the processes of nature until the end. Just 30 years ago the scientific world feared the onset of another ice age. Today that same universal scientific opinion is that man-made warming will destroy the world. Back then geologists found it took 90,000 years for an ice age to run its course. If the scientific world could not find a satisfactory mechanism for an ice age, how could it know that each one lasted 90,000 years?

Seven hundred years is an ice age in record time and can hardly be made shorter. It could be Shem’s genealogy in the biblical record was the leading reason for determining its briefness. The ice sheets did not extend into Bible lands but they did affect their climates, producing much more ice, snow and rain than today. These altered weather patterns deposited moisture in bands a certain distance from the equator that mostly deliver dry air today. Scientists identify depressions seen from space in the Sahara Desert that were once lakes.

⁵⁸ Michael Oard and Beverly Oard, *Uncovering the Mysterious Woolly Mammoth: Life at the End of the Great Ice Age*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007), 50-59.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁰ Oard, *Missoula Flood*, 96.

Time of Job: Waning Years of the Great Ice Age

Job lived in what became an arid region of NW Arabia (now Jordan) and much of the change from moist to dry climate had happened before his ordeal. Job was living in the waning years of the Great Ice Age. The process of forming those vast sheets of ice, producing large geological features as they flowed across the land and finally melting while at the same time causing the oceans to fall 400 feet to expose a land bridge between Asia and North America and then rising to today's elevation took many centuries. It definitely did not fit in the 101 years from the Flood to the birth of Peleg. The only place to fit it is the 35-55 omitted generations between Eber and Peleg.

The Ussher folks will simply say we are making all of this up. We certainly are not making up the fact that the Book of Job speaks more about ice, snow, frozen lakes and torrential rains than any other book in the Bible. That weather was the experience of Job in his first 140 years and the memories of stories told by former generations. Genesis 12-50 covers about the same length of time as the first 140 years of Job plus his immediate forefathers but instead of ice, snow, frozen lakes and torrential rains, we read of drought and famine. Weather patterns cause wet and dry conditions. The Ice Age caused a wet pattern in areas that by Abraham's day, long after Job and the Ice Age, were dry.

Bible students are for the most part unaware that the impact of the Flood lasted for several thousand years. Even though God said "never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11-emphasis ours), few have imagined what the phrase "destroy the earth" involved. As a result the standard view has missed the beauty of abbreviating Hebrew genealogies that allowed sufficient time for the earth to heal. On the other hand, God restated to Noah His original mandate to man to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1). The earth's surface would heal over time but man could immediately begin to fulfill the Creator's plan of refilling the earth with His glory where the Ark landed. Later some would have to live in caves and others in a world of ice and all would have to be very careful as dangers lurked on every hand for hundreds of years.

Oard's field work has focused on the results of the Flood rather than its cause. He finds that Vertical Plate Tectonics (VPT) produced vast amounts of rock stacked high all around the earth. These include the great mountain chains of the world—the Himalayas, the Alps, the Rockies, the Andes. The highest mountain is nearly six miles high. Geologists acknowledge these are all young by comparison with their estimate of the age of the earth. Numerous formations never seen by most people lie on the ocean's floors and likewise testify to a recent time of sudden mountain building and deepening depressions caused by the Flood.

Northrup (chapter 11) preceded these contemporary scientists. He was certain that the breaking up of the great continent also left distinct geological marks. This idea is not a major feature of the three mechanisms above. Maybe in years to come creation geologists will realize that it took the better part of several thousand years for the pieces of the great continent to move to their relatively recent positions.

The Canopy Theory

In closing this section on the time involved in the various theories about the causes and results of the Flood, we should mention the Canopy Theory. Previous generations of Bible students noted that God separated the waters below from the waters above on day two of creation week (Genesis 1:7). They concluded that the waters above formed an enormous transparent canopy surrounding

the earth, producing a greenhouse effect that screened out UV radiation, allowed great longevity and even produced a world-wide uniform climate. They concluded that the intense rainfall of the Flood was the collapsing of this water jacket surrounding the earth.

Today, creation scientists reject this idea. Such a canopy could only produce a few feet of rain and would make the world too hot for life. While there may have been a thin canopy that screened out some UV radiation and allowed great longevity, it would have added mere inches of water needed to flood the earth and cover the highest mountains.

Human Activity Requiring More Time

Now we will observe indications from Scripture of vast human activity between the Flood and the birth of Peleg. Like the activity of nature, all that humans did could not possibly have happened if Shem's genealogy were complete and Peleg was born just 101 years after the Flood. While Job's genealogy is not found in Scripture, his 280 year lifespan places him in the gap after the first three names of Shem's list who each lived about 450 years and before the next three who each lived about 235 years. Eber is the third name in the Shem list while Peleg is the fourth and Abraham is the tenth. Job lived longer than any of the seven names in the Shem line following Eber. The entire Book of Job is a goldmine of historical references pointing to much natural and human activity before his time. Since we estimate he was born 280 years before Peleg and the Ussher chronology only allows 101 years from the Flood to the birth of Peleg, we must firmly conclude that the Shem genealogy is abbreviated.

Founding the Land of Uz

The very first verse of Job indicates much human activity: "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job." Uz, whose land Job lived in, was a second-generation descendant of Shem. He preserved the sound theology of his father Aram and grandfather Shem. While many rebellious descendants of Noah built Babel and its tower, it is unlikely that Noah and his godly descendants such as Aram joined those who defied God's command to fill the earth after the Flood. More likely, as they saw the growing rebellion of Nimrod, they distanced themselves from him.

Uz eventually found his way to the region bearing his name, a sizable area to the east and south of Canaan. Various people groups like the Edomites gave parts of it their own names nearly two millennia later. Its location was still known in Jeremiah's day, 1300 years after Esau. He wrote in Lamentations 4:21, "Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz." This is like saying "Rejoice and be glad, O Frenchmen, you who dwell in Europe." Because Job was a large land owner in the land of Uz, he most likely was a well-known descendant in the Shem-Aram-Uz line.

The discourse between Job and the four who tried to help him give us detailed information about beliefs, conditions and events in that region of the world. After Zophar recited how God blessed the righteous and punished the wicked (Job 11:13-20), Job replied, "Who does not know such things as these" (Job 12:3)? The blessings and judgments of God were common knowledge in the land of Uz. In 6:10 Job said, "I have not denied the words of the Holy One." Sound theology was still available in the land of Uz in Job's day.

Some will say our explanation about the founding of the land of Uz is conjecture. Certainly if there is a fire, something started it. Or more to our subject, if Job lived in the land of Uz, someone before him by the name of "Uz" must have founded it. Who would say that second generation Uz

was not godly, did not hold to the ways of the LORD and did not teach them to his descendants who carried his name throughout the region so that it became known as “the land of Uz?” Job certainly was a distinguished descendant of Uz.

As explained in chapter, ten conservatively speaking, Job’s vast spread contained eight thousand souls. Job was a chief city father of the nearby town. The references to it suggest it also had a sizable population. Job’s friends came from various adjacent regions and Job’s several hundred trading caravans required sizeable populations to service. It would not be unreasonable to estimate that the land of Uz had a million residents.

For a comparable population growth, 520 years after Jacob fathered his first son, Israel completed its forty years of wilderness wandering and moved into Canaan with a population of 2.5 million. The time from the Flood until Uz founded the land of Uz must also be included. This period would have begun as the Ark occupants began learning how to cope with the new climate produced by seasons and how to grow food in the new soil. Eventually most moved away from the mountains of Ararat and settled on the Plain of Shinar. Then came the ambition of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel rebellion and judgment. At some point Aram would have seen the evil in Nimrod’s direction and moved his family westward. Eventually Uz founded the land of Uz. All this activity took time, possibly 300-400 years. While these numbers are only estimates and could well be adjusted in either direction, one hundred years between the Flood and Peleg are far too few for the populating of the land of Uz. But 35-55 generations between Eber and Peleg would be adequate.

Kings Who Rebuilt Ruins

Job wished that he had died at birth. Then “I would have been at rest with kings and counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves.” (Job 3:13-14). Stories were passed on from generation to generation about these kings who once lived and rebuilt ruins. Here a huge amount of human activity is implied. First we must go back to Job’s birth, nearly 300 years before Peleg’s birth. If he had died at birth he would have joined those who had already died after a lifetime of great achievement. Add another 300 years. Those ruins the kings rebuilt had once been cities that had sprouted up and then failed. Add hundreds of more years. Before those cities began growing all the years from the Flood until the dispersal at the Tower of Babel had occurred. Add more years. It could not happen in 101 years but a thousand years might be sufficient.

Eliphaz inadvertently refers to great antiquity in saying “Listen to me and I will explain... what wise men have declared, hiding nothing received from their fathers to whom alone the land was given when no alien passed among them” (Job 15:17-19 NIV). Eliphaz was a contemporary of Job. He lived in the well-known city of Teman which was southwest of Job’s ranch. The wise men would have been the teachers in his youth and the fathers would have been the original settlers of the land. Job and Eliphaz were 140 years old, the teachers would have been one or two hundred years older than Eliphaz and the fathers like the founding fathers of the US would have lived hundreds of years before that. Then there is the time from the Flood until Uz arrived in this land to begin populating it. Again, far more than 101 years.

Bildad urged Job to “Inquire of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have searched out...Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding” (Job 8:8, 10)? The Land of Uz was settled by Uz, a grandson of Shem. This means Uz was born in the second generation after the Flood when people lived 450 years. For comparison Eber was born in the third. These Land of Uz fathers lived ages before Job. Being the fathers of the land of Uz and having lived

in bygone ages suggests they lived near the beginning of the settling of Uz or possibly a millennium before Job was born. They established the sound doctrine in Uz that was still available in Job's day. Job died about the time Peleg was born. Add Job's 280 years to the millennium before Job when these fathers were born and it becomes obvious that Ussher's idea that Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood doesn't work.

In rebuffing Job's longest discourse yet Eliphaz asked rhetorically, "Are you the first man that was born" (Job 15:7) and "What do you know that we do not know" (Job 15:9)? Then he appealed to folks older than Job who would testify to knowing what Job had said: "Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father" (Job 15:10). Not all sons were born when their fathers were just 30 or 35. This statement seems to suggest that Job's father was much older than Job. Having a son in one's old age was not unusual. Abraham had Isaac when he was 100 and Terah had Abraham when he was 130. Turning gray was a sign of advanced age while the aged were even older. Possibly these references point to people 150 to 200 years older than Job. Since Job was born 280 years before Peleg, the oldest of these could have been born 400 years before Peleg and the Flood would have happened another half of a millennium before that. Here is another instance demanding vastly more time than the 101 years between the Flood and Peleg's birth.

Peleg and the Time Required to Build Babel

Associating Peleg with the Tower of Babel judgment is another difficulty in Archbishop Ussher's scheme. Peleg's name generally means "divided" (Genesis 10:25). However, a careful study shows that water is associated with whatever is divided in the extensive use of the three consonants that make up Peleg's name, PLG. In searching for just how the earth could have been divided by water, the melting of the great ice sheets at the end of the Ice Age immediately comes to mind. Unfortunately, Ussher missed that fine distinction and wrote that Peleg's name referred to the dividing of tongues in the Tower of Babel judgment, not water dividing the earth. It is supported with the idea that the city and Tower were well along by Peleg's birth. This section will show that such an interpretation is physically impossible since there would not be enough workers. Just to have enough workers would require missing generations between the Flood and Peleg. Yet this faulty interpretation says the Genesis 11 genealogy has no omissions.

Further, Scripture implies that this division continued to be more and more pronounced during Peleg's lifetime and centered on the earth rather than people. It sounds like a process that went on for years rather than an event that happened in a moment of time like God's confusing the tongues at Babel. Surely the division was about something other than Babel.

Other than the specific meaning of Peleg's name, the issue to examine is whether the Babel judgment could have occurred before Peleg was born or not. He was born 101 years after the Flood (101 AF) if the MT is a chronology. The reason for thinking in terms of his birth is that names are normally given to children when they are born, not when they are grown. Commentaries generalize that thousands of workers built the Tower. We will offer half a dozen reasons to show that no such work force was available in the years shortly before Peleg was born. Such issues as the birth clocks for reaching adulthood, the effort and distraction of raising large families and the unwillingness of the godly to participate in the plan are among the factors that required more time than those 101 years until God's judgment on Babel.

Babel and its tower

The Flood released forces that covered the highest mountains and tore up the face of the earth. Five months after it began the waters started decreasing and the ark became grounded. The constant pitching and rolling of that gigantic floating barge in heavy seas was over. But it was not safe to disembark for over seven more months. Consequently, they lived on the ark for over a year.

Provisions stored in the ark fed the eight people until they could establish flocks, field crops, vineyards and orchards. Over the years they raised families, stripped the ark of whatever they could use and explored their new world. Active volcanoes nearby caused them to think about finding a more suitable land. Eventually they started a migration which ended 400-500 miles south of the mountains of Ararat where the ark had come to rest. The duration of this migration is unknown. The Ararat region continued to rise until the tallest mountain, Greater Ararat, reached its present height of 17,000 feet.

Noah's extended and growing family settled on a broad plain named Shinar. It was as wide as the valleys of Arafat were narrow. When their population was sufficient some decided to build a city with a tall tower that would reach to the sky "lest we be disbursed over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). Their statement suggests an awareness of the vast size of the earth which would have come from considerable exploration. The tower would be a landmark, seen from miles away. Rather than clay bricks dried in the sun which were used for ordinary construction, it would be built of bricks that were burned to stone in an oven. While such a process would be far more labor intensive, the results would be more permanent. Their plan showed ingenuity and purpose but dismissed the direct command of God to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1). It was rebellion to the core.

Did everyone join this rebellion? Noah would not join in a flagrant rebellion against the God who had led him to build the ark and save life from the Flood. He is named with Job and Daniel as among the most righteous men in history (Ezekiel 14:14). What about Shem, Aram and godly Uz? Scripture often generalizes. Note the language of Genesis 11:2: "as people migrated from the east, they found a plain." This would be like Matthew 3:5, "Then Jerusalem and all Judea...were going out to him [John...to be baptized]." It simply means a large number were going down to John to be baptized. Obviously, only a part of the post Flood population joined the rebellion. But who was its leader?

The Table of Nations gives much space to a man named Nimrod who was born in the second generation after the Flood. His name means "rebellion" so possibly this was a nickname given to him in adulthood. Scripture even says his empire began with Babel (Genesis 10:10). He was the world's first iron-fisted dictator. Certainly the godly avoided this rebellion against God and others later escaped his tyranny.

While most commentators link Nimrod to the tower plan, some realize he would have been too young to gain the respect and leadership of the world by the time Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood, so they suggest the city and tower were built in Peleg's lifetime rather than before his birth. Later we will cite Keil and Delitzsch who felt it could be done in 150 or 180 years. Some dismiss Nimrod by pleading the argument from silence—that Scripture does not say specifically that he was or became the leader of this cause and conclude he was not a leader of the Babel rebellion. Of course the argument from silence works both ways. It neither names the leaders nor clarifies that Nimrod, to whom it gave much space, was not involved in this rebellion. Nevertheless, if

Nimrod were the leader, his youth would provide another argument supporting our position that the building of the tower and city could not have happened so soon after the Flood.

Those supporting the 101-year position argue that the city and tower did not have to be completed. In fact, they claim, it would be sufficient for only the base of the tower to be laid. However, this seems to oppose Genesis 11:5, "The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of man **had** built" (emphasis ours). The words make it sound like it was at least substantially well along. However, the project was not finished because when God confused their language, Scripture says "they left off building the city." Possibly they built the tower first and then proceeded to work on the city.

Artists have rendered beautiful pictures of a monstrous tower and vast city. Ancient writings describe Babylon with such a tower. But the ruins of Babel have not been located. It is unknown if the ruins of Babylon are the same as Babel. While the secular world is well aware of ancient Babylon, it dismisses the entire Babel story as myth.

Scripture does seem to indicate that the eight ark passengers and their descendants initially stayed together and settled on the plain of Shinar. Hatching the idea of constructing a city and tower came after the migration. When God did confuse the tongues, it seems many language groups were created. This would be consistent with a large labor force constructing the city and tower. Next we will see just how many workers were available ten years before Peleg's birth.

The Great Pyramid and the Tower of Babel

The work force needed for the Tower of Babel can be somewhat guided by the well-known data for building Egyptian pyramids. The formula for the volume of a pyramid is height times width times depth times 1/3. Khufu's pyramid was originally 481 feet high and 756 feet on a side, fixing its volume at 91.636 million cubic feet. It was the largest structure made by man until modern times. Of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it is the only one still in existence although erosion has reduced it slightly.

Some Egyptian pyramids were stepped; others had smooth sides. On the other hand, Ziggurats, also called temple towers, were massive tiered structures. Each higher level was recessed from the one below enabling staging during construction. Some 130 pyramids have been found in Egypt while about 120 ziggurats have been located in Iraq and western Iran. The base of a ziggurat is equal to its height while the base of a pyramid is about 1.5 times its height. A 200 foot high Tower of Babel would have had a volume of 2,666,667 cubic feet or about 2.91% of Khufu's Great Pyramid.

Most of the effort of pyramid construction is made in the lowest portion of the pyramid. For the tower of Babel to reach even 20% of its proposed height would have required half the labor needed to complete it. If God judged the people when it was only 100 feet high, it would have been 87.51% complete and have a volume of 2,333,667 cubic feet which is 2.5467% of a 100% completed Great Pyramid. That percent of the Great Pyramid's 14,000 full-time and 26,000 seasonal workers comes to 357 full-time and 662 part time workers for ten years.

Comparing the needed work force, however, is a far different matter. In comparing the Great Pyramid with Egypt's earlier pyramids, archaeologists discovered that the pyramid builders learned with experience. Earlier pyramids required far more workers for the same volume of material in the pyramid. The Tower of Babel was its builders' first such experience. They could have started it

several times before an efficient construction method was developed, or they could have discovered mistakes that needed time-consuming corrections.

Besides the time needed to learn how to build a ziggurat, there was the labor-intensive material in the ziggurat. Most of the stones in the Great Pyramid were quarried nearby and much of the insides was filled with inferior materials; the stones in the Tower of Babel were man made. While sun baked clay bricks would require a minimum of labor, the bricks used to construct the Tower were burned to stone. This made them extremely durable, but it also made them extremely labor intensive. Just delivering the wood for the ovens would have required an army of workers. So while the equivalent of Egypt's 14,000 full-time and 26,000 seasonal pyramid builders would have been 357 full-time and 662 part-time workers at Babel for ten years, their inexperience and costly material would have required much more labor per cubic foot of material. Possibly these considerations would have doubled the necessary work force. Besides this an even larger work force would have been needed to build the city. Altogether, several thousand workers putting in six days a week for ten years is not an unreasonable estimate.

While archaeologists have not yet positively identified the site of Babel, the site of ancient Babylon is well known. Its ruins are about 68 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq's capital. Historical accounts describe a temple tower that once stood in Babylon as having seven tiers, three staircases, topped with a temple of exquisite proportions and dedicated to the god Marduk. It was called Etemenanki, "The Foundation of Heaven and Earth." Hammurabi was said to be the builder of this ziggurat which contained the remains of an earlier ziggurat and other structures. Over a thousand years later King Nebuchadnezzar built its final stage, making it 297 feet high. Today only part of its base remains.

Ziggurats were places where the gods could visit and be close to the people, not places of public worship or a burial place for a head of state. Nebuchadnezzar built another ziggurat at Borsippa, 7 miles south of Babylon. It was 231 feet high. Several tablets and a foundation stone explain that he built it on the same design as the Tower of Babel. In another text Nebuchadnezzar said, "Nabu's tower (Borsippa) should reach the skies and be no less in grandeur than that of Babel." The many ziggurats in Iraq and Nebuchadnezzar's inscription and tablets allow the reasonable assumption that the Tower of Babel was in the shape of a ziggurat.

Because of the difference between pyramids and ziggurats, comparing Khufu's pyramid to Babel's tower can only provide a rough idea of the laborers involved in the Tower. But regardless of just how many laborers were needed for the Tower and city, the required work force would have been sizeable. In fact commentaries repeatedly state that thousands of workers were needed to build the city and its tower. But as will shortly be seen, there were not enough workers so soon after the Flood. Those who think otherwise make unrealistic estimates of population growth.

Finding Enough Workers to Build Babel (see also Table 16.1)

The rapid population growth view reasons that if each man had six sons and six daughters there would be enough workers to get the city and tower well along by the time Peleg was born. However, twelve children per father in the generations before the Babel judgment is both unsupported and contrary to the experience of family size reported in Scripture. It is reminiscent of the numbers generated to produce the several million Israelis in the Exodus in just 215-years or four generations. While it could be done if every female did nothing but have babies, that is not the way life works. However, what was not possible in 215-years would have been possible with an

additional 215-years. As to growing a work force to build Babel, Keil and Delitzsch are more realistic in suggesting that if each mother averaged four sons and four daughters, the city and tower could be built in 150 or 180 years.⁶¹

Changing body clocks for starting families

In seeking to find enough workers we will start by observing the remarkable record of changing body clocks for starting families. The human body did not always have the same time clock for birthing children. For instance, Adam and Eve apparently had children shortly after God expelled them from the Garden of Eden. They could have been just a few years old, but their situation is unique because they were created mature adults and were capable of having children immediately after God created them. They had two sons and at least one daughter whom Cain married.

Then Cain murdered his younger brother Abel and God exiled him from his parents. What is surprising is that Adam did not father his next known son until he was 130 years old. The nine generations that followed had their named sons when they were 105, 90, 70, 65, 162, 65, 187 and 182. Apparently after Cain murdered Abel, God reset the human clock for having children. The dial now sat at 65-187. Noah, who began fathering the sons who accompanied him on the ark at the age of 500 may have had other sons at an earlier age. Scripture does not say. If he did have his first son when he was 500, he was an exceptional case.

We are told there were eight people on the ark—Noah and his wife and their three sons and their wives, but no children. Once they were off the ark Noah's three sons began having families. Scripture says Shem fathered Arpachshad two years after the Flood. Shem was 100. Barring some unknown factor, it is reasonable to conclude Noah's sons had pre-Flood body clocks for having children. On the other hand, Arpachshad, who is the first named son born after the Flood, had his first at the age of 35 and the next six generations had theirs at the ages of 30, 34, 30, 32, 30 and 29. Now the body clock for having children was reset to 29-35. The body clock of those born before the Flood for reaching adulthood and starting families stands in stark contrast with those born after the Flood—65-187 vs 29-35.

By Jacob's day males were starting families as early as the late teens. For example, Judah's two oldest sons married before they were 20 and Judah himself fathered Perez and Zerah by his sons' widow, all by the time he was 45. Obviously, as longevity declined, so did the body clock for starting families. By the end of Moses day the average life span was 70, a whopping decrease of 375 years from those first three generations born after the Flood. Thus, this decline in longevity was accompanied by a decline in reaching adulthood. In the wilderness Israel conscripted every able-bodied male for its citizen-army at the age of 20 because this was the age of adulthood and marriage by that day. All of this illustrates the continuing decline in the body clock for adulthood. Since we are talking about the generations immediately after the Flood, we will use the age of 30 which was their approximate average age for reaching adulthood and marriage.

Time needed to bear 12 children

Next, we must account for the time needed to do all the work of bearing and raising 12 children. At the rate of one child every two years each mother would be nursing one or more children

⁶¹ Keil, *The Pentateuch*, Vol. 1, 176.

continuously for 24 years and struggling with a pregnancy over 1/3 of the time while caring for her ever growing family. Once her oldest children could help, they would be pressed into the family work force. During their child bearing years the 36 adults of the first generation and the 216 adults of the second generation had little time for much else than the essentials of survival, but we are getting ahead of ourselves.

Arpachshad, the first person born in the new world, arrived two years after the Flood, which some commentators take to mean two years after the Flood began or one year after it ended. Scripture reports he had fifteen male siblings and cousins so counting him and an equal number of daughters, the first generation would total 32 children. But since the rapid-population-growth people propose six sons per father or a total of 18 sons and 18 daughters, we will test whether even that many children per couple would produce a sufficient work force to build the tower and city in time. At the age of 30 Arpachshad would reach adulthood while his youngest sibling would reach adulthood 22 years after that. Thus all of this first generation would have reached adulthood 54 years after the Flood (AF) ($2+30+22=54$ AF). Shem, Ham and Japheth's 36 children would form 18 couples to produce the second generation.

When Arpachshad was 35 years old (37 AF) he fathered a son named Shelah who represented the second generation. The 18 first generation couples would each bear 12 children for a total of 216 people (108 couples) in the second generation. The first person, Shelah, would reach adulthood 67 years AF ($2+35+30=67$ AF) while his youngest sibling would reach adulthood 22 years later ($67+22=89$ AF). So 89 years after the Flood all 216 second generation children would reach adulthood and be in the process of bearing twelve children per couple to produce the third generation. At this point, 89 years after the Flood, the total adult population of the world would be 260—the eight Ark survivors plus 36 first generation and 216 second generation folks ($8+36+216=260$).

Yet according to the faulty age of the earth view, in two more years thousands of workers would have begun constructing Babel and its tower. Really? Not the 216 second generation people. Each of those 108 couples would have been super busy bearing and caring for their twelve children so it is unlikely they had much time for the construction project. This second generation began having children when Shelah fathered Eber in 67 AF. Shelah's last sibling reached adulthood 22 years later in 89 AF. For 22 years (67-89 AF) these 108 couples conceived the 1296 children of the third generation which reached adulthood between 97 AF and 119 AF. None reached adulthood in time to begin the tower and city in 91 AF so none of them can be counted among the thousands of required workers.

Peleg was born in 101 AF, four years after his father Eber reached adulthood in 97 AF. Eber gave his son the name "Peleg" (divided) because by this time some sort of a division had occurred. Only the sixteen couples of the first generation might have been available for the tower project since the second generation of 108 couples was busy producing the third generation between 67 AF and 97 AF and none of the third generation reached adulthood in time to begin building the tower and city in 91 AF. The division Peleg's name referred to must be something other than the division of languages because the needed work force of several thousand beginning ten years before he was born did not exist. Whatever was divided by the time Peleg was born was not the language of those who had built a city and a tower because there was no city and tower yet. The thousands of workers needed to build the city and the tower were yet to reach adulthood or even be born.

However, the very idea of each male fathering 12 children is both inconsistent with Shem's recorded genealogy and the experience of known Scriptural families. Shem, Ham and Japheth fathered sixteen sons, not 18. Scripture only reports the number of sons fathered by seven of those sixteen. They had a total of 36 sons, not 42, which is also shy of the six sons per father proposal. Nothing is said of daughters. It could well be that there were not enough daughters for all sixteen first generation sons to marry. Besides, one or more of the other nine could have met with misfortune. When space is limited literature generally provides the more striking than the mundane. In this case the more striking would be the largest or most important families. Averages cannot be based on the larger families alone.

Then there is the entire issue of the number of reported sons in general. In the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) 16 are reported for the first generation, 36 for the second, two for the third and three for the fourth. Beyond that, Terah had three sons. Abraham was monogamous and had just one son by his life-long partner Sarah, although he had seven by two other women. Isaac had just two sons. Jacob had 12 sons by four wives or three sons per mother. He also had only one named daughter, but he had at least one unnamed daughter. To provide wives for his sons who could not marry their sisters, other families would have to have more daughters than sons. Thus, if for instance, he had a total of four daughters, he would have had four children per wife—three sons and one daughter. This is a far cry from 12 children per mother.

So a more realistic estimate for the first generation is 30 children eventually forming 14 couples instead of 36 children forming 18 couples. Instead of 216 second generation people, a more realistic number would be 112 people forming 56 couples. Thus, only the 30 first generation people might have been available to build the city and tower because the second generation couples were busy raising the third generation and the third generation did not start reaching adulthood until 97 AF.

Further, there is the matter of the godly. As they thought about the ramifications of not being scattered, they would have dropped out of the potential Babel work force. These would have been the ark survivors and most of those born in the first generation which leaves only a handful to build the city and tower.

In summary, to complete just the bottom 100 feet of a 200' high Tower plus a portion of the city, a workforce of several thousand would have to work on this project for the ten years before Peleg was born. But thousands of workers did not even exist in 91 AF even if each couple had six sons and six daughters. More importantly, Peleg's name refers to a division by water, not a division by languages. Thus, those who teach that Peleg's name refers to the Tower of Babel event are snared in two errors.

All the natural and human activity found in Scripture between the Flood and the birth of Peleg took more than 101 years. Therefore, Peleg was born more than 101 years after the Flood and this shows that Shem's genealogy was abbreviated.

Chapter Seventeen

Recent Scholarship Improves Biblical Understanding

Sixteen detailed chapters have presented arguments that the primary purpose of ancient Hebrew genealogies was identification, not succession. One doesn't have to be a genius to study the Scriptures themselves and let them reveal that

- 1). Israel was in Egypt 430, not 215-years, and that
- 2). Scripture uses words such as father and son in both narrow and broad senses.

However, it takes considerably more skill to apply these ideas to the lists that do make a difference in the age of the earth and realize with confidence that

- 1). the record condenses the Levi-Aaron genealogical list from over a dozen names to just four
- 2). and condenses the Eber-Peleg sequence from an estimated 35-55 to two.

But here is another lulu for the scholars: some lists include two Cainans, others only one. Does the Bible contain errors after all? Eric Lyons of Apologetic press may well have put his finger on it when he wrote: "the simple fact is, just because one genealogy has more or fewer names than another genealogy does not mean that the two genealogies contradict one another."⁶² Appendix Table 8.8 contains a full report on his comments which in summary states that Hebrew genealogies need not be complete to accomplish the author's purpose.

Today it is more evident than ever that we must acknowledge the enormous debt we owe to inerrancy Bible scholars who spend entire lifetimes examining new evidence that sheds light on manuscripts that seem to disagree. Guiding their work are the doctrines of inerrancy, preservation and transmission. Their scholarship in the Scriptures combined with these three doctrines is the subject of this chapter.

Creation scientists who work hard to find the exact age of the earth have showcased how creation witnesses in so many ways to the existence of our wise, loving and powerful Creator God. They emphasize inerrancy. But their zeal in some cases is without knowledge. We love them for their contributions. Yet, we find it necessary to adjure them to appreciate and be informed by those who are renown in relevant biblical fields in which creation scientists have not specialized. We also ask them to correct their published errors in which they condemn these scholars who clearly have right answers.

It may seem petty to insist that some two millennia passed between the Flood and Aaron, placing the Flood in the time frame of 3600-4300 BC rather than 2348-2550 BC. But in view of three-and-one-half centuries of discoveries since Ussher that have revealed a world of human activity after the Flood, his 2348 BC date becomes an embarrassing historical error. This means those in the creation movement who proclaim his time frame place a stigma of naivety and ignorance on the entire creation movement so it is dismissed as hopelessly uninformed. As a result, the work of creation scientists is mostly disregarded by the secular world.

⁶² Lyons, "Was Cainan the Son of Arphaxad?"

Identifying True Genealogical Authorities

The leading source that advanced genealogies over other Scripture was James Ussher (1581-1656), Anglican Archbishop of Ireland from 1625 until his death. Ussher was a scholar and prolific writer for the faith. Of all his works, he is most remembered for *The Annals of the World*, a classic survey of world history. *Annals*, written in Latin, appeared just six years before his death. Two years after he died its English translation appeared; in 2003 a modern English translation was released.

In *Annals* Ussher advanced the idea that scriptural genealogies were complete and from their numbers the age of the earth (and universe) could be determined precisely. He found the date of creation to be the evening of October 23, 4004 BC, or in round numbers about 4000 years before the birth of Christ. He dated the Flood at 2348 BC. Young earth creationists frequently cite Ussher for their conviction that the age of the earth can be known within a few years.

Ussher's scholarship and piety are indisputable. His world was learning, languages, books and writing. In diplomacy he managed to walk a narrow path between supporting the English monarchy while not offending the freedom-seeking Parliament, even asking their permission to move to England. He is said to have watched the execution of Charles I, but fainted before the ax fell. In spite of Ussher's strong support for the throne, Oliver Cromwell who led Parliament in opposing the unlimited power of the crown insisted that he have an elaborate state funeral and be buried at Westminster Abbey. Such was the esteem for his character.

But Ussher labored under enormous handicaps. For instance, the contribution of archaeology to ancient history was still several centuries away. The great ancient manuscript discoveries were yet to be made. Hieroglyphics and cuneiform would not be deciphered for another 200 years. Scholars were far more limited in their access to rare books for primary research. While scribes came to take great care in copying Scripture by the eighth century AD, they passed on the mistakes of earlier scribes. Since the venerable Bishop, those who serve God by laboring to determine precisely every letter or mark of the original Old Testament Hebrew text have made many textual improvements even though their work will never be completed.

The field that deals with textual accuracy lies within the general area of "Semitics and Old Testament Studies." Experts in it have mastered not only the original language of the Old Testament but also related Semitic languages and often spend a lifetime studying, writing about and teaching the fruit of this discipline. In addition, they have learned the broad fields of biblical archaeology and ancient Near East history and for those of faith, they pretty much know the Scriptures backwards and forwards. Invariably, these individuals have brilliant minds and are the top students. These are the authorities conservative evangelicals can trust to provide sound interpretations to the genealogical lists of the OT.

Dr. Merrill F. Unger

Among such modern scholars are Merrill F. Unger and Eugene H. Merrill. Unger, 1909-1980, maintained an amazing straight A record in all his course work at Dallas Theological Seminary leading to Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology degrees (possibly the only DTS student ever to do so). The Master of Theology degree is a professional degree representing four years of course work beyond an acceptable college degree. Unger earned his A.B. and Ph.D. degrees from world renowned Johns Hopkins University in his home town of Baltimore Maryland. His Ph.D. was in

Semitics and Old Testament Studies. He grew thriving churches, was a popular conference speaker, chaired the Department of Old Testament during his entire 19-year tenure at Dallas Theological Seminary, taught Hebrew for years and wrote 26 books. When he retired in 1967 the school made him Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament for life. Such was the esteem in which he was held.

Eugene H. Merrill (1934-Present) represents the next generation in the Unger tradition. He earned two Ph.D. degrees, first at his B.A. and M.A. alma mater, Bob Jones University and the second in Middle Eastern Studies at Columbia University. He earned three masters degrees including one at Columbia University in the field of his doctoral degree and one at New York University in Jewish Studies. He taught in the Old Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, one of the world's largest Evangelical seminaries, for over 35 years and upon retirement in 2013 was named Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies. He has written ten books and some 200 articles, mainly of a historical and exegetical nature. He is an active churchman and preaches and teaches abroad on a regular basis.

But who promotes Ussher's view on the age of the earth today? Certainly not Unger or Merrill! These scholars find Ussher's view of a short Egyptian sojourn and his opinion that the genealogies were comprehensive to be contrary to both Scripture and the history of the ancient Near East. Dr. Unger felt so strongly about this error that he addressed it in considerable detail under the entry "Genealogy" of *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, and, the *Dictionary* itself, which as explained earlier, represented the work of many Bible scholars over an entire century. It expresses the standard thinking of conservative evangelical biblical scholars. The following is an excerpt from his article:

B. B. Warfield showed more than a generation ago that the Bible genealogies contained gaps ("The Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race," *Studies in Theology*, New York, 1932, pp. 235-258). The genealogies in Exod. 6:16-24, Ezra 7:1-5 and Matt. 1:1-17 contain omissions. This is most certainly the case also in the genealogical lists in Genesis 5 and 11. To use these genealogical lists in Genesis to calculate the creation of man (c. 4004 B.C.), as Archbishop Ussher has done, is not only unwarranted from a comparative study of Scriptural genealogies, but incontestably disproved by the well-attested facts of modern archaeology. The total length of the period from the creation of man to the flood and from the flood to Abraham is not specified in Scripture. That the genealogies of Gen. 5 and 11 are most assuredly drastically abbreviated and have names that are highly selective is suggested by the fact that each list contains only ten names, ten from Adam to Noah and ten from Shem to Abraham. It is quite evident that symmetry was the goal in constructing these genealogical lists rather than a setting forth of unbroken descent from father to son, in contrast to modern registers of pedigree. Such symmetry with the omission of certain names is obvious from the genealogy of Matt. 1:1-17. This fact is further corroborated by the evident latitude used in ancient Semitic languages in the expressions "begat," "bear," "father," and "son." This usage is completely contrary to English idiom. Thus to "beget" a "son" may mean to beget an actual child or a grandchild or a great grandchild or even distant descendants. Usage extends to tribes or countries (Gen. 10:2-22), and even to non-blood relationship. Jehu, the usurper and founder of a new dynasty in Israel and with no blood connection whatsoever to the House of Omri, is nevertheless called "son of Omri" by Shalmaneser III of Assyria. (Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia I*, Sect. 590.) Nebuchadnezzar is called the "father" of Belshazzar who was actually the son of Nabonidus, a usurper (Dan. 5:2). Accordingly, as J. H. Raven says in the regular recurring formula, "A lived . . . years and begat B, and A lived after he begat B . . . years and

begat sons and daughters, and B lived . . . years and begat C,” B may not be the literal son of A but a distant descendant. If so, the age of A is his age at the birth of the child from whom B is descended. Between A and B, accordingly, many centuries may intervene. The Genesis genealogical lists are not intended to divulge the antiquity of man upon the earth, but to set forth in outstanding representative names the line of the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15) from Adam to Abraham and to show the effects of sin and the altered conditions brought about by the flood and upon human vitality and longevity. Added evidence that the genealogies of Gen. 5 and 11 contain extensive breaks is demonstrated by the fact that they allow only about 4000 years from the creation of Adam to Christ. On the other hand, modern archaeology clearly traces sedimentary pottery cultures such as that from Tell Halaf well before 4000 B. C. To place the flood so late as 2348 B. C. as is the case if the genealogies are employed for chronological purposes, is archaeologically fantastic. This great cataclysm certainly took place long before 4000 B. C. Revised by M.F.U. ⁶³

Before discovering this section by Unger, the author of *HB* had determined to restrict his research to the study of Scripture itself, particularly those passages of possible abbreviated genealogies suggested by conservative authorities and further passages those passages led to, rather than Scripture plus secular disciplines such as archaeology and ancient Near East history. This approach yielded numerous examples of abbreviated genealogies. This was done with the background of a seminary degree, a lifetime of study in the Scriptures and average academic ability.

Moreover, while many creation science authors have spent a proportionate amount of study in some field of science, they lack such ancient Near East training. It seems appropriate to ask them to defer to inerrancy experts with extensive scriptural training and not to berate them when they reject Ussher’s view. While those more theologically trained and those more scientifically trained both believe in inerrancy, the latter show themselves to be weak in their knowledge of biblical expertise when they become inappropriately dogmatic in their biblical viewpoint. Further, this rides against the principal of Ephesians 4:2-3 to maintain “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Dr. Eugene H. Merrill

The following pages particularize what it takes to be an expert in the fields of manuscript study with its many nuances of textual understanding and interpretation. Dr. Eugene H. Merrill is used to represent the next generation of scholars in the Unger tradition. He devotes many pages in support of the generally accepted dates among conservative evangelical scholars such as the following statements concerning the time in Egypt:

I Kings 6:1...informs us that Solomon began to build his temple in his fourth year (967/966) which was also the 480th year after the Exodus. This places the date of the Exodus at 1446 B.C. In Exodus 12:40 we learn that Israel was in Egypt 430-years...”⁶⁴

Today most young earth creation leaders who speak on the subject still advocate Ussher’s methodology and dates. They turn a deaf ear to three and a half centuries of manuscript discovery and textual refinements. Worst of all they possess none of the qualifications of true scholars such

⁶³ Unger, *Dictionary*, 396.

⁶⁴ Eugene H Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1966), 98.

as Unger and Merrill for determining the truth of matters in these fields, yet they write entire books to perpetuate their errors. Undiscerning creation scientists are taken in by their pseudo knowledge and authority claims and perpetuate their errors. One of these current so-called authorities uses 7000 words to argue that Israel sojourned in Egypt just 215-years while Moses needed only 12 words to write “the time the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years” (Exodus 12:40). Surprisingly many creationists take this man’s words over those of Moses. “This is not good,” you say. Most would agree. Those in the creation movement need to learn from genuine conservative evangelical scholars instead of those who multiply arguments to perpetuate the errors of the past.

Another Uninformed Response: The Two Cainans

Appendix 8.8 addresses the problem of the two Cainans in Luke three. It reports how a leading creation apologist answered this problem by using material up to two centuries old. The Dead Sea Scrolls which have only recently been available falsify that two-century-old material. Sadly, that creation scientist is using his fine mind to perpetuate the Ussher error rather than to carefully examine the work of today’s true inerrancy OT scholars. God protects the Body of Christ through these scholars whose lives are devoted to the fields that address the Old Testament text. Deferring to their learning will save much confusion and misinformation.

Inerrancy Confused with Preservation and Transmission

Some Ussher supporters back their chronology by appealing to a faulty view of the preservation of Scripture. They declare that God has promised to preserve the actual text of Scripture, the actual words of God including every original jot and tittle (Matthew 5:17). Some even maintain that only one Hebrew OT text and one Greek NT text contain the Scripture free of error. Compounding this error, some go so far as to believe that the King James Version is a divinely inspired translation and the only true Word of God in the English language.

Neither Matthew 5:17 nor its context says or implies that the written text of Scripture will be preserved without error in any one manuscript. What it does say is that God will fulfill all that the Law and the Prophets have said. When this is pointed out they jump to various other verses such as Romans 3:2, Mark 13:31, Jeremiah 1:12, Isaiah 40:8 and Psalm 12:6-7. But none of these verses support their view either. Rather, they promise that God will do what He has said and that what He said is true and lasting. Consequently, their view is both unbiblical and, in effect, trumps EVERY manuscript find and textual refinement. It says textual scholars are unneeded and archaeologists should disregard any biblical texts they unearth.

This overemphasis on preservation is actually an attack on the word and character of God—God didn’t say that and if He had, He would be guilty of error. Yet everything God says is true—His word and His character remain unstained. This view confuses preservation with inerrancy. While inerrancy is held by all conservative evangelicals, this view of preservation is held by only a handful of advocates and the many thousands they have misled with their rhetoric. So what are the true doctrines of inerrancy, preservation and transmission?

Theologians use three words to speak of the fact that Scripture is without error—infallibility, inspiration and inerrancy. They apply only to the original writings. “Infallibility” means “without error” and is becoming the least used of these three words. “Inspiration” comes from II Timothy 3:16 and begins Dallas Theological Seminary’s Statement of Faith. It has to do with the method God used to give the Bible:

We believe that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," [II Timothy 3:16] by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God "were moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic—as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible in the originals is therefore without error. We believe that all the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming, and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read, or understood, until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction (Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2–3; 18:28; 26:22–23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 2:13; 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).⁶⁵

Former Dallas professor of theology Dr. Charles Ryrie summarized inspiration as "God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the original autographs His revelation to man."⁶⁶

In recent years a large body of scholarly statements has developed around the word "inerrancy." A famous gathering of leading theologians, the Chicago Conference on Inerrancy, developed the following ideas: "Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible *in its original autographs* and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrines or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences" (emphasis ours). But they make the important distinction noted above: "We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original."⁶⁷

Leading conservative theologians regard the Chicago Statement as a very thorough statement of what "inerrancy" involves. The statement elaborates on various details in Articles formed as couplets of "We affirm ... We deny" Also in this Statement, inerrancy applies only to the *original manuscripts* (which no longer exist, but can be inferred on the basis of extant copies), not to the copies or translations themselves. Further, inerrancy does *not* mean blind literalism, but allows for figurative, poetic and phenomenological language, as long as it is *accurate*. Nor does the Statement define the precise set of biblical books to be considered "Scripture."

Dallas Seminary graduate and Bible teacher Hampton Keathley defined "Inerrancy" as

...a term used to explain that the Bible is completely true and contains no errors in the original autographs. The reason inerrancy is an issue is because some religious "scholars" believe that the scripture contains errors, yet they continue to claim to believe in "inspiration." Actually, they're trying to redefine "inspiration" to include possible errors. Therefore, it is necessary to

⁶⁵ Dallas Theological Seminary, "Doctrinal Statement, Article I—The Scriptures," (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary). <https://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement/>

⁶⁶ Charles C. Ryrie, Class Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965.

⁶⁷ International Council of Biblical Inerrancy, "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," 1978. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>.

discuss “inerrancy” because it assures that we understand inspiration to mean “without error.”⁶⁸

In the same place Keathley summarizes that “[Inerrancy means] freedom from error or untruths. Synonyms include ‘certainty, assuredness, objective certainty, infallibility.’”

Thus, an accurate description about the truthfulness of Scripture is that its authors were guided or inspired by the Holy Spirit so that without waving their personalities or cultures, they were able to pen what God wanted written without error. It only applies to the very document that author composed.

The Ongoing Process of Preservation and Transmission

In contrast to the doctrine of infallibility/inspiration/inerrancy which relates to the original writings, the activities of preservation and transmission spread God’s revelation in every generation to the entire world with sufficient integrity that man can come to know Him and do His will. The Chicago Conference put it this way: “we deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.”⁶⁹

The idea of preservation focuses on the quality of the Scriptures available today. How true are they to the originals? The answer comes from several directions. One is reliability. Copies of many ancient manuscripts have come down to the present. Like the Scriptures their originals have also been lost. Like the Scriptures, scholars have collected copies of them and compared the copies to determine how much change has crept in. In doing so the world of scholarship has come to realize that there are vastly more copies of ancient scriptural texts than nearly all other ancient works. Through comparing these texts scholars have learned just how carefully the Scriptures have been preserved. Thus, this preservation is an astonishing testimony to the divine hand behind it. It far exceeds other ancient books in trueness to the original writings. The general conclusion is that Scripture has been preserved vastly beyond most other works.

Certainly, God the Holy Spirit moved the followers of Christ to put forth the massive effort required to produce so many copies of Scripture that survive from antiquity. The facts regarding this massive body of texts is featured on the website maintained by Josh McDowell Ministries.⁷⁰ Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that no other ancient text begins to compare with the reliability of Scripture. In this way God has preserved His Word.

Another way in which God has preserved His revelation to mankind is by its repetition. God led different authors to state the same truths so that if the truth was obscured or even lost in one or two places, it would be correctly preserved in other portions of Scripture. By stating every major

⁶⁸ J. Hampton Keathley III, “6. The Bible: The Inerrant Word of God,” *Bibliology - The Doctrine of the Written Word*, (Richardson, TX: Bible.org, undated). <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-bible-inerrant-word-god>.

⁶⁹ Chicago Statement.

⁷⁰ <http://www.josh.org/wp-content/uploads/Bibliographical-Test-Update-02.04.16.pdf>

doctrine again and again in different places and in different ways, man is not without a clear understanding of any major doctrine of Scripture.

The work of God in preserving Scripture and the work of man in transmitting Scripture can be likened to a partnership. As the various books of the Bible were penned, others would want the writing, so copies were prepared. Copies wore out, so new copies were made. Over time Scripture was translated into the primary languages of people world-wide. All this copying and translating was a matter of transmission. Transmission was (and is) man's part who hopefully is looking to the Holy Spirit for enablement.

As we study this partnership, we realize God did not promise to preserve the Scriptures without error as they were transmitted through history. In all, about 1% of the text was subject to question at the time of the rise of intense textual studies two centuries ago. In fact, scholars have compiled a considerable list of errors found in any text, whether it be the Masoretic Text tradition or ancient manuscript finds or the Septuagint.

In recent years with a vast number of manuscripts to make comparisons, textual scholars have never been busier. For example, they can now compare the Dead Sea Scrolls with the current MT and LXX. When there is a difference, they must debate which spelling, which form of a word or even which word is the correct reading. Sometimes the Hebrew MT is the preferred choice. Sometimes the Greek LXX reading is selected. Sometimes a third or fourth textual family is preferred. In this way God has made His people (all believers) partners with Him in the integrity of Scripture so we would continue to strive for the best possible rendering of the autographs. Again, in this partnership God does the necessary preserving while man does the transmitting. Only, preserving must not be equated with inerrancy. This may be a difficult truth for some to grasp but it does have a practical application. Maybe this is another way our Father is trying to tell us He doesn't want us to strain over the exact age of the earth for He Himself has not stated it. It is enough that we know the earth (and the universe) is exceedingly young, probably only 7000-9000 years old.

Far more basic is the authority of Scripture. It is the key issue for the Christian church in this and every age. Thus, various dangers must be avoided. The most obvious is denying the divine origin of Scripture altogether which is an expression of unbelief and a rejection of God. But people of faith can also err in many ways concerning Scripture. The one addressed in these paragraphs is to exaggerate the doctrine of preservation and minimize the work of transmission. A proper balance between these two concepts must be found just as a proper balance between the sovereignty of God and the accountability of man must be found. Happily, the informed Christian will avoid an overemphasis on the preservation of Scripture. For even though we do not have those original autographs, the Scriptures are trustworthy and totally sufficient to unite the one who receives them with the God who gave them.

Someone may object, saying that the scribes had a strict procedure for copying. It is true that beginning about 500 AD an extended family of scribes called Masoretes living in the vicinity of Tiberias Israel began to develop procedures to guard against copying mistakes. Over the centuries other scribes adopted these procedures and by about 800 AD they were pretty much the standard. But that was 1000 years after the LXX and 1200 years after the writing of the last Old Testament book. In that millennium many copying errors crept into the various texts. While most of them are mere matters of spelling, some are matters of the text itself like the erroneous text of Exodus 12:40 in the MT (see chapter 2B, The Witness of Moses.)

Getting the distinction between the doctrines of inerrancy and preservation right is essential in honoring the integrity of God. As creationists declare the primary evidence for God, of all Christians they need to make sure they understand and teach this distinction lest they defeat their very objective.

Chapter Eighteen

Secular Evidence—Those Many Documents Unavailable to Ussher

Writing is considered the cornerstone of an advanced civilization and Sumerian cuneiform, generally regarded as the world's oldest written language, developed exactly where Scripture says the descendants of the Ark survivors migrated—Southern Mesopotamia. In the last century several million Ancient Near East (ANE) written records have been discovered by archaeologists. None of course were available to Ussher. While these are not Scripture, their overwhelming number and consistent testimony provide a solid context for Scripture's early post-Flood history and that context strongly supports the contention of *HB*.

This chapter will focus on the most impressive find, the discovery of the Ebla tablets, while surveying all too briefly some of the many other recently discovered and/or deciphered documents and several radical alternatives to the biblical timeline. They are not included to prove that the Flood occurred before Ussher's 2348 BC Flood date. Scripture does that as the preceding chapters have shown. The discovery of these documents is included to show how well-established secular history agrees with what Scripture itself reveals and how without them Scripture might seem to contain many tall tales.

"I remember it well," wrote archaeologist Allan Millard.⁷¹ Millard was referring to possibly the most astonishing archaeological discovery ever to confirm the biblical findings of this book and shout down 2348 BC. In early October 1975 the Syrian Director of Antiquities visited Millard's dig site with astonishing news: Italian archaeologists digging at Tell Mardikh (Ebla), farther north, had found 16,000 cuneiform tablets written between 2400 and 2250 BC! The tablets provided many important insights into the historical, cultural, economic and political life in northern Mesopotamia around the middle of the 3rd millennium BC (2600-2250 BC). They included a broad range of state-oriented literature—from records of state revenue and diplomatic exchanges with foreign rulers to school texts, dictionaries, hymns and popular legends.

Today a more precise inventory of the Eblaite palace tablets reports that as many as 1,800 complete clay tablets, 4,700 fragments and many thousands of minor chips were found. Most were produced in the forty or so years before 2250 BC when Ebla was invaded and the palace burned, preserving the tablets. While the Ebla documents are outstanding because of their early date, they are but the tip of the iceberg. Cuneiform script was invented in Southern Mesopotamia's Sumer about 3000 BC and continued to be used until near the time of Christ. As other civilizations arose in the region, each adopted this script to its own language. An estimated one-half to two million cuneiform texts have been discovered just in this area. The British Museum alone contains approximately 130,000 texts and fragments. Subject matter covers most of the matters of life, all the way from beer recipes to law codes to mythology to mathematics. Together they document beyond question that civilizations flourished centuries before Ussher's Flood date.

Millard wrote that archaeologists in Syria might dream of finding a few dozen tablets, or even a couple of hundred. At the famous site of Ugarit, a few thousand cuneiform tablets had been dug up over many seasons. Only at Mari, far down the Euphrates, had an Ebla-sized hoard been discovered—between 20,000 and 30,000; they were found in a palace dating to about 1800 B.C.

⁷⁵ Allan R. Millard, "Ebla and the Bible," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, (08:02 April 1992): 18.

Putting the Ebla discovery in perspective he said that if finding a few dozen cuneiform tablets was an archaeologist's dream, finding 16,000 might well be an archaeologist's nightmare! The studying and publishing of a collection of texts of that size would be a gargantuan task. "The texts from Mari, discovered since 1933 are still not fully published."⁷²

Preservation of the Ebla tablets

The Ebla site is located about 35 miles SW of the modern city of Aleppo Syria and is called Tell Mardikh after the nearby village of Mardikh. Ebla was a major trade center and had long been known to archaeologists from ancient writings found in other greater Mesopotamian cities. In 1968 it was positively identified when archaeologists at the site recovered a statue dedicated to the goddess Ishtar. It bore the name of Ibbit-Lim, identifying him as king of Ebla. More levels were uncovered in the following years. The unprecedented palace find was made in the summer of 1975, just 47 years ago.

Time is the enemy of ancient written records. Usually, they eventually succumb to the elements. But an accident of history preserved the Ebla tablets. When invaders burned the palace, the heat baked the tablets, preserving them in what the archaeologists call the Central Archive Room, a 12' by 17' room beside the king's Audience Hall. Immediately south along the same wall a passage led to the Administrative Quarter where the king usually fulfilled his administrative duties. Alfredo Archi writes that similar layouts were found in the royal palaces of Mari and Ugarit. He concludes that the Central Archive Room was of major importance to the successful governing of the kingdom.⁷³

A standard archive tablet measured 9x12 inches. These larger tablets were arranged on shelves, classified by subject like a modern library and were found where they had fallen onto the floor over four millennia earlier. Some even had a title on the edge. Smaller rooms contained specific types of records. "The most southern two rooms of the Administrative Quarter (L. 2982, L. 2984) were reachable only from the Throne-room through a sole narrow entrance, and were protected by thick walls. They might have been the rooms of the treasurer...where the precious metals were stored. One tablet found there, TM.82.G.266, is an account of large numbers of fields, cattle, and sheep, and large amounts of silver and gold, whose more detailed data could have been obtained from documents of the Central Archive."⁷⁴ Other rooms contained daily records which were periodically summarized on the standardized tablets placed in the Central Archive.

The tablets themselves found in these eight to ten locations all close to the Audience Room, the Throne Room and the Administrative Quarter were palace records. They contained not only government and economic documents but also literary texts such as myths, epic narratives, hymns, rituals, gazetteers and even school-related materials. Since they included dictionaries, copybooks

⁷² Millard, Ebla, 18-19.

⁷³ Alfano Archi, *Ebla and Its Archives—Texts, History and Society*, (Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), 79.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 80.

and students scratch pads, some have concluded that Ebla was a major educational center for the training of scribes.⁷⁵

Development of Writing/Deciphering the Ebla Tablets

Though cuneiform had been deciphered a century before, linguists experienced much frustration as they attempted to read the Ebla tablets. An explanation of the development of writing and especially cuneiform explains why. Sumerians in Southern Mesopotamia began developing cuneiform writing late in the fourth millennium BC. Because of the constant interchange of Mesopotamian merchants and traders with Egypt, the Egyptians soon began developing their own writing system called hieroglyphics. Writing systems in other parts of the world developed much later.

The Sumerian tablets were made of dampened clay. The scribe used a stylus to make wedge-shaped marks on them. "Cuneiform" actually means "wedge-shaped." Because of the complicated combinations of the thousand or so signs, only a few people beyond scribes were able to read the tablets. The Egyptians wrote their hieroglyphics mostly on a paper-like substance called papyrus which eventually turns brittle under very dry conditions and moldy under humid conditions.

The two writing systems took different directions. Both began as picture writing. Over time cuneiform symbols evolved to words and finally to sounds while hieroglyphs remained recognizable pictures throughout its 3500-year history. Also, over time the 1000 cuneiform pictures were standardized and reduced in number across the region as they came to represent sounds but the symbols still numbered in the hundreds. As each major Near East civilization near the Mesopotamian population bowl developed, it adapted the cuneiform script to express its own language—Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Eblaite, Persian, Ugaritic, Elamite, Babylonian and Hurrian. In effect cuneiform was the alphabet of the region.

For a modern scholar to read even a single Mesopotamian tablet he first had to learn cuneiform with all its different forms through two and a half millennia of change which was a herculean task in itself and then the specific language he was working with. Eventually the much shorter Phoenician alphabet began replacing cuneiform symbols and by 100 BC all languages written with cuneiform script had abandoned it.

Two languages appeared on the Ebla tablets: Sumerian, which the linguists knew and an unknown language which turned out to be the language spoken in the Kingdom of Ebla. But with Ebla's use of cuneiform the problem got even worse. While the Sumerian scribes were developing a writing system that employed a growing mixture of logograms (a symbol that represents a whole word) and phonetic signs, the Eblaite scribes were way ahead. By the time Ebla fell about 2250 B.C., its scribes had reduced the number of signs to an entirely phonetic system. So the tablets contained a mix of Sumerian, older Eblaite and a newer Eblaite using only phonetic signs.

The development of signs representing sounds was a momentous advance in the history of writing. This newest form of Eblaite was both the earliest example of transcription (rendering sounds in a system invented for another language) and a major simplifying step towards "reader

⁷⁵ <https://eduscapes.com/history/beginnings/3000bce.htm>

friendliness" that would enable a wider spread of literacy in palace, temple and merchant contexts.⁷⁶

Now it is obvious why the archaeologists had such difficulty accurately translating the Ebla tablets. About 80% of the tablets were written using the usual Sumerian combination of logograms and phonetic signs in both the known language of Sumer and the unknown language of Ebla. But the other 20% exhibited the innovative, purely phonetic representation of cuneiform in this unknown Semitic language. Further, symbols representing this new system must have begun slipping into some of the 80% which used the older forms, further tripping up the linguists. Unaware of all this, early translation efforts resulted in some of the most sensational claims and blatant errors of all times in the history of archaeology.

The name of the Hebrew god and all kinds of biblical place names were found in the Ebla tablets—Jerusalem, Gaza, even Sodom and Gomorrah. Over many years bilingual Sumerian/Eblaite vocabulary lists were found among the tablets, allowing the better translation of Eblaite. Eventually the fine nuances of Eblaite were mastered, the mistakes corrected and now more accurate information from the tablets is available. Those remarkable claims such as finding the name of the Hebrew god and biblical place names were translation errors and have been withdrawn.

Subject matter and date of the Ebla documents

In the beginning writing was used primarily for unsophisticated record keeping. Transactions, inventories, and government regulations needed to be recorded. Early libraries began as warehouses for government and religious records. As the library's function expanded, a growing number of scribes was needed. Often they were housed in or near the library. Collections expanded beyond recordkeeping to include information related to math, science, agriculture, and theology.⁷⁷ Ebla was no different. Besides business records, royal letters and diplomatic documents, were accounts of Ebla's rich history dating back to 3000 BC in the Upper Levant. It had trade agreements with numerous other city-states through the centuries. Similar records at Mari and Ur spoke of relations with Ebla. At one point Ebla controlled the trade route all the way from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. At other times it controlled trade from the Mediterranean to a point partway down the Euphrates and at still other times was subject to other kingdoms.

Fast forward to the final 40 or so years of the Ebla tablets: the process of record keeping had become extremely efficient. As previously stated, records of daily transactions were kept in specialized areas. Then according to various schedules, they would be summarized on a standardized tablet which was permanently stored in the Archive Room and the temporary tablet was discarded. One tablet might contain all the transactions of a certain nature for a year. Some business records contained many columns. About 5000 place names were found in the tablets. Some were noted cities in Greater Mesopotamia, but most were towns, villages, hamlets or large estates that helped identify the parties to the transaction.

The archive tablets were dated in various ways, sometimes by the king's name and year of ascension; at other times by his chief minister and year. The tablets we speak of bear the names of

⁷⁶ "Language," *Ebla Tablets*, (Wikipedia). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebla_tablets

⁷⁷ <https://eduscapes.com/history/beginnings/3000bce.htm>

just five succeeding kings or their officials which allowed the archaeologists to date them to the years between 2400 and 2250 BC. The names of some of these five kings have been found on king lists for Ebla in other cities of Mesopotamia.

Through much of Ebla's history, its chief rival was Mari, the kingdom on the Euphrates midway between Ebla and the Gulf. The first Ebla king during the archive period was king Igrish-Halam. Payment of tribute to Mari and the extensive invasion of Eblate cities by the Mariot king Iblul-Il marked his reign as they drained Ebla's resources. Under the next king, Irkab-Damu, Ebla's army succeeded in driving Mari back. This was around 2340 BC. From this point Ebla began to prosper. By the time of the destruction Ebla had developed the highly efficient record system explained above and was beginning to use the newly invented all-phonetic system as well. This growing prosperity and government efficiency are mostly reflected in Central Archive tablets dating to 2300 BC or later.

Documents obviously do not reflect events that occurred after they were written but may reflect not only the times in which they were written but earlier times as well. Ebla's tablets include a massive number of business records of the kingdom, giving a powerful picture of its recent economic activity. But the tablets were something of a library as well. Alfonso Archi's huge 854-page tome covers the detail found in them. He writes "While Mesopotamian royal inscriptions limit themselves to simply mentioning the principal warlike undertakings of the kings, without providing any chronological framework, thanks to the administrative documents from Ebla we now know of each of the successive military expeditions carried out year after year over a period of forty years (2290-2250 BC). These expeditions were all concluded within a year by an exchange of messengers, oaths of peace, and other agreements often broken after a few years."⁷⁸

Ebla with its allies had soundly defeated its great rival down the Euphrates some 75 years before. Now as 2250 BC approached tablets reveal growing desperate measures to stave off the obviously increasing danger from Mari. Mari was regaining its battlefield power in the face of Eblate forces. Among the Eblate allies royal weddings cemented relations with neighboring states. Generous treaties bought friendship with other kingdoms. But Mari was doing the same and all of Ebla's efforts were to no avail. Sometime around 2250 disaster struck. The capital was invaded and conquered. The palace was burned. Who did it? No records have yet been found to identify the victor but all assume it was Mari and/or her allies.

Testimony to Mesopotamian civilization long before 2348 BC

Now for a look at the larger picture. A fragment here, an inscription there, a few artifacts, radiometric dating. They hardly make a case for 2348 BC being too late. Even the 20,000-30,000 documents and fragments at Mari dating around 1800 BC can be explained by those using the Ussher chronology approach.

But the dates Ebla establishes are formidable. Archaeologists have determined that while Ebla was attacked and destroyed at various times, it was generally occupied between 3000 BC and 1500 BC. Yet in just 150 years of that 1500-year period (2400 B.C.-2250 B.C.), the cuneiform records reveal that an astonishing civilization developed under five kings, complete with division of labor, education and highly specialized jobs. Women held positions in government and made decisions.

⁷⁸ Archi, *Ebla and Its Archives*, 262.

By the time of its fall an estimated 12,000 civil workers served the palace, nearly 1000 of which were involved in record keeping. The capital city and its suburbs contained a quarter of a million people. The king was the equivalent of a modern CEO of a multinational corporation.

Ebla's non-economic tablets contained a host of additional subjects. Most crucial are its records of past rulers, military battles and relations with other kingdoms. To some extent they reflect Ebla's history from its founding around 3000 BC until 2250 BC. On the other hand, since Mari's tablets date to 1800 BC, those tablets reflect the history of that kingdom from about 2600 B.C. to its fall, confirming the overlapping Mari time with Ebla.

To restate, most of the Ebla palace tablets were written over just a 40-year period of Ebla's 1500-year history, from about 2290-2250 BC. Yet they only exist because of the rarest of events, baked hard by a fire. How many were written during the rest of Ebla's 1500-year history that perished through the ages? What about the cuneiform documents written in other Mesopotamian cities? Sumer had 18 principal cities in Southern Mesopotamia around 2000 BC. Yet most have produced only small quantities of tablets and some of those cities have yet to even be identified. On the other hand, travelers to Ur in the 18th and 19th centuries said the ground was so strewn with tablets that it was hard to avoid stepping on them. Then there are the other dozen or so major cities of the Greater Near East. They also were able to write yet in most of them archaeologists have found few tablets.

Would it be too much to say that hundreds of millions of tablets were written in that area during the nearly three millennia in which cuneiform script was used? Greater Mesopotamia contained a dozen major nations or city-states and numerous lesser people groups that authenticated each other in dozens of ways. The same picture was found across the region. First one dominated, then another. They traded with each other. They fought with each other. They recorded treaties, histories of the area, lists of kings, names of buildings, even solar and lunar eclipses. They told stories about the Creator. In a myriad of ways they authenticated each other. How many are needed to establish beyond question that civilization was well established going back to 3000 BC?

What are the 2348 BC people going to do? Denying Ebla's library is impossible. It was enormous. Its words testify to highly organized civilizations at a time when the loudest voices in the creation science movement say Noah's Flood occurred. People like Josephus, the church fathers and Ussher were unaware of the Archive's existence. It had disappeared from human knowledge from about 2250 BC until 1975 AD. Now it has been found and fascinates us with its history. By comparison most of the 900 Dead Sea Scrolls consist of collections of verses or part of a chapter of the Bible. Only one, the Isaiah Scroll, contains a complete book of the Bible—the full text of all 66 chapters of that book.

Some will claim this is all made up, that these are just the words of those with academic credentials and that the Word of God is greater than any academic credential. Such a claim is a half-truth. For certain the Word of God is greater than any academic credential. But the Word of God itself testifies to much time passing after the Flood before Abraham was born in Sumerian Ur. As to the genealogy of Shem, it is better understood as a record of 45-65 generations than ten. This places the Flood 1300-1900 years earlier than those who defend the Ussher date. Nevertheless, recognizing a major new idea in Scripture can take years or even lifetimes. Some will not accept this truth until they get to heaven.

Putting the Discovery of Written Records in Perspective

One of the early criticisms of the Bible was that Moses (1526 B.C-1406 B.C.) could not have written the Pentateuch since writing was not yet invented. Now we learn that people wrote 1500 years before Moses. But those thousand or so cuneiform symbols limited reading and writing to a select few. Even at the time when most of the Ebla tablets were written between 2290 and 2250 BC, people in the Kingdom of Ebla still had to learn some 600 symbols to read and write. One hundred years later Abraham grew up in Ur where boys learned to read and write and even do modern high school math, all using the cuneiform system of writing. Amazingly cuneiform continued to be used until just several hundred years before Christ. In contrast the Phoenician Alphabet which appeared around 1000 BC contained 22 consonants and no vowels. It was spread by Phoenician merchants and adopted with modifications by Greeks and Hebrews, among many other peoples in that region.

In contrast with these written records are other evidences that speak of extensive human activity in the region where the Flood survivors began to rebuild the world's population. Some, like radio isotope dating, are misdirected, building on the premise that the world is billions of years old, so its conclusion supports its premise and that is a logical fallacy called circular reasoning. Even such approaches as pottery dating and the use of materials for tools such as stone, bronze and iron can be misleading. But written documents have the greatest credibility and to some extent can be weighed objectively.

Where did the Church Fathers and Bishop Ussher go wrong? They failed to recognize the hidden beauty of Hebrew genealogies and instead treated those genealogies as secular societies used them. They overlooked the gradual decline of longevity after the Flood and the 1300-1900 years of history that passed between Eber and Peleg.

The Ebla tablets plus tens of thousands found at other locations reveal exactly what the Bible records of life recovering after the world-wide Flood. As descendants of the eight Ark survivors migrated from the mountains of Ararat to the plains of Southern Mesopotamia over the next 200 years, they defied God's instructions to repopulate the entire earth and founded the first advanced civilization at Babel. While they did not develop a written language, they did build a city and a tower reaching to heaven. God saw what they were doing and stated "Nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:6). In judgment God confused their language which caused this advanced civilization to reproduce itself in dozens of locations across Greater Mesopotamia and Arabia.

Explorers took this advanced civilization to other favorable locations to establish similar civilizations in the river valleys of Egypt, India and China. Those who encountered the Ice Age in the upper latitudes adopted primitive Stone Age hunting-gathering lifestyles to survive. This is the picture Scripture paints and it is confirmed by the findings of archaeology. Archaeologists puzzle over why civilization developed that specific way in the very recent historic past. The Bible has the answer—the eight Ark survivors reestablished mankind after the Great Flood in a world of new land forms and climate.

Funerary Avenues in Arabia

Breaking headlines reported a large population in Saudi Arabia at the time of Job. On 1/12/2022, multiple news stories on the Internet reported the discovery of vast numbers of tombs in Saudi Arabia dating between 2600 and 2000 BC. The tombs line major routes to the north of Medina Arabia connecting long-established centers. These networks are called *funerary avenues*.

They stretch “for hundreds of kilometers and possibly thousands.” While they are well known to local residents, archaeologists only recently took serious interest in them. Over the last year they have counted around 18,000 tombs but expect to spend years pursuing this new field of research and find many more.

Walls up to six feet high surround each tomb. In aerial photographs they are obvious and at times tightly packed together. The tombs are either round or pendant in shape, and are still standing to their original height. “The level of preservation is unbelievable,” said one archaeologist. It is initially thought that the occupants farmed the land nearby and their tombs were placed on the highway so their descendants would remember them. A similar custom was linked to Greece and Rome in later history. Since similar tombs are found in Yemen, the avenues may stretch that far.

(Aside-Why did relatives stop building them around 2000 BC? *HB* would answer: “The Ice Age had come to an end so the rain it delivered stopped, the vegetation dried up, the population moved away and the land has been barren, uninhabitable desert ever since.”)

This 4,500-year-old Arabian network of highways lined with well-preserved tombs joins Ebla’s thousands of written documents dated between 2400 and 2250 BC to verify that civilization was going full tilt when some teach the Flood occurred. Therefore, the idea found in *HB* that Moses followed the common Hebrew practice of omitting generations when he recorded Shem’s list can hardly be dismissed.

Claims of Alternate ANE chronologies

David Rohl maintains that the chronology of pharaohs is wrong, that the Middle Kingdom dates are 300 years too early. He says dynasties in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt coexisted but scholars have treated their years linearly so when the duplications are removed Egypt’s chronology agrees with his dating of the Exodus. A leading creation scientist cites Rohl’s work to justify accepting Shem’s genealogy as complete so just who is David Rohl and what do real scholars think of his work?

Rohl says he became enamored with Egypt at the age of 11 when his family was treated to a Nile River boat ride on King Farouk’s stern wheeler. In adulthood he formed a rock band and recorded several albums. He worked as a sound technician but on the side he read about ancient Egyptian and Near East history. He had a fertile imagination and began writing fiction with the Near East as background. In his forties he earned a bachelor degree in Egyptian studies and continues to promote his ideas about Egyptian chronology.

What does the scholarly world think of his chronology? No Egyptologist has endorsed his idea. Kenneth Kitchen, renowned Egyptologist has a single word for 300 too many years in the Egyptian chronology, “nonsense.” As to Rohl’s beliefs, he is an agnostic. He believes the Bible is a record of ancient history just like many other histories but he does not believe it is the inspired Word of God. Why would any creationist place greater faith in this man than in true inerrancy biblical scholars? There can be but one answer—Rohl confirms their misinterpretation of Hebrew genealogies.

Truth be told, secular scholars have produced a range of chronologies—short, shorter, long, longer, median, etc. Their median chronology seems to work pretty well with the biblical chronology once Hebrew genealogical practice is factored in. The shortened chronologies of Rohl and others actually conflict with the Scriptural timeline.

Claim that the Bible Borrowed from Cuneiform Tablets

An entire pole (or world) away is a line of secular thinking summarized by free-lance writer Joshua Mark that myths found in ancient cuneiform tablets were borrowed and embellished by Jewish scribes and became stories in the Bible. The following quotes are taken from an article by him published in *Ancient History Encyclopedia*:⁷⁹ “When the ancient cuneiform tablets of Mesopotamia were discovered and deciphered in the late 19th century CE, they would literally transform human understanding of history.”

How did they transform mankind’s understanding of history? Mark explains, “Prior to their discovery the Bible was considered the oldest and most authoritative book in the world. The brilliant scholar and translator George Smith (1840-1876 CE) changed the understanding of history with his translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in 1872 CE. This translation allowed other cuneiform tablets to be interpreted which overturned the traditional understanding of the biblical version of history and made room for scholarly, objective explanations of history to move forward.”

How did *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and other cuneiform tablets replace the Bible’s version of history? Mark continues: “Many biblical texts were thought to be original until cuneiform was deciphered. The Fall of Man and the Great Flood were understood as literal events in human history dictated by God to the author (or authors) of Genesis but were now recognized as Mesopotamian myths in *The Myth of Etana* and the *Atrahasis* which Hebrew scribes had embellished. The Garden of Eden could now be understood as a myth derived from *The Enuma Elish* and other Mesopotamian works. The Book of Job, far from being an actual historical account of an individual’s unjust suffering, could now be recognized as a literary piece belonging to a Mesopotamian tradition following the discovery of the earlier *Ludlul-Bel-Nimegi* text which relates a similar story.”

Wait a minute! Mark is saying that the stories found in the Torah written or edited by Moses during Israel’s 40 years of wilderness wandering and taught by Christians as authentic revelations from God is a false explanation of their origin. Rather, he says, they were Mesopotamian myths that preceded Moses who borrowed and embellished them. But couldn’t it be the other way around? Couldn’t those biblical events have just as well happened first and over the millennia as they were told and retold, they were distorted into the recorded Mesopotamian myths? The dates of those tablets and the actual events are millennia apart. The tablets translated by George Smith dated to the early 2nd millennium BC. The Flood occurred two millennia before the date of those tablets and the stories of Adam and Eve and the Fall occurred four millennia before. If the Babylonian myths reflected true events that happened millennia before, wouldn’t they be greatly distorted as they were told and retold for those thousands of years?

Even more important the quality of the Babylonian stories is childish in comparison with these stories recorded in the Bible. These scholars who are making room for objective explanations of history don’t spend much time with the details of those Babylonian myths. Gilgamesh’s record of the Ark, for instance, describes it as a cube, 100 x 100 x 100. How long would its passengers last as this cube tumbled in the waters of the Great Flood? But, of course, it is just a myth so it is not surprising that its details are ridiculous. Why don’t these critics examine the details of the biblical

⁷⁹ Joshua J Mark, “Cuneiform,” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, 3/15/18; <https://www.ancient.eu/cuneiform/>.

story of the Flood? They would quickly learn that the dimensions of the Bible's Ark are as up to date as those of today's ocean-going freighters. The two-page story about the undeserved suffering of a Babylonian man has the quality of a grade schooler's composition when compared with the forty-two chapters of the Book of Job and its host of brilliant ideas.

Mark has it backwards. As the stories of early human history beginning with Adam were told and retold, they would have become more and more distorted until they landed in the writings of ancient Mesopotamia millennia later as myths and legends. Mark's explanation is the idea of scientific evolution applied to the field of ancient literature—things working their way to perfection rather than drifting downhill. Anyone working in the legal field of court testimony knows the difficulty of a witness keeping his facts straight. Repeating second hand information becomes even less reliable and third hand information is frequently dismissed as uncertain. Gilgamesh's exploits placed side by side with Holy Scripture are as different as night and day, as great as the difference between children playing soccer on a vacant lot and a contest between leading professional soccer teams.

The on-line Ancient History Encyclopedia carrying Mark's piece was founded in 2009 with the mission of improving history education worldwide. Its vision is to create open-minded and tolerant societies. It endeavors to help teachers, students and schools by providing reliable resources for free. It is now the largest and most popular history encyclopedia on the internet, recommended by the likes of Oxford, Michigan State and the University of Minnesota. How alarming that the world's largest and most popular history encyclopedia on the internet is publishing such disinformation. But one thing the article does do is highlight just how superior the record of Scripture is over the clouded minds of those captive to the enemy.

This book, *The Hidden Beauty of Hebrew Genealogies*, is not about what the many learned disciplines say although they say much. Nor does it put a spin on what the Bible reveals. Rather it carefully examines in great detail the very Word of God on the subject. An enormous amount of material has been examined. Consistently and without exception, Scripture supports the premise of this book. At the same time support against it has evaporated into thin air. In the end it is the case against it that is missing. So for seventeen chapters this book has focused primarily on just one source—Scripture. Most will confess to shock in finding that as many as 55 generations and maybe even more were omitted from Shem's genealogy, but the examination of Scripture leads to such a conclusion.

Why wasn't this book written long before by any of the tens of thousands of capable Bible scholars? Why wasn't it written even as early as the Church Fathers? This book is filled with the answers—the deficiency of Exodus 12:40, historical errors, ignorance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ebla Tablets, lack of creation models for the Flood and ignorance of the Ice Age. The Church Fathers had none of these resources to assist them. Neither did Ussher, Newton or the KJV translators. Rather, these resources are all recent. As they came to light, they led to corrections of misinterpretations of Scripture. In effect God has used in recent times an army of folks in various disciplines to provide the raw material for this book. Our hat is off to them. So the current picture allows for this book and the many others that will surely follow.

Chapter Nineteen – Conclusion

Seventeen chapters on biblical genealogies with an additional chapter of confirming secular history? Yes, but Scripture warns us to be careful with them. Chapter one observed the Apostle Paul's directive to Timothy:

³As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach false doctrine ⁴or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies. These promote empty speculations rather than God's plan, which operates by faith. ⁵Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have departed from these and turned aside to fruitless discussion. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, although they don't understand what they are saying or what they are insisting on. 1 Timothy 1:3-7 (CSB).

In a word genealogies can be harmful. They can even be used to teach false doctrine. They can go on and on, advance myths and promote speculation as opposed to God's plan. In contrast, this book has restricted itself to what Scripture discloses of them. It has functioned under the principle Paul would later write Timothy that "All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable" (II Timothy 3:16). The revelation God has given concerning genealogies cannot be harmful; only its distortions can be.

We began with the genealogy of Aaron listing four names to cover four centuries. Obviously, names were skipped. Some therefore conclude Israel didn't sojourn in Egypt for four centuries. Chapter two acknowledged that not just Moses, but God and Stephen also testified to four centuries in Egypt. When Joseph invited his father to move to Egypt to survive the famine, Jacob paused before departing the land of promise. God spoke to him, repeating the promises He gave to Abraham and Isaac one last time. God stated specifically that it would be in Egypt that Jacob's descendants would increase to the numbers that comprise a nation. Thus, he was not to fear moving to Egypt.

Paul spoke of 430-years from the promise to the law. Since Paul would not contradict God (Genesis 15:13), his words must be interpreted to mean Israel would sojourn in Egypt 430-years following those many times God gave the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and concluding when He gave the law at Mount Sinai. Thus, Paul's words also support four centuries in Egypt.

Others reply, "What about Abraham's call? Doesn't the order of the text suggest it came in Haran, not Ur? They conclude, "Those 430-years began with God's call to Abraham in Haran and ended with the Exodus." Chapters three and four corrected this, showing conclusively that Abraham's calling from God came to him at Ur of the Chaldees in southern Mesopotamia, not in Haran. As to the order of the text, Scripture finishes the Terah section in Genesis 11 before beginning the Abraham section in chapter 12. In addition, numerous other misinterpretations in the accounts of Abraham and Jacob used to support the 215-year error are corrected.

Chapter five is the heart of this book. It explored many of the over 300 instances in the Old Testament where filial terms are used in a broad sense. While "son" and "father" normally refer to an immediate relationship, Hebrew writers often used them in the sense of someone further down or up the line. When filial terms were used this way in a genealogy, that list would be incomplete. Chapter six presented 16 examples of genealogies that skip generations by using filial terms in a broad sense.

Creation is the primary evidence for the existence of God. About two centuries ago the idea of evolution arose. Evolution's explanation for the existence of all things is time, not God. According to evolution billions of years brought about the material universe. The Bible indicates God created the universe and man thousands, not billions of years ago. Creationists reject the idea of vast eons of time. But some have added the years in the genealogies of Shem and Adam to give specific dates for the Flood and Creation. If those lists are incomplete, their dates are wrong and they discredit creation science.

Chapter seven addresses Shem's list and shows that it skips 35-55 generations, pushing the date of the Flood back many years. This finding is consistent with the thinking of most Old Testament inerrancy scholars that Shem's list is incomplete. The approximate year of the Flood dogmatically declared by certain fellow believers who insist that Shem's list is complete is beyond doubt too late. Nowhere in Scripture is the date for the Flood given or even hinted at. This book concludes that at best Shem's genealogy only provides a range of years in which the Flood occurred. Those who date the Flood by adding the numbers in Shem's list provide an easy target for dismissing all who appeal to the Bible as authoritative.

The purpose of most biblical genealogies is to relate descendants to forefathers and forefathers to descendants without the necessity of naming every person in the genealogical line. When this purpose is understood, conflicts between the words of Scripture and the numbers found in the genealogies are avoided. Thus, a true understanding of the genealogies glorifies God as we handle His Word. That has been the goal of this book. It has found that beyond question Hebrew genealogies do not always consist of immediate father-son dependencies. This understanding frees us from wresting other passages of Scriptures in an effort to date the earth to an exact number of years as did Archbishop James Ussher in *Annals of the World*. Yet, neither do we accept evolution's billions-of-years view.

Paul's words about genealogies come at the beginning of his letter to Timothy. He will speak on many subjects before he is done but this message was uppermost in his mind. He states his motive for bringing up the subject: "The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." I Timothy 1:5. Paul loved the new Ephesian converts as he loved all converts. He didn't want to see their Christian lives bound by false Bible teaching. His motive was pure, his conscience unviolated, his faith intact.

But according to Paul those who taught on genealogies had a different motive. It was not a careful investigation to see what the Old Testament actually taught. Their goal was to so teach genealogies that gentiles would be forced to embrace the Mosaic law and in effect become Jewish proselytes. Paul said they did not understand what they were talking about (1:7). Ephesians chapters two and three shows that gentiles came to Christ apart from the law. Paul did not identify those who incorrectly taught genealogies. He simply refers to them as "Certain persons" (1:6). Timothy would know who Paul was referring to.

Fast forward to today. Certain persons teach that the Bible reveals the dates of the Flood and Creation. They say those dates are revealed in the genealogies of Shem (Genesis 11) and Adam (Genesis 5). They say that adding the numbers in Shem's list discloses the date of the Flood and continuing by adding the numbers in Adam's list discloses the date of Creation. But those dates are not found in Scripture and it would seem that such important dates would be clearly stated if God wanted them known. So instead of appealing to the clear statements of Scripture, these certain brethren appeal to genealogies.

But what is their motive? The motive of those Paul wrote Timothy about was no secret. It was to force gentiles to accept the entire Mosaic Law. One of their tools was an erroneous teaching of genealogies. Now for the critical question: what is the motive of those who appeal to genealogies today? If it is to learn what the Bible teaches about genealogies as this book attempts to do, that would be a good motive. If their motive is to study those early Hebrew genealogies, they would address them at length, but they don't. Rather, their motive is something else. It is an attempt to declare those elusive dates.

Challenge to the reader: study the arguments of this book. Are they sound? Do they make sense? Are they correct? If you have come to believe so, you will become a part of history, helping to correct a biblical error that has persisted in the church for two thousand years. What will you accomplish? Unbelievers will not be impressed with your new view that maybe the earth is 2000 years older than Bible students previously thought. But the global Flood depositing the many sedimentary layers on the surface of the earth about 3600 to 4300 BC will impress some. Much evidence supports such a range of dates. It will be hard to refute. This will result in some unbelievers having a higher regard for the Bible and will also support the work of creation scientists. For believers, it will further confirm that the Bible is true history.

So much of the Bible includes genealogies that we would be amiss in not understanding the Holy Spirit's true purpose for them. Rightly understood they are a blessing and have been a great blessing to the author. Hopefully these truths will likewise inform your faith and make it stronger.

In our zeal for the inerrancy of the Scriptures, we learned more about the dear souls God included in His word along with their exploits and failures. We gained new insights into relationships and their consequences. People and their relationships are important to God—even our names—even our organization—what we do for Him and how we do it. In the end our biggest concern is what the hymn writer said:

***Lord, I care not for riches, neither silver nor gold,
I would make sure of Heaven, I would enter the fold.
In the book of Thy kingdom with its pages so fair
Tell me, Jesus my Savior, Is my name written there?
Is my name written there?
On the page white and fair?
In the book of Thy kingdom,
Is my name written there?***

Therefore, as we leave this subject of Hebrew genealogies with over 160,000 words, we hope no one will still be asking what difference 2000 years of human history makes anyway and, really, what's the big deal?

To them we answer, after all, what difference does correct Bible teaching make anyway? It makes a huge difference. There is a grave penalty for teaching the Word of God incorrectly. James 3:1 gives this sober warning: "Be not many of you teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive the heavier judgment." Clearly God does not take incorrect Bible teaching lightly and if He doesn't, neither should we.

Glory to God. Lloyd Tontz Anderson, (Seventh Edition)

Appendix

Appendix A: Major Ideas of Book

Arguments for Omitted Generations between Eber and Peleg

Solving the Problem of Flood Dates that Are Too Late

The Hidden Beauty of Hebrew Genealogies: Harmonizing Old Testament Words and Numbers studies the Scriptural use, records and context of Hebrew genealogies as they relate to the date of the Flood. The key issue is whether Hebrew genealogies are abbreviated, how frequently and under what circumstances. The first four chapters are needed just to present an open/shut case for the condensing of the Levi-Aaron list of Exodus 6 and Numbers 26. The approach of the book is to observe what the inerrant Scriptures themselves say and then draw conclusions from those observations which the reader can weigh. It is not a survey of what others have said. That must be left to others. It concludes that 35-55 generations are omitted between Eber and Peleg (E&P) and that the Flood happened 1500 to 2100 years earlier than generally understood.

This book is long because so many issues cloud the subject—from the nature of Hebrew genealogies to the lives of the Patriarchs to the accuracy of the existing text through history and on and on. Both little known and even new thoughts are found throughout the reading. Below is a summary of the book's findings, but their support will only be discovered through the reading of the entire book. They are listed in the order of the most relevant findings to the conclusion of the book. Upon completing the book, it should be clear whether its conclusion is reasonably supported.

1. The gradual decrease of longevity after the Flood with one exception. Human longevity slowly decreased after the Flood from 438 to 70 years. In Shem's record of Genesis 11 the decline between the first and second names was five years and between the fourth and sixth names was 4.5 years per generation. This gradual decline continued until Moses' day at rates as high as seven or eight years per generation with one exception. The decline between the third and fourth names was 225 years or 61% of the total 368-year decline. While it appears to come between two otherwise straight-forward consecutive generations, it is the clue to the omission of many, many generations.

2. An immediate halving of Post-Flood Lifespans. While this study concludes that the decline between Eber and Peleg was the result of omitting an estimated 35-55 generations, it must be distinguished from the immediate halving of post-Flood lifespans. Scripture records that those who lived and died before the Flood all lived about 900 years. Without exception all eight listed names lived about that long. Yet the first three generations born after the Flood lived just half as long. These are facts declared by Scripture.

3. Recognizing a sufficient cause for the immediate halving. What caused the immediate halving? Recognizing the Flood's unimaginable violence triggers the solution. Twice God spoke of the Flood destroying the earth (Genesis 6:13; 9:11). The planet remained but its crust was wracked by forces beyond comprehension. After this violence the reproductive genetics of all on the Ark could only produce progeny living half as long as those who lived and died before the Flood. Longevity charts of the past included Noah and Shem. They were born with pre-Flood genetics, but they lived after the Flood as well so they are exceptions. Consequently, they cannot be used to determine longevity declines.

4. The misguided chrono-genealogy interpretation. Some suggest that the numbers when each father had his son in Genesis 11 establish a chronology and even if there are omitted names, the number marks the years until the next named son. The issue here is how to treat details about the parents preceding an omitted name. That issue is solved with the Levi genealogy of Exodus 6 and Numbers 26. The names involved are Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron. Names are omitted between Amram and Aaron. Six details are given about Amram's wife—her name, her father (Levi), her country of birth, etc. They are true of the mother of Amram's unnamed son, not Aaron who was born 300 years after Amram. Chapter one of *Hidden Beauty* spells this out in careful detail. The omission of names between Amram and Aaron is indisputable.

5. The purpose of the begat numbers. Chrono-genealogy advocates support their argument by saying the purpose for giving each father's age when he begat his heir in Genesis 11 is to provide a timeline of history. Yet nowhere does Scripture state this or any other purpose for providing those numbers. If Moses summed them or if they were summed elsewhere in Scripture, we would know beyond doubt that they were provided to be summed. Elsewhere Scripture provides critical numbers and even sums entire periods of time: lifespans of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 430-year sojourn in Egypt; 480-year period between the Exodus and the Temple. It might be argued that the silence of Scripture is an argument from silence and could just as easily be used for adding those numbers. But on the face of it, which is more likely—that the numbers were not added because they would give the wrong answer or that they were not added because the reader was expected to add them?

6. Israel's sojourn in Egypt: 430, not 215-years. Of all the dates for the Flood determined by summing the numbers of Shem's list, the 2348 BC date published in 1650 by Archbishop James Ussher is the best known. Ussher was a first-rate Bible scholar but he was limited to the sources of his day and they contained multiple errors, especially a textual problem in Exodus 12:40. As a result, like most before him he understood Moses' words to support a 215-year Egyptian sojourn. Two hundred years after Ussher's death the textual problem was finally solved. Today, nearly every modern English Bible reads "The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430-years." But all along Scripture had provided four witnesses to a 430-year sojourn in Egypt: God (Genesis 15:16), Moses (Exodus 12:40), Stephen (Acts 7:6) and Paul (Galatians 3:17).

7. Questionable Scriptural Interpretations. Numerous unreasonable interpretations and even contradictions appear when Shem's genealogy is viewed as complete. In chapter 15 *Hidden Beauty* lists around 45 that were identified and corrected in the preceding chapters and it certainly did not find them all. These difficulties disappear when the Bible student acknowledges the omission of 35-55 names.

8. The practice of condensing Hebrew genealogies. It is a fact that Old Testament genealogies, at times, are abbreviated. It was a Hebrew practice. *Hidden Beauty* gives 16 examples in chapters six and seven. Even the line from Perez to David was shrunk by about 2/3rds in Ruth 4 (ten names instead of an estimated 27-30) and repeated in exactly the same order in I Chronicles 2, Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Intentionally condensing Shem's genealogy was consistent with Hebrew practice.

9. The simplicity of Hebrew family terms. The nature of Hebrew kinship terms makes abbreviating genealogies possible. Hebrews used simple words for family relationships. “Son” could refer to a father’s immediate male offspring, his grandson or even a distant descendant. Matthew 1:1 uses “son” in this very way: “Jesus Christ, the son of David.” Even the verb “to bear, to beget” was used in this way. This simplicity allowed much flexibility in expressing relationships based on birth. It allowed for brevity. A long list could be shortened to just the tribe, clan and family before naming the individual. The primary purpose of Hebrew lists was to identify ancestors with descendants and descendants with ancestors. Therefore, in most cases a complete list was at the discretion of the author.

10. The biblical pattern of condensed genealogies. Scripture (often) follows a pattern when generations are skipped and Shem’s list follows this pattern—the gap comes after three consecutive names. When more time is covered, lists contain more structure. The following examples work from the simplest structure to the most extensive. The purpose of omitting names was efficiency. Why trouble the reader with numerous unknown people when it was unnecessary? Various clues often help to estimate how many generations were omitted.

Aaron’s list began with the typical three names and ends with his: Levi-Kohath-Amram-(an 8 to 12 generation gap)-Aaron. Korah who challenged Aaron’s leadership and Dathan and Abiram, who challenged Moses’ leadership, follow the pattern of Aaron’s list: Levi-Kohath-Izhar-(an 8 to 12 generation gap)-Korah; Reuben-Pallu-Eliab-(a 9 to 13 generation gap)-Dathan and Abiram. For clarity the structure may also include the father or even the grandfather of the individual: Judah (tribe)-Zerah (clan)-Zabdi (family)-(a 10 to 14 generation gap)-Carmi (father)-Achan. The Judah-David list covers 900 years so it contains more structure. It consists of ten names in three groups of three consecutive names separated by two gaps and concludes with David: Perez (son of Judah)-Hezron-Ram-gap of 8 to 10 generations; Amminadab-Nashon-Salmon-gap of 9 to 11 generations; Boaz-Obed-Jesse (third set of three consecutive names)-David.

Shem’s list covers about 2000 years and follows the structure of David’s list. It consists of ten names beginning with the patriarch Shem followed by three groups of three names. Group one consists of the first three generations born after the Flood. Group two consists of the three names immediately following the 35-55 generation gap. Group three consists of the three names of Abraham’s immediate family: his grandfather, father and himself. It is possible that a small gap exists between the second and third sets of names. Here is the pattern: Shem (born before the Flood); Arpachshad-Shelah-Eber-35 to 55 generation gap; Peleg-Reu-Serug-a possible brief gap of up to six names; Nahor-Terah-Abraham.

11. The meaning of Peleg’s name. A strong argument for the late Flood date has been that Peleg’s name means “to divide” and that he was given this name because shortly before his birth God divided the human race by languages at the Tower of Babel judgment. Summing the years indicates he was born 101 years after the Flood. Since four generations is reasonable for 101 years, this argument concludes that no names are missing. Language scholar and Hebrew professor Bernard E Northrup (1925-2008) observed that Peleg’s name meant “divided by water,” not merely “to divide.” He got this meaning from an extensive study of the Hebrew words formed from the root of Peleg’s name (PLG). Of the 17 times the noun is found in the Old Testament, Strong found it meant stream or river ten times (Strong word number 6378) and the son of Eber seven times (word #6379). Rivers and streams obviously divide things.

In a broader search, whether Northrup looked at Hebrew PLG words in their other parts of speech, PLG words in related Semitic languages and even PLG words in unrelated languages, those three letters often had something to do with water or a division related to water. Northrup found 18 such PLG words associated with water in classical Greek alone. Even in English he found PLG words associated with water: pelagic depths and archipelago. While he believed the division was caused by the breakup of the super continent, current thinking points to Ice Age melt raising sea level to increase open water distances between continents and islands. Peleg meaning “divided by water” would place his birth at the end of the Ice Age, over 1000 years after the Flood.

12. Too little time between the Flood and Babel. If the Babel judgment did occur just 101 years after the Flood, not enough workers would have been available to build the city and part of the tower. *Hidden Beauty* shows there would have been fewer than 100. This time argument is another strike against saying Peleg’s name marks the date when God stopped man from building the Tower of Babel by dividing his speech. Actually, the text seems to grant the latitude of his entire lifespan. Since God’s judgment at Babel was an immediate act, a process such as the final period of the Ice Age melt is a better fit for the meaning of Peleg’s name.

13. The larger numbers in the Septuagint (LXX). Depending on versions, the LXX reports up to 900 more years in the Shem line than the Masoretic Text (MT), placing the Flood up to a millennium earlier than Ussher’s 2348 BC date. The LXX formed as follows: about 250 BC Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt requested that Jewish scholars from Jerusalem translate their Hebrew Torah into Greek for his growing library. These scribes had different Hebrew texts to choose from. This fact was unknown until recently as scholars discovered through exhaustive studies of the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls that they fall into different textual groups. Why would the scribes choose from a textual group with larger numbers unless there was a sense that the Flood was earlier than a summing of MT numbers indicated? Further, the larger numbers of the LXX entered the Hebrew textual tradition well before 250 BC. Even further, the LXX was the Old Testament of Christians for a thousand years. Today, some creation scientists accept these larger numbers because they are convinced of an earlier Flood date. The existence of the LXX shows that even before 250 BC some Jews preferred an earlier date for the Flood and this alerts today’s students to watch for the possibility of more time as they study Shem’s list in the MT.

14. The context of the Book of Job. Before Northrup’s career change that led to teaching Hebrew for 45 years (point #11), he trained to be a geologist. During his teaching career he assisted Bible translators in foreign countries. Due to his faith that God’s works (geology) would agree with His Word (the Bible) during his travels he visited and studied more geological sites than many career geologists. He was speaking at a conference in 1971 when it struck him that the Book of Job was an Ice Age book. Since the Ice Age was previously poorly understood, it is not surprising that expositors did not recognize the 15 or so different kinds of Ice Age phenomena Northrup observed in Job.

Expositors generally missed that God in His creation discourse (Job 38-41) was establishing an extended record of the marvelous nature of His creation which showed His love for mankind and Job. Due to evolution, they also misidentified the dinosaur God described as the long-necked, long-tailed Behemoth of Job 40. Further, they missed the true identity of the only creature specifically named in the creation account and elaborated on by its Creator Himself in Job 41 with as many verses as the entire creation account of Genesis 1:1-2:3. Finally, they failed to see that God’s true

purpose in allowing Job's suffering was to establish at the earliest opportunity the malicious intent of Satan towards humanity as portrayed in the sea monster and Job 1-2. Ice Age phenomena and Jordan's dinosaurs were gone by the time Abraham entered Canaan 500 years later. *Hidden Beauty* spends three chapters on the antiquity of the book of Job which shouts that Shem's list omits many generations.

15. Job's 280-year lifespan. How long did Job live? Simple logic applied to the clear statements of Scripture provides the answer. First, Scripture established a truth: "The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10) and "The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12). The passage speaks of three categories of blessing: livestock, family and years. Since his first livestock were lost forever, God indeed gave him twice as many as before. But since his first ten children were in heaven, he received just ten more, so that in heaven he truly would have twice as many. As to his years before the ordeal, he still had those experiences of walking with the LORD and building a ranching empire. They were like his children so he would only need 140 more to double them to 280. By comparison Peleg lived 239 years. The decline of longevity was 4-5 years per generation at that point so Job's 280 years places his birth 8-9 generations before Peleg or about 2675 BC. If Shem's list is not shortened **before** Peleg, Job would have been born before the Flood which is impossible. Job's 280-year lifespan may be a radically new idea to the reader and take some deep thinking to accept but the logic of animals vs children and the early context of the book support it.

16. The symmetrical Lists of Adam, Shem, Terah, Perez and Gospel of Matthew. Shem's genealogy (Genesis 11:10-22) follows a pattern of structuring—ten names in it (Shem-Abraham) to balance the ten from creation to the Flood (Adam-Noah, Genesis 5). Meredith Kline of covenant theology fame sees a third set of ten names in Terah's extended family. Genesis 11:27-30 lists eight names while grandsons, Ishmael and Isaac, are found later in Genesis. He scores points on this idea by observing that Iscah, an otherwise obscure granddaughter is named solely to bring the number to ten. The Perez-David list of Ruth 4 also contains 10 names while omitting as many as 21 and is found in I Chronicles, Matthew and Luke. Matthew's genealogy of Christ is also structured—three sets of double sevens stretching from Abraham to Christ.

The structuring of lists reflects the Hebrews' love for certain numbers. Ten and seven were among the most favored. Whether a genealogical list or simply a listing of an extended family as in the case of Terah, those favored numbers are found in five associated lists. How could five perfectly balanced lists containing over 100 names come about by chance? The odds must be great. More likely the authors under divine guidance structured them. While structuring does not demand omitting names, it raises a substantial possibility. Some inerrancy Evangelicals lay a lot of stock in biblical numbers and greatly appreciate this point.

17. The awkward overlapping of lives. If Shem's list is not abbreviated between **E&P**, according to the numbers found in Scripture, Shem who was born before the Flood would have outlived seven of the first eight generations born after the Flood; the first three fathers born in the new world, Arpachshad, Shelah and Eber, would have outlived many generations born after them; and Shem's great grandson Eber would have outlived the next five generations after him. In contrast this extreme overlapping is not found after Eber in the biblical numbers. Why would these first three generations be immune to whatever reduced the years of their immediate descendants by half and more? Considering how Hebrews handled their genealogies provides the answer.

Shem's line is compressed. Many generations were born between Eber and Peleg so those first three fathers died over a millennium before Peleg and the names that follow.

18. Damage to the credibility of creation scientists. Creation science is an admirable movement. In it are those who have risked reputations and even careers as they point to scientific evidence that supports biblical creation and a global Flood. But a Flood date that is late by a thousand years or more is also associated with this movement and unfortunately raises a question over the credibility of the science of creation scientists as well. By understanding how Hebrew genealogies work, those holding the late Flood date can correct their error and remove this obstacle to the acceptance of creation science.

19. Non-biblical records about the first civilizations. Scripture reveals that the Ark survivors and their descendants quickly established an advanced civilization in Lower Mesopotamia. This makes sense since people who could build an Ark to today's dimensional standards for ocean-going vessels, fill it with 15,000 kinds of animal pairs that needed a year's worth of food and survive in it for over 365 days could certainly organize an advanced civilization as seen in Babel and its tower. As to the when of that advanced civilization, the ordeal of Job about 2550 BC testified that civilization already had a long history.

These biblical facts are now confirmed in writing. In just the last 100 years several million written documents have been unearthed in the Ancient Near East at numerous locations. These tablets speak of their history and of each other, confirming the existence of these many civilization centers beyond doubt. They also attest to the first civilizations. Where? You guessed it—in Lower Mesopotamia, precisely where Noah's descendants first migrated and settled. *Hidden Beauty's* finding of a 1300-1900 year gap between Eber and Peleg places the Flood between 3800 and 4400 BC which encompasses the early well-known civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. What about cave men? At the same time advanced civilizations were being formed, settlers that migrated to regions where severe ice age conditions developed were reduced to hunting-gathering life styles and stone-age technology as they struggled to survive. Advanced civilizations and stone-age lifestyles existed simultaneously within 500-800 years after the Flood.

20. Solving complicated problems. Only in modern times has the problem of a Flood date that is too late been widely recognized. Numerous attempts have been made to solve it, all to no avail because highly complicated problems require the correct solution to many individual issues. Yet the central solution is often elegantly simple. With Luther the elegant but simple solution was *sola scriptura* but getting there required addressing 95 issues for starters. As to this solution-defying problem the Church faces, the elegant solution is so simple—35-55 missing generations between Eber and Peleg—but this is only the first of many books needed to tackle the many issues it raises.

21. Credit to Creation Scientists. Much credit for the findings of this book should go to creation scientists. Only through their research has the violence of Noah's Flood become apparent. This realization sparked the idea of distinguishing between the immediate longevity decline due to the Flood's impact on the genetics of man and the gradual decline between Eber and Peleg represented by just a single generation. If that 61% E-P longevity decline were immediate, a catastrophe greater than the Flood itself would have been needed to cause it.

Appendix B

Key Biblical Dates/Introduction to Tables

Chronology for Early Biblical History (dates BC)

Date Solomon begins Temple-I Kings 6:1		966
The Exodus occurred 480 years earlier-I Kings 6:1	Add	480
Date of the Exodus		1446
Israel sojourned in Egypt 430 years-Exodus 12:40	Add	430
Date for the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn		1876
Jacob was born 130 years before moving to Egypt-Genesis 47:9	Add	130
Date Jacob was born		2006
Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born-Genesis 25:26	Add	60
Date Isaac was born		2066
Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born-Genesis 21:5	Add	75
Date Abraham was born		2166

Key Dates. Scripture itself provides the numbers to determine all but one of the six dates above, the date when Solomon began building the Temple. Countless OT scholars have debated that date to the point where 966 BC is generally accepted as correct. However, Scripture only provides years, not years and months, so the above dates going back from Solomon could each add up to six months of difference. Otherwise, for those who subscribe to the inerrancy of Scripture, the above dates are certain. These dates are then used to complete a chronological history of the world back to Adam based on the lists in Genesis five and eleven including the HB view of 35-55 missing generations between Eber and Peleg. Tables B.1 and B.2 give the master timeline in both directions, from 966 BC to Adam and from Adam to 966 BC.

Numbering of Tables. Following Appendix B are Tables that provide historical data associated with various chapters of *HB*. The Tables are numbered. The main number is the chapter with which the Table is associated. Numbers after a decimal are sequential for material related to that chapter.

Length of Generations. Following the Flood lifespans slowly decreased from 464 to 70. Adulthood similarly decreased. The Tables use various measures for starting new generations. Immediately after the Flood new generations started every 32 years but by Judah's day, they were starting at the age of 20. When necessary, a Table will tell the length of generations it is using.

Table Headings/Abbreviations. Various methods are used to save space. Most are straight forward. Abbreviations include: gen=generation(s); est=estimate; MG=Missing Generation; calc=calculation; Scr=Scripture.

B.1 - Master Timeline (Working back from Solomon to Creation)

Scheme: Row one contains a known date and event. Column seven gives their source. Row two adds the known time of an earlier event. Each row continues the process back to creation. Estimated omitted generations are added in columns four and five. Gen=Generations.

Rows (1)	Add (2)	Date (3)	+37 Gen (4)	+ 58 Gen (5)	Event/Birth (6)	Source (7)
1		966			Solomon begins temple	I Kings 6:1
2	480	1446			The Exodus	I Kings 6:1
3	430	1876			Sojourn in Egypt	Exodus 12:40
4	130	2006			Jacob	Genesis 47:9
5	60	2066			Isaac	Genesis 25:26
6	100	2166			Abraham	Genesis 21:5
7	130	2296			Terah	Three passages
8	29	2325			Nahor	Genesis 11:24
9	30	2355			Serug	Genesis 11:22
10	32	2387			Rue	Genesis 11:20
11	30	2417			Peleg	Genesis 11:18
12	0, 1120 or 1760	2417	3537	4177	Estimated 35-55 names Missing from Shem's list	Numerous biblical reasons
13	34	2451	3571	4211	Eber	Genesis 11:16
14	30	2481	3601	4241	Shelah	Genesis 11:14
15	35	2516	3636	4276	Arpachshad	Genesis 11:12
16	2	2518	3638	4278	Beginning of the Flood	Genesis 11:10
17	98	2616	3736	4376	Shem	Genesis 11:10
18	500	3116	4236	4876	Noah	Genesis 5:32
19	182	3298	4418	5058	Lamech	Genesis 5:28
20	187	3485	4605	5245	Methuselah	Genesis 5:25
21	65	3550	4670	5310	Enoch	Genesis 5:21
22	162	3712	4832	5472	Jared	Genesis 5:18
23	0, 200 or 300	3712	5032	5772	Possibly 2 or 3 names Missing from Adam's list	Various biblical Reasons
24	65	3777	5097	5837	Mahalalel	Genesis 5:15
25	70	3847	5167	5907	Kenan	Genesis 5:12
26	90	3937	5257	5997	Enosh	Genesis 5:9
27	105	4042	5362	6102	Seth	Genesis 5:6
28	130	4172	5492	6232	Adam/Creation	Genesis 5:3

Summary: Years from Creation to Present (2022)

<u>No Missing Names</u>	<u>37 Missing names</u>	<u>58 Missing names</u>
4172+2022=6192	5492+2022=7514	6232+2022=8254

B.2 - Master Timeline (From Creation to the Present)

Scheme: This table reverses the order of Table B.1. All but one date is BC.

Estimate of omitted generations in Adam's list: we doubt that many generations are skipped because God would not continue a society that is hardened towards Him. Maybe two or three names are omitted in order to have an even ten (Adam-Noah).

Estimate of omitted generations in Shem's list: Strong evidence is found for skipping 35-55 generations between Eber and Peleg while little evidence exists for other gaps in Shem's list. At 32 years per generation the missing years would range from 1120 to 1760 years.

Row (1)	Subtract (2)	Date (3)	+37 Gen (4)	+ 58 Gen (5)	Event/Birth (6)	Source (7)
1		4172	5492	6232	Creation/Adam	Genesis 1
2	130	4042	5362	6102	Seth	Genesis 5:3
3	105	3937	5257	5997	Enosh	Genesis 5:6
4	90	3847	5167	5907	Kenan	Genesis 5:9
5	70	3777	5097	5837	Mahalalel	Genesis 5:12
6	0, 200, 300	3777	4897	5537	Possibly 2 or 3 missing names before the Flood	Biblical patterns
7	65	3712	4832	5472	Jared	Genesis 5:15
8	162	3550	4670	5310	Enoch	Genesis 5:18
9	65	3485	4605	5245	Methuselah	Genesis 5:21
10	187	3298	4418	5058	Lamech	Genesis 5:25
11	182	3116	4236	4876	Noah	Genesis 5:28
12	500	2616	3736	4376	Shem	Genesis 5:32
13	98	2518	3638	4278	The Flood	Genesis 11:10
14	2	2516	3636	4276	Arpachshad	Genesis 11:10
15	35	2481	3601	4241	Shelah	Genesis 11:12
16	30	2451	3571	4211	Eber	Genesis 11:14
17	0, 1120, 1760	2451	2451	2451	Estimated 35-55 names missing from Shem's list	Numerous biblical reasons
18	34	2417			Peleg	Genesis 11:16
19	30	2387			Rue	Genesis 11:18
20	32	2355			Serug	Genesis 11:20
21	30	2325			Nahor	Genesis 11:22
22	29	2296			Terah	Genesis 11:24
23	130	2166			Abraham	Genesis 11:32
24	100	2066			Isaac	Genesis 21:5
25	60	2006			Jacob	Genesis 25:26
26	130	1876			Move to Egypt	Genesis 47:9
27	430	1446			The Exodus	Exodus 12:40
28	480	966			Temple begun	I Kings 6:1
29		2022 AD			Present year	

3.1 Chronology of the Terah-Abraham-Isaac Line

Accuracy of Dates: Known dates are based on specific numbers found in Scripture and an 1876 BC arrival in Egypt. Other dates are reasonable estimates based on these revealed numbers making them very close to the correct year.

Headings: **Date**-BC; **Event/Period**-what happened on that date; **Age**-age of Patriarch; **Bible**-documentation in Genesis.

Date	Event/Period	Age	Bible
2296	Terah born		11:24-27
2226	Terah fathers Haran (known age; estimated birth order)	70	
2196	Terah fathers Nahor (estimated age; estimated birth order)	100	11:26-27
2166	Terah fathers Abraham (known age; known birth order)	130	11:26-27
2156	Terah fathers Sarai (Sarah)	140	17:17
2091	Terah dies	205	11:32
2166	Abram (Abraham) born		
2111-2101	God calls Abram; Abram responds; Terah's household accompanies Abram who follows God's leading	55-65	11:31
2111-2101	Divine leading stops; the Terah party settles in Haran area	55-65	11:31
2091	Leading reappears after Terah dies; Abram arrives in Canaan	75	12:4
2088 (Est.)	Strife between herdsmen; Abram and Lot separate	78	13:7-12
2088 (Est.)	God promises to multiply Abram's seed; give them all the land	78	13:14-18
2082	Abram rescues Lot/Meets Melchizedek	84	14:1-24
2081	God appears in a vision; promises protection, reward and heir; warns of difficult times ahead for Abram's descendants	85	15:1-21
2080	Abram fathers Ishmael through Sarai's bondswoman Hagar	86	16:16
2067	God changes Abram's name to Abraham; gives sign of covenant; promises Isaac; all men of household circumcised	99	17:1-27
2067	Fire and brimstone destroy Sodom and Gomorrah; Lot spared	99	19:1-29
2066	Abraham fathers Isaac	100	21:1-7
Unknown	Abraham offers Isaac in obedience to God	---	---
2029	Sarah dies at age 127	137	23:1
2026	Abraham finds wife for Isaac	140	24:1-67
1991	Abraham dies	175	25:7
2066	Isaac born	---	21:1-7
2026	Marries Rebekah	40	24:67
2006	Rebekah barren; Isaac prays; Esau and Jacob born	60	25:20-26
1976	God repeats Abrahamic Covenant to Isaac	90	26:1-5
1966	Isaac's older son Esau marries two Canaanite women	100	26:34
1932	Jacob steals blessing from Esau; sent to live with Uncle Laban	134	Ch 27-28
1920 (Est.)	Rebekah dies; her nurse Deborah joins Jacob in Haran	144	35:8
1912	Jacob returns from Haran but settles in Succoth/Shechem	154	Ch 31-33
1900-1898	Dinah defiled; Jacob dwells in Bethel; returns to Hebron	166	35:1-29
1886	Isaac dies	180	35:28-29

3.2 Recorded Divine Visitations in Abraham's Day

Reference/ Occasion	Abe's Age	God's Statements (Promises in Bold)
Genesis 12:1-3 Initial Call	60-65 (est.)	Go...to a land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse. In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Genesis 12:7 In Canaan	75	To your offspring I will give this land.
13:14-17 After separating from Lot	78 (est.)	[Look] northward and southward and eastward and westward...all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth....walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.
14:17-20 Help through Melchizedek.	84 (est.)	Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hand.
15:1-6 -- Abram fears retaliation	84 (est.)	Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be very great. ...your very own son shall be your heir. Look toward heaven, and number the stars...So shall your offspring be.
15:7-11; 17-21 Abram seeks assurance of God's promises	84 (est.)	⁷ " I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess. " ⁹ "Bring me...." ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, " To your offspring I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites.... "
15:12-16 Warning about Abram's descendants 400-year servitude in Egypt	84 (est.)	¹² ...a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. "
16:7-12 Visitation to Hagar	86	Return to your mistress and submit to her. I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude. Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael.

17:1-7 God changes Abram's name	99	My covenant is with you. You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ...your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, & I will make you into nations, & kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me & you & your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you & to your offspring after you. And I will give to you & to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession & I will be their God.
17:8-14 The sign of the covenant	99	This is my covenant which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised...eight days old...every male throughout your generations....
17:15-21 God changes Sarai's name	99	Sarah shall be her name...I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations, kings of peoples shall come from her.... You shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ...I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.
18:1-33 God appears; reveals distress over Sodom's evil	99	About this time next year, Sarah your wife shall have a son. Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.
21:1-7 Isaac born	100	The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.
21:9-14 Sarah casts out Ishmael	102 (est.)	Do as she (Sarah) tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.
21:15-21 God pro- vides water	102 (est.)	[To Ishmael's mother]: Fear not for God has heard the voice of the boy [water ran out; dying of thirst]. I will make him into a great nation.
22:1-2 God tests Abe.	118 (est.)	Abraham...take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering...

22:9-18 God provides a sacrifice	118 (est.)	¹¹ Abraham...do not lay your hand on the boy...for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son...from me.... ¹⁵ By myself I have sworn declares the LORD, because you have done this..., I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven.... ¹⁸ And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed....
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24:1-67 God guides Abraham's servant	140 (three years after Sarah died)	[While God does not speak in this chapter, He answers the prayer of Abraham's servant for guidance in seeking a wife for Isaac in such a remarkable way that the servant bowed his head and worshipped the LORD. Then he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen."]
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25:21-24 God speaks to Rebekah	160	[When Rebekah asked about the struggle in her womb, the LORD said], Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.
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3.3 Scriptural Notice of Years (Abraham and Isaac)

Large number of biblical age notices. Scripture generously provides the age of various Patriarchs when certain events happened. If Scripture were the product of man, out of fear of contradictions, very few such ages would be given. But since all Scripture is God-breathed, there is an abundance of freedom in the number of times an event is associated with the age of a Patriarch. Further, age notices are at times accompanied with a large amount of detail so that a greater time period can be identified and reduced to an extremely accurate chronology. The following table gives age notices during the time of Abraham and Isaac while a later table gives such data for Jacob.

Genesis	Subject	Age/Years	Event
11:26	Terah	70	Terah fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran but not triplets, because Abram was 70 when Terah died at 205 (11:32, 12:4)
11:32	Terah	205	Terah died in Haran
12:4	Abram	75	Departed Haran; followed God to Canaan
14:4-5	Sodom	12-14	Serves Elam 12 years; rebels in 13th; invaded in 14th; defeated in 15th year [two year campaign]
15:1-21	Abram	Next Spring	God is Abram's shield and assures Abraham of great reward; promises guaranteed by blood covenant signed only by God
15:13	Offspring	400	Abram's descendants will be afflicted 400 years
16:3-4	Abram	10	Abram takes Hagar at Sarai's request
16:16	Abram	86	Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
17:1	Abram	99	Divine visitation when Abram was 99 years old
17:17	Abram	100	Abraham will be 100 and Sarai 90 when child is born
17:24	Abram	99	Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised
17:25	Ishmael	13	Ishmael his son was 13 years old when he was circumcised
18:10,14	Abraham	99	"About this time next year" stated two times
21:5	Abraham	100	Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.
21:8-14	Ishmael	16 (Est)	Isaac weaned; Ishmael mocks and is cast out
23:1	Sarah	127	Sarah died
25:7	Abraham	175	Abraham died; Ishmael and Isaac bury him
25:20	Isaac	40	Isaac was 40 when Abraham obtained a bride for him
25:26	Isaac	60	Isaac was 60 when Esau and Jacob were born
25:17	Ishmael	137	Ishmael lived 137 years
35:28	Isaac	180	Isaac lived 180 years
Multiple	Various	Relative	Indefinite but helpful time indicators such as "After these things," "At that time," etc. 15:1; 21:22; 22:1; 22:20;

3.4 Spectacular Confirmation of the Bible

Secular history records that Elam (forerunner of Southern Persia) conquered Ur sometime between 2150 and 1995. Elam burned its palace and enslaved its population, ending the greatest period in Ur's history, the 100-year reign of the Third Dynasty. No end of artifacts reveals the achievements of the five kings of that dynasty. Then just years later, Elam itself was defeated. It would be 1500 years before Persia again dominated Southern Mesopotamia.

Secular history's record is vastly expanded by Scripture. Genesis 14 tells that Elam placed Sodom and Gomorrah under tribute about six years before Abraham arrived in Canaan. The passage even identifies eight kings and eight nations associated with that event. Thus, Elam not only conquered Ur but extended its domination all the way up the Mesopotamian Valley and down the route to Egypt as far as Sodom and Gomorrah.

While secular history offers a 155-year range of dates for Elam's dominance over Ur (2150-1995), the Bible dates Abraham's birth at 2166 BC, thus narrowing the secular range of years to just a small window of time. As to Abraham, God's call to leave Ur spared him from death or slavery when Elam invaded Ur. Our view is that God called Abraham after he had fully mastered Ur's advanced learning, when he was between 60 and 65 years of age, shortly before Ur fell. This means Abraham lived just 10 or 15 years in Haran and most of his adult life in Ur.

Event or Period	Date (BC)
Orientation: Biblical Date of Abraham's birth	
Jacob moves to Egypt with family	1876
Jacob born 130 years earlier	2006
Isaac born 60 years earlier	2066
Abraham born 100 years earlier	2166
Biblical timeframe for Elam's Domination of Jordan Pentapolis (Genesis 14)	
Year Elam subjugates Jordan pentapolis and crafts tribute agreement	2097
Sodom and allies pay tribute for next 12 years	2096-2085
Sodom and allies don't pay tribute in 13th year	2084
Elam and allies conduct two-year campaign in destroying Sodom	2083-2082
Elam and allies complete conquest of the pentapolis	2082
Movements of Abraham in relation to Elam (some dates estimated)	
Estimated date of God's call to Abraham in Ur	2111-2106
Estimated date of Elam's destruction of Ur	2100
Elam pushes up the Euphrates River valley	2099-2097
Elam subjects Jordan pentapolis and crafts tribute agreement	2097
Abraham arrives in Canaan-enjoys unusual freedom of movement	2091
Abraham and Lot separate	2087 (est.)
Elam and allies punish the pentapolis; Abraham rescues Lot	2082
Abe fearful the next spring at age 85 (Genesis 15)	2081
Ishmael born the next year when Abe is 86 (Genesis 16)	2080
Isaac born when Abraham is 100 and Ishmael is 14	2066

4.1 Jacob's Chronology-Overview

Accuracy. A highly accurate chronology of Jacob (4.2) is possible because Scripture gives so many specific events in his life. For comparison, by our count Scripture records 38 specific events or significant details in Isaac's life. With Abraham 80 are found. For Jacob the number is 158. He lived 147 years so that is the equivalent of an event or important detail per year. Further, the place where Jacob lived when many of these events happened is known. Finally, his age is recorded when some happened. Consequently, the sequence of these events, his age when they occurred and the place where he was living at the time allows the assembling of a very reliable chronology.

Undergirding this chronology are large time periods and specific dates found in Scripture. The time from the Exodus to the start of Solomon's temple was 480 years (1446-966 BC). Jacob told Pharaoh he was 130, placing his birth at 2006 BC (1876+130). Jacob repeatedly stated he served Laban 20 years. Further, Joseph was 17 when his brothers sold him into slavery and 39 when Jacob moved his family to Egypt.

Some events, however, must be dated from a chain of events. Determining when Jacob left home to live with his uncle in Haran for 20 years is critical. That year is found by starting with his age when he moved to Egypt (130), subtracting the 39 years to Joseph's birth (130-39=91), subtracting the preceding ten years to the date of his marriage (91-10=81) and subtracting the seven years of service to Laban for his wife (81-7=74). Thus, he was 74 when he left home.

Scripture does not give dates for some events such as Judah's marriage or the violation of Dinah. Dinah and Joseph were born about the same time, so they were about three when Jacob returned to Canaan. To be violated, she had to be old enough to be desirable but young enough to be naive. Because of all that happened next (her brothers murdered the men of Shechem, plundered their households; then God told Jacob to journey to Bethel and settle there), we suggest she and Joseph were 15: they made it safely, put away their idols, worshipped God and settled down.

Quiet returned. Judah married a Canaanite, Joseph began dreaming and two years later at 17 was sold into slavery. Thinking he was killed by a wild beast, Jacob was crushed. He left Bethel for home (Mamre) and Rachel died in childbirth along the way. Benjamin was born after Joseph was gone.

This Table gives the years Jacob lived in six known locations. Most of the dates are found from the very numbers in Scripture. He lived with his parents until he stole the blessing from Esau and fled to Haran to live with his Uncle Laban. Scripture says multiple times that he lived with Laban 20 years. Then he settled in Succoth and Shechem until Dinah was violated. Then Bethel, Mamre (Hebron) and finally Egypt. (Most commentaries overlook his dwelling at Bethel.) How many years? Two make the numbers work.

Jacob's Home	Years	Age	Date(s)
With Parents	74	1-74	2006-1932
With Laban-Haran	20	74-94	1932-1912
With Heathen-Succoth & Shechem	12	94-106	1912-1900
With God-Bethel	2	106-108	1900-1898
With Father-Hebron	22	108-130	1898-1876
With Joseph-Egypt	17	130-147	1876-1859

4.2 Jacob's Chronology-Details

Event or Period	Genesis	Age/Years	Date-BC
Birth of twins, Esau and Jacob	25:26; 47:9		2006
Purchases birthright from Esau	25:25-34	30 (Est.)	1976
Sees grief caused by Esau's Canaanite wives; delays marriage; finally marries 41 years later	26:34	40-81	1925
Steals blessing of firstborn; Esau plans to kill him; sent by parents to Uncle Laban in Haran	27:1-28:5	74	1932
Staircase vision at Bethel; divine covenant made	28:10-22	74	1932
Serves Laban 7 years for Rachel	29:20	74-81	1932-1925
Due to Laban's trickery marries Leah; quietly given Rachel after 7-day marriage celebration	29:21-30	81	1925
Fathers twelve children over next ten years; possible sequence: at 81-Reuben; 83-Simeon & Dan; 84-Levi & Nephtali; 85-Judah; 87-Gad; 89-Asher & Issachar; 90-Zebulun; 91-Joseph/Dinah	29:31-30:22	81-91	1925-1915
Serves another seven years for second wife	29:27-28; 31:41	81-88	1925-1918
Serves Laban six years for flocks; Laban changes terms of contract again and again	31:7, 41	88-94	1918-1912
Joseph and Dinah born	30:21-24	91	1915
Recorded contract follows birth of Joseph	30:25	91	1915
Returns to Canaan after 20 years in Haran; wrestles with God; meets Esau	31:1-33:20	94	1912
Dwells in Succoth and Shechem 12 years	Dated by logic	94-106	1912-1900
Dinah violated/Shechemite men slaughtered	34:1-31	106	1900
God commands: "Go to Bethel and dwell there." removes idols; builds altar; worships	35:1 35:2-15	106	1900
Deborah dies	35:8	107	1899
Too old to actively supervise field operations; makes Joseph his eyes and ears; hated by bros.	37:2-4, 12-14	106-108	1900-1898
Judah marries at age 22; fathers 3 sons	38:1-5	107	1899
God appears 2 nd time; repeats promises; name	35:9-15	108	1898
Joseph sold into slavery at age 17	37:2, 18-28	108	1898
Jacob leaves Bethel for Hebron	35:16	108	1898
On the road Benjamin is born; Rachel dies	35:16-21	108	1898
Reuben violates Bilhah after death of Rachel	35:22	108	1898
From Hebron to Egypt, 22 years elapsed	Logic	108-130	1898-1876
Isaac dies at 180; buried by Esau and Jacob	35:28-29	120	1886
Joseph made governor of Egypt at age 30	41:46; 42:6	121	1885
Judah starts second family through Tamar; he is 45; Joseph/Dinah-39; Benjamin-22; Reuben-49; Simeon/Dan-47; Levi/Nephtali-46; Gad-43	38:12-30	130	1876
Jacob moves family to Egypt	46:1-4	130	1876
Jacob dies; buried in Hebron with Leah	47:28	147	1859

5.1 Jerahmeel's Genealogy: A Gem among Biblical Lists

Jerahmeel's genealogy is utterly unique among all biblical lists in that it contains 23 unbroken generations and is the only complete biblical list of those who lived during the 430-year Egyptian captivity. After the three Patriarchs mentioned in I Chronicles 1, chapter two begins with Judah, Perez, Hezron and his three sons. I Chronicles 2:25-41 devote no less than 17 verses to Jerahmeel, Hezron's oldest son. The list ends about 200 years after the Exodus. In the list are 16 consecutive generations that were born in Egypt. Sheshan owning a slave is the clue. It could only happen during that period of the 430-year Egyptian sojourn when Semitic Hyksos invaders dominated Northern Egypt. This list is such a prize because it clearly shows that Aaron's list and many others with just a few names for the 430 years in Egypt were condensed. See further details near the end of chapter five.

Est. Year (BC)	Event	I Chronicles 2:1-41	Generation
2006	Birth of	Jacob, v 1	
1921	Birth of	Judah, v1	
1901	Birth of	(Judah's first family, 3 sons-none chosen)	
1876	Move to Egypt	Jacob moves his entire family to Egypt Beginning of 430-Year Egyptian Sojourn	
1876	Birth of	Perez, v4	1
1848	Birth of	Hezron, v25	2
1820	Birth of	Jerahmeel, v25	3
1792	Birth of	Onam, v26	4
1764	Birth of	Shammai, v28	5
1736	Birth of	Nadab, v28	6
1708	Birth of	Appaim, v30	7
1680	Birth of	Ishi, v31	8
1652	Birth of	Sheshan, v31	9
1624	Birth of	Ahlai (Sheshan's daughter), v31, 34, 35	10
1596	Birth of	Attai, v35	11
1568	Birth of	Nathan, v36	12
1540	Birth of	Zabad, v36	13
1512	Birth of	Ephlai, v37	14
1484	Birth of	Obed, v37	15
1456	Birth of	Jehu, v38	16
1446	The Exodus	God Delivers Israel from Egypt	---
1428	Birth of	Azariah, v38	17
1400	Birth of	Helez, v39	18
1372	Birth of	Eleasah, v39	19
1344	Birth of	Susnaum v40	20
1316	Birth of	Shalum, v40	21
1288	Birth of	Jekamiah, v41	22
1260	Birth of	Elishama, v41; End of Record	23

6.01 Line of Aaron, First High Priest of Israel

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 11

Scripture: The Bible repeatedly gives just four names for Aaron's genealogy: Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron. In three passages this sequence is stated, Exodus 6:16-20, Numbers 26:57-59, I Chronicles 6:1-3, and in a fourth it is inferred (Numbers 3). Nowhere else in Scripture is Aaron's genealogy stated. Further, Scripture gives the number of years each of these fathers lived and since these years are insufficient for the 430-year Egyptian sojourn, Aaron's genealogy is clearly abbreviated. Chapter one spells this out in great detail while chapter six restates it in other ways. Levi was the tribal father; Kohath was the founder of the Kohathite clan within the tribe of Levi; Amram was founder of a great family within the clan of Kohath. An estimated 8-12 generations are skipped between Amram and Aaron. Beyond question Scripture abbreviates this list.

Headings: **Gen**-Generation; **Age**-Age of the father in the row above when he begat the **Offspring** to the right; **Calc**-Numbers used to determine Year (father's birth year minus begetting years). **Year**-Year the offspring was born. All dates are BC. For sake of reference the move to Egypt and the Exodus are included.

New generations: On average they started every 25 years after Jacob. It appears that the Levitical line was more restrained so 28 years is used to start new generations for this line. These averages will be adjusted through the tables to conclude with revealed numbers such as the Exodus.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Isaac			
	60	Jacob (Israel)	2066-60	2006	
1	84	Levi (Tribal Father)	2006-84	1922	Genesis 29:34
2	30	Kohath (Clan Founder)	1922-30	1892	Exodus 6:16
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	30	Amram (Family Founder)	1892-28	1864	Exodus 6:18
4	28	1 st Missing Generation	1864-28	1836	
5	28	2 nd Missing Generation	1836-28	1808	
6	28	3 rd Missing Generation	1808-28	1780	
7	28	4 th Missing Generation	1780-28	1752	
8	28	5 th Missing Generation	1752-28	1724	
9	28	6 th Missing Generation	1724-28	1696	
10	28	7 th Missing Generation	1696-28	1668	
11	28	8 th Missing Generation	1668-28	1640	
12	28	9 th Missing Generation	1640-28	1612	
13	28	10 th Missing Generation	1612-28	1584	
14	28	11 th Missing Generation	1584-28	1556	
15	27	Aaron-First High Priest	1556-27	1529	Exodus 6:20
16	28-40	Aaron's Four Sons	1529-28/40	1501-1489	Exodus 6:23
17	28	Phinehas-Son of Eleazar	1493-28	1465	Exodus 6:25
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
	123	Death of Aaron	1529-123	1406	Nu20:28; Deu 34:7

6.02 Line of Korah the Rebel

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 11

Korah's Rebellion. The account of Korah's rebellion is related in Numbers 16. God gave the office of the priesthood exclusively to Aaron and his descendants while He appointed Moses as the leader of the nation. Korah worked up a following challenging the positions of both Aaron and Moses. In effect Korah disputed God's authority. God dealt severely with him. The earth opened up and swallowed Korah and all that he had. This controversy appears to have come early in the 40 wilderness years. After the year at Mount Sinai came the census, then the spy event, then this questioning of God's ordained government.

Korah's Genealogy follows the pattern of Aaron's so it strengthens the idea of abbreviated registers. It is found in Numbers 16:1 – "Korah, the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi" (four names: Levi-Kohath-Izhar-Korah). Aaron's list also contained just four names: Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron. Korah and Aaron were about the same age so like Aaron, his list condenses up to 16 generations into four. Both belonged to the tribe of Levi and clan of Kohath. But whereas Aaron descended from Amram, the first son of Kohath, Korah descended from Izhar, Kohath's second son. From Izhar the record skipped down to Korah who was born about 350 years after Izhar's birth, thus omitting 8-12 generations.

Dating Izhar's birth. Table 6.02 continues the scheme established in Table 6.01 with regard to new generations and headings. Additionally, since Izhar was Kohath's second son and daughters must be factored into the family tree, by alternating the birth of sons and daughters and allowing two years between births, Izhar was born four years after his older brother Amram.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Isaac			
	60	Jacob (Israel)	2066-60	2006	
1	84	Levi (Tribal Father)	2006-84	1922	Genesis 29:34
2	30	Kohath (Clan Founder)	1922-30	1892	Exodus 6:16
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	32	Izhar (Family Founder)	1892-32	1860	Exodus 6:18
4	28	1 st Missing Generation	1860-28	1832	
5	28	2 nd Missing Generation	1832-28	1804	
6	28	3 rd Missing Generation	1804-28	1776	
7	28	4 th Missing Generation	1776-28	1748	
8	28	5 th Missing Generation	1748-28	1720	
9	28	6 th Missing Generation	1720-28	1692	
10	28	7 th Missing Generation	1692-28	1664	
11	28	8 th Missing Generation	1664-28	1636	
12	28	9 th Missing Generation	1636-28	1608	
13	28	10 th Missing Generation	1608-28	1580	
14	31	11 th Missing Generation	1580-28	1552	
15	31	Korah (Aaron's Peer)	1552-28	1524	Numbers 16:1
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
	81	Death of Korah	1524-81	1443	Numbers 16:31-35

6.03 & 6.04 - Lines of Rebels Dathan & Abiram

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 13

The Dathan-Abiram Rebellion. These men joined Korah (see Table 6.02) to challenge God's appointed leadership of Israel. They were most likely princes of the tribe of Reuben and about the same age as Moses. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. Traditionally, the firstborn was the leader of the family. Jacob's family had grown to a population of several million. The Reubenites expected to share in the leadership of the nation. But due to moral failure, God set Reuben's line aside and chose Moses, a Levite, to lead Israel at this time. As with Korah, God caused the earth to open up and swallow them and their households.

Genealogy. Their genealogies are carefully stated in Numbers 26:5-9 and follow the pattern of Aaron's and Korah's—tribe, clan, family and them, just four generations. They were of the tribe of Reuben, clan of Pallau and family of Eliab. Then the record skips down to Dathan and Abiram who were born 350 years after the birth of Eliab and were contemporaries of Moses. Yet Scripture calls them sons of Eliab. Obviously, it is using "son" in the broad sense of "descendant." Just their family and tribe are stated in Numbers 16:1 where the account of their rebellion is found.

Dating their births. This page continues the heading scheme established in Table 6.01. However, because it involves two biblically named individuals, two numbers are assigned so there is a full count of condensed OT genealogies. As a result, only averages are used rather than accounting for multiple sons in the same family as Table 6.02 did. New generations begin every 25 years.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Isaac			
	60	Jacob (Israel)	2066-60	2006	
1	82	Reuben (Tribal Father)	2006-82	1924	Numbers 26:5
2	25	Pallu (Clan Founder)	1924-25	1899	Numbers 26:5
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	25	Eliab (Family Founder)	1899-25	1874	Numbers 26:8
4	25	1 st Missing Generation	1874-25	1849	
5	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1849-25	1824	
6	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1824-25	1799	
7	25	4 th Missing Generation	1799-25	1774	
8	25	5 th Missing Generation	1774-25	1749	
9	25	6 th Missing Generation	1749-25	1724	
10	25	7 th Missing Generation	1724-25	1699	
11	25	8 th Missing Generation	1699-25	1674	
12	25	9 th Missing Generation	1674-25	1649	
13	25	10 th Missing Generation	1649-25	1624	
14	25	11 th Missing Generation	1624-25	1599	
15	25	12 th Missing Generation	1599-25	1574	
16	25	13 th Missing Generation	1574-25	1549	
17	25	Dathan & Abiram	1549-25	1524	Numbers 16:1
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
	81	Deaths of Dathan & Abiram	1524-81	1443	Numbers 16:31-35

6.05 Line of the Rebel On

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 14

On's Rebellion. On joined Korah, Dathan and Abiram (See Tables 6.02-6.04) to challenge God's appointed leadership of Israel. Like Dathan and Abiram he was probably a prince of the tribe of Reuben and about the same age. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn and the firstborn usually became the leader of his father's family. Moses was a descendant of Levi, Jacob's third son. Like Dathan and Abiram, On felt Moses had gone too far. Maybe Moses could lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt, but now leadership supplied by the tribe of Reuben was in order. He, like the other rebels, had totally overlooked the fact that God chose the nation's leader. In judgment God caused the earth to open up and swallow him and all he had.

Genealogy. Like Dathan and Abiram, On belonged to the tribe of Reuben. But while Scripture tells both the clan and family to which Dathan and Abiram belonged, it only tells On's clan, that of Peleth/Pallau. His list of just one name between the tribal leader and himself distinguishes his list as the shortest on record, just one name to span the 400 years between Reuben and himself.

Dating On's birth. Table 6.05 continues the scheme established in Table 6.01 with regard to new generations and headings. See the introductory paragraphs in the three preceding tables for further details.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Isaac			
	60	Jacob (Israel)	2066-60	2006	
1	82	Reuben (Tribal Father)	2006-82	1924	Numbers 26:5
2	29	Peleth	1924-25	1899	Numbers 26:5
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	32	1 st Missing Generation	1899-25	1874	
4	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1874-25	1849	
5	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1849-25	1824	
6	25	4 th Missing Generation	1824-25	1799	
7	25	5 th Missing Generation	1799-25	1774	
8	25	6 th Missing Generation	1774-25	1749	
9	25	7 th Missing Generation	1749-25	1724	
10	25	8 th Missing Generation	1724-25	1699	
11	25	9 th Missing Generation	1699-25	1674	
12	25	10 th Missing Generation	1674-25	1649	
13	25	11 th Missing Generation	1649-25	1624	
14	25	12 th Missing Generation	1624-25	1599	
15	25	13 ^h Missing Generation	1599-25	1574	
16	25	14 th Missing Generation	1574-25	1549	
17	25	On	1549-25	1524	Numbers 16:1
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
	81	Death of On	1524-81	1443	Numbers 16:31-35

6.06 Line of Achan, the Troubler of Israel

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 13

Stealing from God. Joshua chapter seven is devoted to Achan's sin. God had commanded that all the plunder from Israel's first victory in the Promised Land be devoted to destruction. Instead, a nobody named Achan kept some of the valuables. Israel lost the next battle. Why? Sin in the camp. The perpetrator was to be found and executed.

Method of Identification. Achan acted in secret and hid what he took in his tent. How would the guilty party be located? God said to use the organization of the nation. The tribes were to pass by and the LORD took the tribe of Judah by lot. The clans of Judah passed by and the LORD took the clan of Zerah by lot. Then the households of Zerah passed by and the LORD took the household of Zabdi. Finally, the men of Zabdi's household passed by and the LORD took Achan by lot. This event further confirms what *Hidden Beauty* has said about Israel being organized by tribes, clans and households (also designated as Families).

Genealogy and Lifespan. Several difficulties—Achan was unknown so his father's name is added. Further, his tribal father (Judah) started two families, the second after the first had grown, so his son, Zerah represents two generations, not one. Because Achan had considerable possessions and his father was dead, he would have been approaching the age of 60. His crime was so grave that it is singled out in the genealogies of I Chronicles 2:1-7 as well. Five names are found in Achan's register rather than four. Up to 13 generations are omitted.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
1		Judah (Tribal Father)		1921	I Chronicles 2:1
2-3	45	Zerah (Clan Father)	1921-45	1876	I Chronicles 2:4
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
4	25	Zabdi (Family Founder)	1876-25	1851	Joshua 7:17
5	25	1 st Missing Generation	1851-25	1826	
6	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1826-25	1801	
7	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1801-25	1776	
8	25	4 th Missing Generation	1776-25	1751	
9	25	5 th Missing Generation	1751-25	1726	
10	25	6 th Missing Generation	1726-25	1701	
11	25	7 th Missing Generation	1701-25	1676	
12	25	8 th Missing Generation	1676-25	1651	
13	25	9 th Missing Generation	1651-25	1626	
14	25	10 th Missing Generation	1626-25	1601	
15	25	11 th Missing Generation	1601-25	1576	
16	25	12 th Missing Generation	1576-25	1551	
17	25	13 th Missing Generation	1551-25	1526	
18	30	Carmi	1526-30	1495	I Chronicles 2:7
19	33	Achan	1495-30	1465	I Chronicles 2:7
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
	59	Death of Achan	1465-59	1406	Joshua 7:25-26

6.07 Line of Daughters of Zelophehad

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 12

Request of Zelophehad's Daughters. A certain man died during the wilderness years leaving only daughters, no sons. His daughters asked Moses permission to receive their father's land inheritance in order to perpetuate his name. God approved their request (Numbers 27:1-11).

Genealogy. This genealogy contains seven names, considerably more than typical four. Covering 500 years it omits up to 12 generations. The three extra names are added for the following reasons: 1) Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons, making them tribes so both Joseph and the right son must be named; 2) While no household founder is named, Joseph's grandson Manasseh produced clans for the next two generations so they had to be distinguished; 3) Both the grandfather and father of the five daughters are named, most likely because these women were unknown and this was such an important legal precedent.

New Generations and Headings. Table 6.07 continues the scheme established in Table 6.01 for new generations and headings. Because their father died in the wilderness, he would have been 20 or more at the time of the Exodus. The daughters fall between the 12th and the 13th missing generations so the birthing ages of their forefathers are adjusted, placing their ages from 33 to 23.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Jacob (Israel)		2006	
1	93	Joseph – Tribal Founder	2006-91	1915	Numbers 27:1
2	30	Manasseh – Tribal Head	1915-37	1878	Numbers 27:1
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	32	Machir – Clan Founder	1878-25	1853	Numbers 27:1
4	25	Giliad – Sub Clan Head	1853-25	1828	Numbers 27:1
5	25	1 st Missing Generation	1828-25	1803	
6	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1803-25	1778	
7	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1778-25	1753	
8	25	4 th Missing Generation	1753-25	1728	
9	25	5 th Missing Generation	1728-25	1703	
10	25	6 th Missing Generation	1703-25	1678	
11	25	7 th Missing Generation	1678-25	1653	
12	25	8 th Missing Generation	1653-25	1628	
13	25	9 th Missing Generation	1628-25	1603	
14	25	10 th Missing Generation	1603-25	1578	
15	25	11 th Missing Generation	1578-25	1553	
16	27	12 th Missing Generation	1553-27	1526	
17	27	Hepher	1526-27	1499	Numbers 27:1
18	30	Zelophehad	1499-30	1469	Numbers 27:1
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
19	30-40	Five Daughters	1469-30/40	1439-1429	
	25-33	Request for Inheritance		1406	Numbers 27:2-11

6.08 Line of Sheerah, Famous Heroine of Ephraim

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 11

Sheerah and Joshua. As the chronicler recorded the descendants of Jacob, he highlighted outstanding individuals in each tribe. But what could he write of the tribe of Ephraim? It had divided the nation. Yet it did have two distinguished people whom he featured: Sheerah, a famous heroine given below (I Chronicles 7:20-24) and Joshua who succeeded Moses, given next (7:25-59).

Confusion. These two lists (Tables 6.08 and 6.09) are frequently confused because the father of the heroine was named after the tribal founder. Further, the author did not have all the names. As a result, the names between the first and second Ephraims are fitted into the lifetime of the first Ephraim and somehow the list concludes with the famous warrior Joshua. Sheerah's list presents eight generations (including Joseph, named earlier) before skipping up to 11 generations, concluding with the second Ephraim and his children, Ezer, Elead, Sheerah and Beriah.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Jacob (Israel)		2006	
1	91	Joseph – Tribal Founder	2006-91	1915	
2	36	Ephraim – Tribal Head	1915-36	1879	I Chronicles 7:20
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	25	Shuthelah #1/Bered	1879-25	1854	I Chronicles 7:20
4	25	Tahath #1	1854-25	1829	I Chronicles 7:20
5	25	Eleadah	1829-25	1804	I Chronicles 7:20
6	25	Tahath #2	1804-25	1779	I Chronicles 7:20
7	25	Zabad	1779-25	1754	I Chronicles 7:21
8	25	Shuthelah #2	1754-25	1729	I Chronicles 7:21
9	25	1 st Missing Generation	1729-25	1704	
10	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1704-25	1679	
11	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1679-25	1654	
12	25	4 th Missing Generation	1654-25	1629	
131	25	5 th Missing Generation	1629-25	1604	
4	25	6 th Missing Generation	1604-25	1579	
15	25	7 th Missing Generation	1579-25	1554	
16	25	8 th Missing Generation	1554-25	1529	
17	25	9 th Missing Generation	1529-25	1504	
18	25	10 th Missing Generation	1504-25	1479	
19	25	11 th Missing Generation	1479-25	1454	
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1
20	25	Ephraim #2	1454-25	1429	I Chronicles 7:22
21	25/27	Ezer & Elead	1429-25/27	1404, 1402	I Chronicles 7:22
		Deaths of Ezer & Elead	1372 est.		
		Inheritance to Sheerah	1370 est.		
		Birth of son in old age	1366 est.		I Chronicles 7:23

6.09 Line of Joshua, Moses Successor

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 8

Continuing the Unscrambling of I Chronicles 7:20-28 (see also Table 6.08 and chapter six). These verses recognize two outstanding individuals in the tribe of Ephraim. Sheerah (vv20-24) and Joshua (vv25-27). Not clearly seen in translations is that the record lists one line of Ephraim beginning in verse 20 and a second line from Ephraim beginning in verse 25.

Organization of I Chronicles 1-7. Chapter one covers descent from Adam to Jacob. Chapters 2-3 documents the descent of the kings of Israel. Chapters 4-7 gives genealogical information about each of the tribes of Israel. The tribe of Ephraim data is found in 7:20-28. However, it has been misunderstood through the centuries because the same names were given to sons again and again. This list alone has the same name for multiple individuals. The careful expositor will understand this common Hebrew custom and distinguish various individuals with the same name. When this is done with the Ephraim section, it will make sense.

Condensing. In Joshua's genealogy up to 18 generations are condensed into 10. Two hundred years went by from the birth of Ladan to the birth of Amminhud. This indicates missing generations since that is considerably longer than the lifespan of any known individual in this period of history. Like most Hebrew genealogies, that of Joshua is abbreviated.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
		Jacob (Israel)		2006	
1	91	Joseph – Tribal Founder	2006-91	1915	
2	36	Ephraim – Tribal Head	1915-36	1879	I Chronicles 7:20
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
3	25	Missing Clan Head 1 st Missing Generation	1879-25	1854	
4	29	Birth of Brothers: Rephah and Resheph	1854-29	1825	I Chronicles 7:25
5	25	Telah	1825-25	1800	I Chronicles 7:25
6	25	Tahan	1800-25	1775	I Chronicles 7:25
7	25	Ladan	1775-25	1750	I Chronicles 7:26
8	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1750-25	1725	
9	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1725-25	1700	
10	25	4 th Missing Generation	1700-25	1675	
11	25	5 th Missing Generation	1675-25	1650	
12	25	6 th Missing Generation	1650-25	1625	
13	25	7 th Missing Generation	1625-25	1600	
14	25	8 th Missing Generation	1600-25	1575	
15	25	Amminhud	1575-25	1550	I Chronicles 7:26
16	25	Elishama	1550-25	1525	I Chronicles 7:26
17	25	Nun	1525-25	1500	I Chronicles 7:27
18	25	Joshua	1500-25	1475	I Chronicles 7:27
		The Exodus	966+480	1446	I Kings 6:1

6.10 Line of Caleb, the Believing Spy

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 10

Caleb, one of the two believing spies, was a national hero. He was apparently so popular that it was unnecessary to give his line. But because Scripture speaks of him often, his line can be pieced together with much work. Two keys unlock his line: his daughter Achsah and his being named after the famous third son of Hezron (I Chronicles 2:42-50). See also chapter six.

Caleb and Achsah. After a year at Mount Sinai Moses sent a leader from each tribe to spy out Canaan. Caleb represented the tribe of Judah (Numbers 13:6) so his forefathers must be found in the genealogies of Judah (I Chronicles 2). After many verses on the descendants of Caleb, Scripture says “and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah.” Since only one person has the name “Achsah” in the OT, this is the writer’s way of linking the Caleb at the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn with his famous descendant, the believing spy Caleb.

Placing Caleb. Caleb is called a Kenizzite, ie, of the clan or family of Kenaz and fifteen times he is called the son of Jephunneh. So Scripture names nine in his line: Judah-Judah’s first family-Perez-Hezron-Caleb #1 plus Kenaz-Jephunneh-Caleb #2 and Achsah. Since Achsah was born about 1425, about ten names are missing from this genealogy.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Offspring/Event</u>	<u>Calc</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
1		Judah – Tribal Founder		1921	I Chronicles 2:1
2	23	1 st Family-Er, On, Shelah	1921-23	1898	I Chronicles 2:3
3	22	2 nd Family-Perez, Zerah	1898-22	1876	I Chronicles 2:4
		Israel Moves to Egypt	1446+430	1876	Exodus 12:40
4	25	Hezron – Family Founder	1876-25	1851	I Chronicles 2:5
5	31	Chelubai (Caleb) #1	1851-31	1820	I Chronicles 2:9
6	25	1 st Missing Generation	1820-25	1795	
7	25	2 nd Missing Generation	1795-25	1770	
8	25	3 rd Missing Generation	1770-25	1745	
9	25	4 th Missing Generation	1745-25	1720	
10	25	5 th Missing Generation	1720-25	1695	
11	25	Kenaz – New Clan Founder	1695-25	1670	Joshua 14:6
12	25	6 th Missing Generation	1670-25	1645	
13	25	7 th Missing Generation	1645-25	1620	
14	25	8 th Missing Generation	1620-25	1595	
15	25	9 th Missing Generation	1595-25	1570	
17	25	10 th Missing Generation	1570-25	1545	
18	30	Jephunneh	1545-30	1515	
19	30	Caleb #2	1515-30	1485	
		Spies sent after Mt. Sinai	1446-1	1445	Numbers 13
20	60	Achsah (Daughter)	1485-60	1425	Joshua 15:16
		Caleb requests Hebron		1400	Joshua 14:6-15
		Caleb Offers Achsah		1398 est.	Joshua 15:16

6.11 Line of David, Second King of Israel

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 20

Ten famous names are recorded in this highly condensed genealogy. It was first given in Ruth 4:18-22. Five hundred years later it was incorporated into the I Chronicles 2:1-15 list without change. Five hundred years after that it was included in Matthew 1:3-6 without change and Luke 3:31-33 with just one contested addition.

Organization of list. The ten names are divided into three groups. Group one lived at the beginning of the Egyptian sojourn while the second lived at the time of the Exodus 400 years later. The final group lived toward the end of the 4 80-year period of the judges concluding with Solomon's temple.

Organization of Table. The purpose of the tables in chapter six, is to calculate the estimated birthdate of each generation, thus producing a historical chronology. While our standard generation is 25 years, when Scripture provides more specific information (identified in the David section of chapter six), that information is used. The headings have been rearranged. On each line is an individual or event. Column one calculates his birthdate by copying from the line above his father's birthdate and begetting age.

Headings. **Year**=birth year of individual in the row. **Gen**=Generation. **Age**=when person in the row fathers his heir. The official genealogy of David condenses about 31 generations into 10. Perez was born about 1876 BC while David was born over 800 years later.

Calculation	Year	Offspring/Event	Gen	Age	Scripture
	1876	Perez, son of Judah	1		I Chronicles 2:1-4
1446+430	1876	Israel Moves to Egypt			Exodus 12:40
1876-25	1851	Hezron – Family Founder	2	29	Ruth 4:18-19
1851-29	1822	Ram – Clan Founder	3	25	Ruth 4:19
1822-100	1722	Missing Generations 1-4	4-7	25x4	
1722-100	1622	Missing Generations 5-8	8-11	25x4	
1622-25	1597	9 th Missing Generation	12	25	
1597-25	1572	10 th Missing Generation	13	25	
1572-25	1547	Amminadab	14	40	
1547-40	1507	Nahshon	15	45	Ruth 4:19-20
1507-45	1462	Salmon	16	59	Ruth 4:20
966+480	1446	The Exodus			
1462-59	1403	11 th Missing Generation	17	25	Ruth 4:20-21
1403-25	1378	12 th Missing Generation	18	25	
1378-100	1278	Missing Generations 13-16	19-22	25x4	
1278-100	1178	Missing Generations 17-20	23-26	25x4	
1178-25	1153	Boaz	27	45	Ruth 4:21
1153-45	1108	Obed	28	22	Ruth 4:21-22
1108-22	1086	Jesse	29	46	Ruth 4:22
1086-46	1040	David	[30]	[1010]	Ruth 4:22

6.12 Genealogy of the High Priests of Israel

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 9

Genealogy. God restricted the priesthood of Israel to Aaron and his descendants. Aaron's oldest two sons offered strange fire and were struck dead. The line of chief priests passed through his third son, Eleazar, except for a time when descendants of his fourth son, Ithamar, filled the position. Both lines are shown below. The official record is found in I Chronicles 6. Amazingly, even the official record omits names. The list concludes about 440 BC.

Headings. **Gen**=Generations. **Year**=estimated first year of service as high priest (30 years allowed for average tenure unless better data is supplied by Scripture). Years are BC.

Individual/Scripture=name of high priest and Scripture reference. **HP**=High Priest. **MG**=missing generation in official list. (If found elsewhere, name is included.)

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Individual/Scripture</u> Line of Eleazar, I Chron 6	<u>Individual/Scripture</u> Line of Ithamar, I Sam 22	<u>Year</u>	<u>Gen</u>
		The Exodus-1446 BC			
1	1445	Aaron-First HP, Exodus 6:20			
2	1406	Eleazar, Numbers 20:22-29			
3	1376	Phinehas, Numbers 25:10-13			
4	1346	Abishua, I Chronicles 6:4			
5	1316	Bukki, I Chronicles 6:5			
6	1286	Uzzi (Ozi), I Chronicles 6:5			
7-10	1256	1st -4th Missing Generations			
11	1136	Zerahiah, I Chronicles 6:6	Brief Line of Ithamar HPs		
12	1106	Meraioth, I Chronicles 6:6	Eli/ 2 Sons, I Samuel 1-4	1115	1-2
13	1076	Amariah, I Chronicles 6:7	Ahitub, I Samuel 22:20	1075	3
14	1046	Ahitub, I Chronicles 6:7	Ahimelech, I Samuel 22:9	1045	4
15	1016	Zadok, I Chronicles 6:8	Abiathar, I Samuel 22:20	1015	5
16	986	Ahimaaz, I Chronicles 6:8			
17	985	Azariah, I Chronicles			
18	980	Johanah, I Chronicles 6:9			
		Reign of Solomon, 970-930 Building of Temple, 966-950			
19	970	Azariah, I Chronicles 6:10	Eleazar (continued from left)		
20	940	Amariah, I Chronicles 6:11	Jehozadak, I Chron. 6:14-15	606	32
21	910	Ahitub, I Chronicles 6:11	Babylonian Captivity 586-516		
22	880	Zadok, I Chronicles 6:12	Exilic/Post Exile HPs		
23	850	Shallum, I Chronicles 6:12	Jeshua, Haggai 1:1		33
24	820	Hilkiah, I Chronicles 6:13	Joiakim, Nehemiah 12:10		34
25	790	Azariah, I Chronicles 6:13	Eliashib, Nehemiah 12:10		35
26-30	760	5th – 9th Missing Generations	Joiada, Nehemiah 12:10		36
31	611	Seraiah, I Chronicles 6:14	Johanan & Jaddua, 12:11		37

6.13 Line of Ezra, the Priest and Scribe

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 11 or 6

Genealogy. Ezra deliberately omitted six consecutive high priests from the list he recorded who are found in the official list of I Chronicles. The omissions fall between Meraioth and Azariah. Because this happened around the time of Eli, it could have had something to do with two high priests serving at the same time. He also omits high priests from the Captivity on. This may not be a true omission if he descended from another son of Seraiah than the official line.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Official High Priest List-I Chr. 6</u>	<u>Ezra's List/Scripture</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Gen</u>
		The Exodus-1446 BC			
1	1445	Aaron-First HP, Exodus 6:20	Aaron-First HP, Ezra 7:5	1445	1
2	1406	Eleazar, Numbers 20:22-29	Eleazar, Ezra 7:5	1406	2
3	1376	Phinehas, Numbers 25:10-13	Phinehas, Ezra 7:5	1376	3
4	1346	Abishua, I Chronicles 6:4	Abishua, Ezra 7:5	1346	4
5	1316	Bukki, I Chronicles 6:5	Bukki, Ezra 7:4	1316	5
6	1286	Uzzi (Ozi), I Chronicles 6:5	Uzzi (Ozi), Ezra 7:4	1286	6
7-10	1256	1 st -4 th Missing Generations	1 st -4 th Missing Generations	1256	7-10
11	1136	Zerahiah, I Chronicles 6:6	Zerahiah, I Chronicles 6:6	1136	11
12	1106	Meraioth, I Chronicles 6:6	Meraioth, I Chronicles 6:6	1106	12
13	1076	Amariah, I Chronicles 6:7	1st Omitted Name	1076	13
14	1046	Ahitub, I Chronicles 6:7	2nd Omitted Name	1046	14
15	1016	Zadok, I Chronicles 6:8	3rd Omitted Name	1016	15
16	986	Ahimaaz, I Chronicles 6:8	4th Omitted Name	986	16
17	985	Azariah, I Chronicles	5th Omitted Name	985	17
18	980	Johanah, I Chronicles 6:9	6th Omitted Name	980	18
		Building of Temple, 966-950	Building of Temple		
19	970	Azariah, I Chronicles 6:10	Azariah, Ezra 7:3	966	19
20	940	Amariah, I Chronicles 6:11	Amariah, Ezra 7:3	936	20
21	910	Ahitub, I Chronicles 6:11	Ahitub, Ezra 7:2	906	21
22	880	Zadok, I Chronicles 6:12	Zadok, Ezra 7:2	876	22
23	850	Shallum, I Chronicles 6:12	Shallum, Ezra 7:2	846	23
24	820	Hilkiah, I Chronicles 6:13	Hilkiah, Ezra 7:1	816	24
25	790	Azariah, I Chronicles 6:13	Azariah, Ezra 7:1	786	25
26-30	760	5 th – 9 th Missing Generations		726	26-30
31	611	Seraiah, I Chronicles 6:14	Seraiah, Ezra 7:1	756	31
32	606	Jehozadak, I Chron. 6:14-15	7th Omitted Name	606	32
		Babylonian Captivity 586-516			
33	576	Jeshua, Haggai 1:1	8th Omitted Name	576	33
34	546	Joiakim, Nehemiah 12:10	9th Omitted Name	546	34
35	516	Eliashib, Nehemiah 12:10	10th Omitted Name	516	35
36	486	Joiada, Nehemiah 12:10	11th Omitted Name	486	36
37	456	Johanan & Jaddua, 12:11	Ezra, Ezra 7:1	458	37

6.14-16 Directors of the Temple Singers: Heman, Aseph and Ethan

Estimated Number of Missing Generations: 11, 18 and 19

A Choirmaster from Each Clan of Levi. King David appointed a choirmaster from each of the three sons of Levi. But none of them was a descendant of Aaron so they were not priests. Nevertheless, they composed many of the Psalms and were so prominent in worship at the Temple that they are better known than most of the priests during the Temple period.

Missing Generations: Their lines follow the pattern of most earlier examples—each line names three consecutive generations beginning with the tribe (Levi). Then they skip 8-12 generations before resuming with the Exodus generation. After that, each line lists different numbers of consecutive generations : Heman’s line is complete, listing 19 generations; Aseph’s line lists 11 generations before skipping 7 and concludes with him; Ethan is complete for ten generations before skipping the next eight and concludes with him. For sake of clarity, birth years are averages, not specific biblical dates. In this way the missing generations become obvious and add three more examples.

Birth Year	<u>Heman</u> I Chronicles 6:33-38	<u>Aseph</u> I Chronicles 6:39-43	<u>Ethan</u> I Chronicles 6:44-47
2006	Jacob (Israel), 6:38	Jacob (Israel)	Jacob (Israel)
1922	Levi (Tribal Father), 6:38	Levi (Tribal Father), 6:43	Levi (Tribal Father), 6:47
1894	Kohath (Clan Founder), 6:38	Gershon (Clan), 6:43	Merari (Clan), 6:44, 47
1876	Israel Moves to Egypt	Israel Moves to Egypt	Israel Moves to Egypt
1866	Izhar (Family) 6:33, 38	Jahath (Family), 6:43	Mushi (Family), 6:47
1839	1st -11th Missing Generations	1st -11th Missing Gen.	1st -11th Missing Gen.
1515	1-Korah, 6:37	1-Shimei, 6:42	1-Mahli, 6:47
1485	2-Eliasaph, I Chronicles 6:37	2-Zimmah, 6:42	2-Shemer, 6:46
1446	The Exodus	The Exodus	The Exodus
1444	3-Assir, I Chron. 6:37	3-Ethan, 6:42	3-Bani, 6:46
1419	4-Tahath, 6:37	4-Adaiah, 6:41	4-Amzi, 6:46
1394	5-Zephaniah, 6:36	5-Zerah, 6:41	5-Hilkiah, 6:45
1369	6-Azariah, 6:36	6-Ethni, 6:41	6-Amaziah, 6:45
1344	7-Joel, 6:36	7-Malchijah, 6:40	7-Hashabiah, 6:45
1319	8-Elkanah, 6:36	8-Baaseiah, 6:40	8-Malluch, 6:44
1294	9-Amasai, 6:35	9-Michael, 6:40	9-Abdi, 6:44
1269	10-Mahath, 6:35	10-Shimea, 6:39	10-Kishi, 6:44
1244	11-Elkanah, 6:35	11-Berechiah, 6:39	1st Further Missing Gen.
1219	12-Zuph, 6:35	1st Further Missing Gen.	2nd Further Missing Gen.
1194	13-Toah, 6:34	2nd Further Missing Gen.	3rd Further Missing Gen.
1169	14-Eliel, 6:34	3rd Further Missing Gen.	4th Further Missing Gen.
1144	15-Jeroham, 6:34	4th Further Missing Gen.	5th Further Missing Gen.
1119	16-Elkanah, 6:34	5th Further Missing Gen.	6th Further Missing Gen.
1094	17-Samuel, 6:33	6th Further Missing Gen.	7th Further Missing Gen.
1069	18-Joel, 6:33	7th Further Missing Gen.	8th Further Missing Gen.
1044	19-Heman, 6:33	12-Asaph, 6:39	11-Ethan, 6:44

6.17 Placing Moses in the 18th Dynasty of Egypt

Tables Providing Historical Chronologies. Four Appendix Tables provide carefully researched historical chronologies that undergird and affirm the preceding 16 examples of condensed genealogies. Each begins with Scriptural information and is supplemented with well-established secular history. The first two, found in Tables 3.1 and 4.1, provide significant historical data related to the time of the Patriarchs. This table, Table 6.17, provides historical data related to Israel's final years in Egypt and the Exodus while the next table, Table 6.18, provides historical data related to the period leading up to Solomon and the construction of the Temple.

Below. Column one locates Moses in the consecutive list of 18th Dynasty Egyptian pharaohs. While scholars have proposed various dynasties during which Moses could have lived, only the chronology of the 18th Dynasty fits the biblical details about the birth of Moses, his family, his adoption by the daughter of Pharaoh, his 40 years in the wilderness, the ten plagues and the Exodus. These ideas are developed at the close of chapter six.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	ACHIEVEMENT/RATING	DATES
Amenhotep I	First Pharaoh of the 18 th dynasty	Drove out Hyksos Enslaved Hebrews	
Thutmose I	Son of Amenhotep I	Powerful; Expansionistic	
Hatshepsut	Royal daughter of Thutmose I	Adopted Moses; Powerful rule; Second confirmed female pharaoh	
Moses	Raised by Pharaoh's daughter	Learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Killed Egyptian at the age of 40. Next 40 years in Midian. Led Israel out of Egypt in 1446 BC.	1526- 1406 BC
Thutmose II	Son of Thutmose I by lesser wife Married Hatshepsut to strengthen his claim to the throne	Weak Pharaoh Died when Thutmose III was 2 years old	
Thutmose III	Son of Thutmose II	Military genius; Expanded rule to the Euphrates	
Amenhotep II	Son of Thutmose III	Weak Pharaoh Pharaoh of the Exodus	

6.18 Chronology of Samuel: An Outstanding Example of Humility

Samuel's love for God. Samuel is one of the most remarkable servants of God in the OT. All Israel knew that the sons of the high priest were worthless men, blaspheming the sacrifices and defiling the Tabernacle with fornication. A godly but barren Israelite woman prayed for a son and promised to give that son to the LORD. God answered her prayer with Samuel whom she delivered to the high priest after weaning. For the next 25 years Samuel ministered to the LORD. When God judged 98-year-old Eli and his two sons who were around 60 with death, Samuel did not assume the position of high priest because while he was a Levite, he was not a descendant of Aaron. Rather he trained the next generations of Eli's line to be faithful priests, while serving as Israel's last judge and first prophet. He wrote the book of I Samuel, possibly other portions of Scripture and was a model for David. Because Scripture reports so much of his ministry, he provides extensive information for this period of Israel's history.

Event/Period	I Sam.	Years	Date
Term of Eli as high priest (from age 58 to 98)	4:15-19	40	1115-1075
Barrenness of Hannah; rivalry of wives	1:1-8	13	1120-1107
Hannah makes vow; Eli blesses her	1:9-18	0	1107
Samuel born	1:20	2	1105
Samuel weaned; left with Eli at Shiloh	1:22-28	5	1105-1100
Samuel ministers to the LORD; wears priest's ephod	2:11, 18	25	1100-1075
Eli's sons treat the LORD'S offerings with contempt	2:12-17	35	1110-1075
Eli rebukes sons	2:22-25	15	1090-1075
Message of judgment delivered by prophet	2:27-36		1076
God calls Samuel	3:4-18		1093
Samuel receives visions	3:19-21	18	1093-1075
Philistines kill Eli's sons; capture Ark; Eli dies	4:1-18		1075
Samuel organizes/trains Eli's descendants	I Chr. 9:22		1075-1065
Generations 3-5 of Eli conduct priesthood functions	Jer. 7:8-15	60	1075-1015
After seven months the Ark returns to Israel	6:1		1074
Israel laments; Samuel assembles nation, renews kingdom, sacrifices; God routes Philistines	7:2-14	20	1055
Samuel old; sons judge corruptly; people demand king	Ch 8-10		1055-1050
Saul reigns	Acts 13:21	40	1050-1010
Saul disobeys repeatedly; God rejects him	Ch 13-15	30	1050-1020
Samuel anoints David	Ch 16	1	1019
Saul loves/hates David, slays 85 priests at Nob	22:6-19	4	1015
Samuel dies; all Israel mourns; buried at Ramah	25:1		1013
David flees to Philistines; Ziklag sacked; David defeats Amalekite raiders	Ch 27, 29-30	3	1013-1011
Saul consults witch of Endor	Ch 28		1010
Saul dies in battle	Ch 31		1010
David reigns in Hebron	II Sam. 2	7.5	1010-1003
David reigns in Jerusalem over all Israel	II Sam. 5:5	33	1003-970
Solomon reigns	I K 11:42	40	970-930

7.1 The Numbers in Shem's Genealogy

Overview to chapter seven tables. The numbers in Shem's genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26 have been added for 2000 years to determine the year of the Flood. A similar grouping of names and numbers in Genesis five have been used to continue earth history back to Adam and Creation. Those names and numbers are examined in chapter seven and organized in the tables to follow.

Missing names between Eber and Peleg. The numbers from Shem's list are displayed in table form below. They clearly reveal an enormous decline of longevity between Eber and Peleg, vastly more than normal variations and it was permanent. How many missing years does this permanent decline of longevity represent? The answer is found by multiplying the average years in a generation by the number of missing generations. Those two necessary numbers are found in the next two tables. They show that the average length of a generation was 31.5 years and that 48 generations are missing. Hence, by this metric and without further refinements, about 1500 years are missing, placing the Flood around 4000 BC.

Table Headings. **Count**=consecutive numbering of names in the biblical text; **Age #1**=age of father when he died; **Age #2**=age of his son when son died; **Diff**=the difference in the length of the father's and son's longevities for quick comparisons. **Age #3**=Father's age when "son" was born.

Shem's Genealogy

Count	Father	Age #1	Age #2	Diff.	Son	Age #3
1	Shem	600	438	-162	Arpachshad	100
2	Arpachshad	438	433	-5	Shelah	35
3	Shelah	433	464	+31	Eber	30
4	Eber	464	239	-225	Peleg	34
5	Peleg	239	239	0	Reu	30
6	Reu	239	230	-9	Serug	32
7	Serug	230	148	-82	Nahor	30
8	Nahor	148	205	+57	Terah	29
9	Terah	205	175	-30	Abraham	130
10	Abraham	175	[180]	[+5]	[Isaac]	[100]

Adam's Genealogy

Count	Father	Age #1	Age #2	Diff.	Son	Age #3
1	Adam	930	912	-18	Seth	130
2	Seth	912	905	-7	Enos	105
3	Enos	905	910	+5	Canaan	90
4	Canaan	910	895	-15	Mahalalel	70
5	Mahalalel	895	962	+67	Jared	65
6	Jared	962	[365]	--	Enoch	162
7	Enoch	[365]	969	--	Methuselah	65
8	Methuselah	969	797	-172	Lamech	187
9	Lamech	797	950	153	Noah	182
10	Noah	950	[600]	[-350]	[Shem]	[500]

7.2 Average Years in a Generation

Calculating the two missing critical numbers. As explained in the introduction to Table 7.1, the Scripture reveals that Peleg lived 225 fewer years than Eber. Since 225 years is the biblical record and no recorded individual after Peleg lived longer than he did, this 225-year decrease was permanent. But the big question is “How many years does that 225-year decrease represent?” Two numbers must be found from the Shem list to answer this question. The first number is found in this Table and the second is found in Table 7.4.

Three Standards for Starting New Generations:

- 1). **31.43 years** per generation. This number is found by adding the ages of the first seven fathers in Shem’s list when each had his son and dividing by seven, so this figure is an exact representation of the text of Scripture. For purpose of simplification, this number is often rounded to 31.5.
- 2). **33.33 years** per generation. This number is provided for ease of use. It is a generalization and can be used as 3 generations per 100 years. Example: if 48 generations are skipped between Eber and Peleg, at 3 generations per 100 years, 3 goes into 48 16 times. Thus 1600 years are omitted.
- 3) **25 years** per generation. This number is used in Jacob’s day when his sons were starting families early, even before the age of 20. As longevity decreased, the years to adulthood also decreased. When Israel enlisted all 20-year-olds in its citizen army in the wilderness wanderings, this was because the age of adulthood had declined to 20.

Reliability of 31.43 Years per Generation (observations from Table below):

1. Based on seven consecutive biblical fathers and their numbers.
2. Shows an expected overall slight decline of years from generation to generation.
3. Overall, Shem’s list shows a modest range of birthing years: 29-35 years.
4. Average before the omission of generations: 33 years.
5. Average after the omission of generations: 30.25 years
6. Conclusion #1 – The slight decline of longevity is obvious in the record of Genesis 11.
7. Conclusion #2—This 7-father average provides a strong number for the length of a generation at this time in history.
8. 31.43 (or a rounded number) will be used to determine generations before Jacob’s sons.

Headings: Gen=Generation; Birthing Age=Father’s age at birth of first son; Before/After-birthing age of fathers before and after the gap; Gap-The omission of names between Eber and Peleg.

Gen	Father	Birthing Age	Before	After
1 st	Arpachshad	35	35	
2 nd	Selah	30	30	
3 rd	Eber	34	34	
GAP of 35-55 Generations				
4 th	Peleg	30		30
5 th	Reu	32		32
6 th	Serug	30		30
7 th	Nahor	29		29
Total Years		220	99	121
Average Years Per Generation		31.43	33.00	30.25

7.3 The Decline of Human Longevity in General

This Table shows beyond doubt that human longevity slowly declined after the Flood. Four successive periods from the Flood to Moses are examined. The average lifespan in each succeeding period was shorter than the average in the preceding period. This material is explained on pages 127-128 and repeated here in table form for easy viewing. Dates are BC. Years for the first two periods are based on the view that 35-55 generations are omitted between Eber and Peleg in Shem's genealogy (Genesis 11:10-26). Since the lifespans of named individuals are taken from Scripture, they are reliable.

Headings/Abbreviations. Decrease=decrease of lifespans between two consecutive generations; increase=increase of lifespans between two consecutive generations; average=the average lifespan within the period; gap=omitted names; gen=generations; YPG=years per generation.

Person	Lifespan	Decrease	Increase	Average
Period 1 – First Three Fathers after the Flood (About 4000 BC)				
Arpachshad	438 Years			
Shelah	433 Years	5 Years		
Eber	464 Years		31 Years	450 Years
Period 2 – Next Three Fathers after the Flood (About 2400-2200 BC)				
Peleg	239 Years			
Reu	239 Years	0 Years		
Serug	230 Years	9 Years		236 Years
Period 3 – Four Fathers (About 2000-1800)				
Jacob	147 Years			
Levi	137 Years	10 Years		
Kohath	133 Years	4 Years		
Amram	137 Years		4 Years	138.5 Years
Period 4 – Amram to Moses (About 1750-1400)				
Amram	137 Years			
Gap	10 Gen.			
Moses	120 Years	1.5 YPG		128.5 Years

Longevity of Moses. Amram's line had unusual vitality. More realistic is the decline from Joseph to David. Joseph was born about 1915 BC while David was born about 1040, a 900-year period. Joseph lived 110 years while David lived 70 years or 40 years fewer than Joseph. The longevity of those who lived and died before the Flood did not change. 900 years was typical. After the Flood it was cut in half to 450 years. 38-58 generations later it had declined to 236 years, then 138 years, then 128 years. Joseph lived 110 years. Last of all David lived 70 years. Psalm 90:10 tells us the typical lifespan of his day was 70 years. Yes, the decline after the Flood is undeniable.

7.4 The Decline of Longevity in Shem's Genealogy

Overview: Table 7.3 gave the broad picture of human longevity decline after the Flood. This decline is reflected in Shem's genealogy, but it is so brief that without the broader picture, it is mostly dismissed as too small of a sampling to be acceptable. Thus, the broad picture is placed first, verifying that this specific picture follows the pattern of the larger picture and is therefore trustworthy.

Record of Declines. Four helpful records are found in the first six names of the Shem list. In each of the four records below the second name immediately follows the first name so they are consecutive. The three records in the first table are single generation records. These show declines of 5, 0 and 9 years. The second table shows a two generation decline of nine years. Averages are paramount. This gives an average generational decline of 4.5 years while the three records in the first table give an average generational decline of 4.7 years. These similar numbers assure us of being on the right track.

Patriarch		Age at Death		Decline
Name #1	Name #2	#1	#2	
Arpachshad	Shelah	438	433	5 Years
Peleg	Reu	239	239	0 Years
Reu	Serug	239	230	9 Years

Patriarch		Age at Death		Decline
Name #1	Name #2	#1	#2	
Peleg	Reu	239	239	0 Years
Reu	Serug	239	230	9 Years

Refinements. To produce meaningful averages, unusual numbers must be addressed and adjustments must be made when required. This is where interpreters get tripped up. Unusual numbers are numbers that are considerably larger or smaller than the average. Examples: Nahor's shorter lifespan; four fathers starting families late (Terah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob); the two who lived both before and after the Flood (Noah and Shem); the one generation increase between Shelah and Eber; and the precipitous decline of lifespans between Eber and Peleg. Chapter seven explains that the shorter life of Nahor is inconsistent with the overall record and must be rejected as an anomaly, such as an untimely death. The longer years of Eber are, of course, true, but *HB* suggests was due to less stress than those reestablishing life right after the Flood.

Missing Years between Eber and Peleg. Table 7.2 and this Table have provided the raw numbers required to determine how many years are missing between Eber and Peleg. Table 7.2 found that the average generation at the time was 31.43 years. This table finds that the generational decline was 4.5 to 4.7 years. The next Table will use these numbers to find how many years are missing between Eber and Peleg and thus the date of the Flood.

7.5 Flood Date Estimates

Missing Years. Finally, the big question can be answered. The date of the Flood ranges from 3600 to 4300 BC because of many variables described in chapter seven. Below are tables containing the data on which this range is based. While God gave much information so that a reasonable date could be established for the Flood, Deuteronomy 29:29 applies. The things God has revealed belong to us but the secret things belong to Him.

Estimate #1: Maximum Date for the Flood (4300 BC)

Elements for Maximum Date:

1. 225 year decline between Eber and Peleg
2. Decline of 4.5 years per generation
3. A 200-year quiet period to reestablish life

Decline of Years Per Generation	Overall Decline of Longevity	Generations	Years Per Generation	Missing Years
Quiet Period	None	6.25 (Est.)	32	200
4.5 Years	225 Years	50	32	1600
Total Missing Years				1800

Estimate #2: Minimum Date for the Flood (3600 BC)

Elements for Minimum Date:

1. Eber's years were due to vigor. Had he lived a normal lifespan, he would have lived five fewer years than his father.
2. Longevity decline of 5.0 years per generation
3. Greater longevity declines during the most severe part of Ice Age

Decline of Years Per Generation	Overall Decline of Longevity	Generations	Years Per Generation	Missing Years
5	189	37.8	31.43	1188
Ice Age				-88
Total Missing Years				1100

Date of Flood	Maximum	Minimum
Birth of Peleg	2417	2417
Years in Gap	1800	1100
Years before Gap	101	101
Total	4318	3618

Rounding	4300 BC	3600 BC
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Date of Creation

Years from Creation to the Flood	1656	1656
Total	5956	5256
Rounding	6000 BC	5300 BC

8.1 Comparing Genesis 5 & 11 Numbers in Three Texts

Introduction. Chapter 8 acknowledges that many Christians in the West do not know that their Old Testament Pentateuch is but one of three existing OT Pentateuchs. Germaine to *HB* are the numbers in the genealogies of Adam and Seth. Each text has some different numbers so the numbers from the three texts are set side by side for easy study.

Abbreviations for the three texts. LXX-Septuagint; MT-Masoretic Text; SP-Samaritan Pentateuch. The “match” column codes the amount of agreement on each number in the three middle columns. BA stands for column two, the begetting age of each Patriarch; RY stands for the remaining years until the Patriarch died; TL refers to column 4, the total life span of the Patriarch.

Match. Column five indicates which of the three texts agree on the numbers in columns two-four. Numbers 5-1 are codes: 5-all three of the text agree; 4-LXX and MT agree; 3-LXX and SP agree; 2-MT and SP agree; 1-each text contains different numbers. Scripture itself gives The Remaining Years in Adam’s list while HB calculates that number in the Table below. In as much as the three texts contain 146 numbers, the issue is complicated. *HB* takes the view that the Masoretic Text contains the correct numbers.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Begetting Age</u>			<u>Remaining Years</u>			<u>Total Life Span</u>			<u>Match</u>		
Name	LXX	MT	SP	LXX	MT	SP	LXX	MT	SP	BA	RY	TL
Adam	230	130	130	700	800	800	930	930	930	2	2	5
Seth	205	105	105	707	807	807	912	912	912	2	2	5
Enosh	190	90	90	715	815	815	905	905	905	2	2	5
Cainan	170	70	70	740	840	840	910	910	910	2	2	5
Mahalaleel	165	65	65	730	830	830	895	895	895	2	2	5
Jared	162	162	62	800	800	785	962	962	847	4	4	4
Enoch	165	65	65	200	300	300	365	365	365	2	2	5
Methuselah	167	187	67	802	782	653	969	969	720	1	1	4
Lamech	188	182	53	565	595	600	753	777	653	1	1	1
Noah	500	500	500	450	450	450	950	950	950	5	5	5
Shem	100	100	100	500	500	500	600	600	600	5	5	5
Arphaxad	135	35	135	430	403	303	565	438	438	3	1	2
Cainan	130	—	—	330	—	—	460	---	---	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shelah	130	30	130	330	403	303	460	433	433	3	1	2
Eber	134	34	134	370	430	270	504	464	404	3	1	1
Peleg	130	30	130	209	209	109	339	239	239	3	4	2
Reu	132	32	132	207	207	107	339	239	239	3	4	2
Serug	130	30	130	200	200	100	330	230	230	3	4	2
Nahor	79	29	79	129	119	69	208	148	148	3	1	2
Terah	70	70	70	135	135	75	205	205	145	5	4	4

8.2 Creation to Abraham According to Three Pentateuchal Texts

Adding the numbers of Table 8.1. Table 8.1 enables the comparing of numbers in the two genealogies of the three Old Testament texts of the Pentateuch of Genesis 5 and 11. This table takes those numbers to the next step by both showing them and adding them to give the various number of years from several significant points in history like the number of years from Creation to Christ. Past chronologies were flawed because of numerous misinterpretations of the OT text. Two of the most obvious was a 215-year sojourn in Egypt and Terah being 70 when he fathered Abraham. The numbers below reflect a 430-year Egyptian sojourn and Terah being 130 when he fathered Abraham. The numbers below include two Canaanites but no missing generations. See Table 7.5 for HB's date range for the Flood and Creation. Headings are explained in Table 8.1.

Name	Age at Begetting			Remaining Years			Total Life Span		
	LXX	MT	SP	LXX	MT	SP	LXX	MT	SP
Adam	230	130	130	700	800	800	930	930	930
Seth	205	105	105	707	807	807	912	912	912
Enosh	190	90	90	715	815	815	905	905	905
Cainan	170	70	70	740	840	840	910	910	910
Mahalaleel	165	65	65	730	830	830	895	895	895
Jared	162	162	62	800	800	785	962	962	847
Enoch	165	65	65	200	300	300	365	365	365
Methuselah	167	187	67	802	782	653	969	969	720
Lamech	188	182	53	565	595	600	753	777	653
Noah	500	500	500	450	450	450	950	950	950
Shem/Ham/Japheth	100	100	100						
Creation to Flood	2242	1656	1307						
After Flood-Shem	2	2	2	500	500	500	600	600	600
Arphaxad	135	35	135	430	403	303	565	438	438
Cainan	130	—	—	330	—	—	460	---	---
Shelah	130	30	130	330	403	303	460	433	433
Eber	134	34	134	370	430	270	504	464	404
Peleg	130	30	130	209	209	109	339	239	239
Reu	132	32	132	207	207	107	339	239	239
Serug	130	30	130	200	200	100	330	230	230
Nahor	79	29	79	129	119	69	208	148	148
Terah	70	70	70	135	135	75	205	205	145
Shem Duplication	-2	-2	-2						
Flood to Abraham	1070	350	940						
Creation to Abram	3312	2006	2247						
Abram's Birth Year	2166	2166	2166						
Creation to Christ	5478	4172	4413						

8.3 - Origin of the Septuagint (LXX)

Josephus devotes some 6000 words to the origin of the LXX in his work *The Antiquities of the Jews* (*Ant.*, 12/2, 287-292). It is a fascinating story that held and delighted his audience. That many words would produce an article about 18-pages long.

While the writings of Josephus were immensely popular in the Greco-Roman world of his day and after, he was branded a traitor by Jewish officials who forbid Jews to read or translate his works. This is understandable for he was born into a prominent Jewish family in Jerusalem. In the rebellion against Rome, he served as a Jewish General in the Galilee. Then he was captured, but instead of being executed, he talked his way into Roman favor, even advising them on military strategy in the destruction of Jerusalem. He ended up becoming a Roman citizen and received patronage from the Roman Flavian dynasty whose name he took. It is no wonder that his own country hated him so.

The Jews told a different story for the origin of the LXX. According to their account Egypt contained a large number of Greek speaking Jews who could no longer read their Hebrew Torah, so about 280 BC the LXX was translated for them by 70 Jewish translators. Their date is 30 years earlier than the date Josephus gave. Could the purpose of this second account be aimed at diminishing Josephus' appeal to Jews? Regardless, the LXX stands dated to both 280 and 250 BC depending on which account is considered correct.

Major difficulties face the 280 BC view. The Koine (common) Greek language was new to Egypt. It was only spoken in Macedonia until Alexander the Great spread it through his conquests. Jews living in Egypt would have spoken possibly an Egyptian language and a Jewish language but not Alexander's Greek that early. While he conquered Egypt in 332 BC, his successors fought continually to establish Greek rule over that part of his empire. Ptolemy II Philadelphus who followed his father's 40-year rule was still quelling rebellions in Palestine and importing Jewish slaves after 280 BC as his father had done before him.

Over time these Jewish slaves increased in number and learned a measure of their masters' Greek language, but they had not reached such a population, proficiency in Greek or even the freedom to own books and read as early as 280 BC. Further, 280 BC was a time of struggles, not peace. A gathering of 70 Jewish scholars to translate the Torah required peace, not turmoil. Finally, as suggested above, the Jews' hatred of Josephus could well explain the rival account of the LXX's origin.

Creationists who favor the LXX numbers prefer the 280 BC date which means they view Josephus' story as pure fiction. Yet the same creationists present Josephus as the strongest historical testimony to the LXX numbers. If he fabricated a tale about the origin of the LXX, can his numbers for Genesis five and eleven be creditable? Declaring he made up his story of the origin of the LXX does not fit the facts.

8.4 - Description of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The DSS almost defy description, they are so varied. DSS authority Geza Vermes wrote his first edition of *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* in 1962. The 2004 Penguin Classics revised edition (about the 6th edition) covers 694 pages of fine print and only includes the non-biblical scrolls. Vermes divided these scrolls by subject matter—the rules, hymns and poems, calendars, liturgies and prayers, historical and apocalyptic works, wisdom literature, bible interpretations, biblically based apocryphal works and miscellaneous. Thus, they cover far more than books of the Old Testament. Hershel Shanks, founder and long-time editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* had this to say about the non-biblical documents:

While the Biblical scrolls reveal important insights about the formation and variations of the Hebrew Bible, the non-biblical scrolls have opened up whole new worlds of study and shed light on the rich variety of thought within Judaism at the end of the Second Temple period.⁸⁰

It is exciting to hear that over 200 ancient scrolls (plus many, many fragments) were recovered that contain verses from every book of the Hebrew OT except Esther. But these scrolls are far from 200 complete OT books. Just one is a complete book (Isaiah) while another scroll contains half of Isaiah. One of the best-preserved biblical scrolls is the Great Psalms Scroll. It contains 48 psalms including seven non-biblical Psalms (not found in the MT). However, the average scroll is just a fraction of an OT book. Cave number four contained over half of the scrolls yet all were in tiny fragments, covered with up to a meter of debris and some even chewed by rodents.

Among the non-biblical religious scrolls are commentaries on Isaiah, Psalms, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah and Song of Solomon. Scrolls called apocryphon (singular for “apocrypha”) expand on or rewrite biblical books. In this category are the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the *Moses Apocryphon*, the *David Apocryphon* and the *Pentateuch Apocryphon*. Scholars especially appreciated the calendar scrolls which give astronomical observations and therefore can be identified with exact dates.

Among the non-biblical writings are portions from just three of the common apocryphal books--*Tobit*, *Ecclesiasticus* (Sirach) and the *Epistle of Jeremiah* while the well-known Pseudopigrapha books of *Jubilees* and *Enoch* are well represented. The Pseudopigrapha is a category of fictional religious literature that uses a famous name to get a reading. Lesser known and unknown books of this nature found at Qumran include the *Book of Noah*, *Book of Mysteries*, *Testimony of Naphtali*, *Prayer of Nabonidus*, *List of False Prophets*, *Prayer of Enosh*, *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, *Prophecy of Joshua*, *Birth of Noah*, *Testimony of Levi* and *Visions of Amram*.

The *Book of Enoch* (I Enoch) is a collection of texts dating 350 - 0 BC telling of the rebellion of angels who mated with human females that began a race of giants who devastated the earth and whose demonic spirits continued to produce sin and misery. It further tells of Enoch's translation to heaven where he learned the secrets of the universe and of the coming judgment. He transmitted these revelations to Methuselah. Enoch was composed in Aramaic, translated into Greek and then into ancient Ethiopic. And so the list goes.

⁸⁰Hershel Shanks, “The Dead Sea Scrolls—Discovery and Meaning,” *Biblical Archaeological Society*. 2007: 24. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dead-sea-scrolls-discovery-and-meaning.pdf?>

The researchers gave each document a reference code, a name and a simplified code. The simplified code began with the number of the cave in which the writing was found, followed by the letter "Q" [for Qumran, the settlement near the caves] and finally a sequential number for that document. Document 1Q1 was found in Qumran cave number one and is the first number assigned in that cave. This document contains about 22 selected verses written in Hebrew from Genesis chapters 1, 3 and 22-24. Document 1Q72, the last parchment found in Qumran cave number one, contains nine verses from the book of Daniel.

The fragments from each cave were cleaned and placed under glass. One authority said that fitting them together was like working a jigsaw puzzle with 90% of the pieces missing. As pieces were assembled, OT scholars began analyzing them. Having spent a lifetime with biblical texts in various ancient languages, they knew the unique differences of individual verses. Pieces resembling the Masoretic text were labeled "proto-Masoretic" while pieces resembling the Septuagint were labeled "proto-Septuagint." A third category was labeled "proto-Samaritan Pentateuch," a fourth "free-style scrolls" and a fifth "miscellaneous." Through this sorting it became apparent that most scribes through the centuries had carefully copied existing documents to the point where the biblical scrolls maintained their integrity. There was no large scale changing of sacred texts, at least after 250 BC when Genesis was translated into Greek.

The Mysterious Sectarian Texts

The documents to receive the most attention were the never-before seen non-biblical sectarian writings. The sectarian scrolls are a collection of ideas requiring a certain life style which is thought to have been practiced at Qumran. These texts opposed the Jewish authorities who controlled the Jerusalem Temple, observed a different calendar than the Temple and involved a strong apocalyptic element. One prescribes stricter purity rules than those of the Temple. Rules dictated the community's day, rising at a certain hour, beginning the day with prayer, then a long morning of work, concluding with ritual washing, dressing in special garments, eating the main meal, more liturgy and prayer, etc. The slightest violation of rules brought severe discipline.

The following scrolls provided the core of sectarian thinking: the *Community Rule* is a basic code of sectarian existence reflecting the celibate life and common ownership. The *Temple Scroll* (longest DSS-over 28' long and preserved almost to its entirety) is one of the most important. Found in Cave #2 in 1956, it was the last scroll of the original batch to be discovered. It is a legal scroll, containing a rewriting of Pentateuchal passages, applying its laws to its readers who are to live as a community. It was written in the first person style of Deuteronomy (God speaking directly to His people). The *War Scroll* is a militaristic document about the ultimate battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. The *Genesis Apocryphon* is a rewrite and expansion of the book of Genesis. The *Damascus Document* and *Habakkuk Commentary* complement the *Community Rule*. The *Thanksgiving Hymns* contain special prayers and hymns. These were found in better condition than most of the other scrolls.

According to the *Community Rule* the supervisor evaluated members annually. Promotion meant sitting in a higher seat at the main meal for the next year. Demotion meant taking a lower seat. The standing of each member of the community was obvious. Those who remained in the lowest seats were in danger of being banished from the community which could lead to death because of the oath they had taken.

Geza Vermes well stated the thinking of the scholars of his day about the sectarian scrolls when he wrote

The principal novelty provided by the manuscripts consists of cryptic allusions to the historical origins of the community, launched by a priest called the Teacher of Righteousness, who was persecuted by a Jewish ruler designated as the Wicked Priest. The Teacher and his followers were compelled to withdraw into the desert where they awaited the impending manifestation of God's triumph over evil and darkness in the end of days....⁸¹

The sectarian scrolls used unique terminology to describe the special theology, worldview and history of the group which called itself the Yahad (community). In earlier years researchers believed the community was Qumran and that these documents guided life at Qumran. However, after years of reflection the thinking has somewhat changed as the following quote shows.

Most now agree that the corpus represents the writings of related, evolving communities rather than a single sect. Even the texts labeled as sectarian were likely to have been composed by multiple groups, within and outside of the Community. Three of the original seven scrolls found in Cave 1 near Qumran were instrumental in identifying sectarian texts and remain some of the most well-known manuscripts: The Community Rule (Serekh HaYahad), The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness, and The Habakkuk Commentary (Pesher Habakkuk).⁸²

⁸¹ Giza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised Edition [Vermes 6th Edition] (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 3.

⁸²*The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library*. [https://www.thedeadseascrolls.org.il/learn-about-the -scrolls/scrolls-content](https://www.thedeadseascrolls.org.il/learn-about-the-scrolls/scrolls-content). Page no longer available, but on 4/24/19 this exact quote was found without further identification on screen three at <https://howura.ga/the-qumran-library-in-the-light-of-the-attitude-towards-books.pdf#>

8.5 Qumran: The Community that Treasured the DSS

The identity of the Qumranians has been slow to gel because the scribes of the DSS and the occupants at Qumran are shrouded in mystery. Further, excavations of the ruins have not provided satisfactory answers. The first archaeologist to excavate the site did the most field work. To the chagrin of more recent archaeologists, he died in 1975 not having published his research and those responsible for it still had not released it 22 years later. In the summer of 1997 Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, met with four field archaeologists to discuss the Qumran site. In the Jan/Feb 1998 issue of BAR Shanks reported on the discussion. He referred to his guests as “four prominent archaeologists who know as much about Qumran and its excavation as can be known today.” The archaeologists disagreed on many questions but one they all agreed on was that the occupants of Qumran at the time of the scrolls were Jews. They listed four reasons: Hebrew inscriptions on pottery called ostraca, many ritual baths next to the two large reservoirs, numerous stone vessels (which are always clean whereas clay vessels can be unclean) and the nearness of Jerusalem.

But in the early years as scholars debated the identity of the occupants many opinions were expressed. The cemetery at the site with over 1100 graves was a puzzle. Some scholars said the settlement had nothing to do with the caves and scrolls. Instead, they explained that when it became obvious that the Romans would defeat the Jews near the end of the Jewish-Roman War (66-70 AD), Jews from across the country brought their precious scrolls to this area and hid them in the caves. As to the settlement, they point to the fine clay collected by the water system along with the finding of much pottery and maintain it was a pottery factory. Others said that because of early archaeological discoveries, it was a tannery or a perfume making facility or a military outpost or a winter villa of a wealthy Jewish family living in Jerusalem.

But the majority of scholars observed that cave number four that contained over half of all the scrolls was just a stone’s throw from the compact Qumran buildings, conclusively linking the settlement with this ideal place to store their precious scrolls. Five inkwells were found in the ruins, far more than at any other archaeological site in Israel. Many inkwells speak of much scribal activity. While over 200 scrolls were copies of Old Testament books, three times as many were non-biblical sacred books and handbooks for the function of a religious sect. Somewhere there had to be leaders who taught those highly detailed religious practices and disciples who kept them. The place would have been the settlement immediately below cave number four that wrote and copied those religious obligations.

Being self-reliant they would have made their own pottery and maybe even sold some for income. Twelve hundred pottery place settings were found in a storage room near the kitchen. Nearby was the largest of the rooms. It could seat 150-200 for a meal. To be constantly producing scrolls would require a steady tannery output, hence the tannery association. Their sacrifices involved incense, hence the perfume association. Lastly, the large cemetery and location suggested the site may have been a military outpost at an earlier time. But the archaeologists were adamant that Qumran was not a military fortress at the time of the scrolls. Military fortresses such as the Hasmonean and Herodian fortresses on Israel’s east border are well known. They had features such as one entrance and a courtyard large enough to assemble the troops. Qumran did not have these features. Rather, it had the features of a fortified agricultural settlement which are found throughout ancient Israel.

All eleven caves were within a mile and a half of the compound. Most were on the faces of cliffs and were not easily accessed. Some were natural while others were hand carved in soft stone below the hard rock that rises to 3000' above sea level. A total of about 250 such caves have been identified in the region so there was nothing special to attract sightseers to these inaccessible eleven. The dry desert air and dark caves preserved those documents for 2000 years. Following the vast document discovery at Qumran, letters and business documents have been found in caves at four other Dead Sea locations.

Date(s) of Occupation

The present thinking is that sometime after 100 BC religious Jews occupied this ancient site. It came to be called Qumran, a word associated with holiness, and would eventually consist of a large square two-story building with a small central courtyard and a smaller building behind it. It featured an intricate system for collecting and storing water. About 31 BC a powerful earthquake struck the area. The 7.0+ earthquake's date and strength has been confirmed in the layers of mud at the bottom of the Dead Sea. Some say the earthquake left the site in ruins and that it was not rebuilt until 30 years later. Others claim it was not damaged severely and was quickly repaired. The Romans put a final end to it about 70-72 AD.

The dates of occupation should not be confused with the dates of the scrolls. Qumran procured existing documents, copied them and also produced new titles. The cost of an entire Bible (Old and New Testament) before the printing press was about the same as the cost of an above average home in the US today. Assuming that the Qumranians had limited resources, many of the documents they gathered would have been second hand. As the wealthy wore out their copies of OT books and replaced them, the Qumranians purchased these second-hand volumes. If so, the typical scroll they copied from could have been one or two hundred years older than the date when they copied that scroll. Thus, they could have possessed copies of some OT books that dated to 300-250 BC. Such scrolls would have been 1200 years older than the Aleppo Codex (c. 920 AD) which was the earliest major Hebrew scroll available to OT scholars before the DSS discovery.

Number of Occupants

Estimates of the number of occupants at Qumran run from 12 to 200. In addition to the buildings, investigators have identified 20 hand-dug caves in the marl of the plateau on which the site rests. Marl is a clay-like material, as hard as concrete when dry, but workable when moistened. The caves were large enough to hold two people and household items were found in some. If Qumran was basically a copying center, the number of residents would have been low. But if it were both a copying and training center, the number would have been high.

Whatever the number, certain primary functions can be identified. Obviously, there was the staff of scribes. If various similar religious groups shared in the use of Qumran, each scribe may have been part of a team that wrote new documents, obtained existing documents to copy, prepared writing material (parchment) and ultimately copied texts. A building and grounds crew would be needed to maintain the facilities, especially the complicated water system which was apparently also used for ritual bathing. A food service crew would be essential, securing and preparing the food, operating the dining hall and cleanup. The management team would supervise the members, oversee the finances, conduct daily religious services, train potential members (a two-year process) and manage relations with other like-minded communities. These considerations suggest estimates ranging from 40 to 150.

8.6 Were Qumranians Essenes?

Did Jesus Found the New Testament Church on Essene Ideas?

Were the Qumranians Essenes and was the New Testament Church founded on Essene Doctrines? Good grief! Another huge distortion to unpack. Just three ancient sources speak of the Essenes—Philo, Pliny the Elder and Josephus. Their writings have been used by some to argue that the Qumranians were Essenes. Josephus wrote that there were three Jewish religious sects—the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. The argument goes that since the Qumranians were obviously not Pharisees or Sadducees, they must have been Essenes.

Josephus was noted for simplifying his ideas for the sake of his audience. He would have lost them if he had mentioned the many other Jewish sects or parties with religious views known from history such as the Zealots, the Sicarii, the Hellenes, the Therapeutiae, the Boethusians, the Herodians, the Hasidim, the Samaritans and the Christians. Beyond these were others we don't even know about.

Rabbinic sources say there were 24 groups of heretics in Israel. Only the uninformed or those who wish ill to historic Christianity would advance this Josephus three-sect argument. No writings that claim to be Essene have ever been found. Never, anywhere in the DSS do the authors and copyists call themselves Essenes. No DSS even mentions them. Nevertheless, once a noted scholar suggested the Qumranians might be Essenes the idea stuck and soon the scholarly world was announcing, "We now know about the Essenes. The Dead Sea Scrolls inform us about them." This is false reporting.

The first ancient writer who spoke of the Essenes, Philo, was a Jewish philosopher, born in Alexandria and lived about 60 years (20/10 BCE – 50/60 CE). His brother was the customs collector in Alexandria and reportedly one of the wealthiest men in the world. Philo was thoroughly Hellenized, speaking highly of the gymnasium which righteous Jews abhorred. Philo's comments about the Essenes mainly reflect the experiences and testimonies of others so they generally are hearsay and to be taken with a grain of salt.

The second, Josephus, claims to have been in Essene training at the age of 17 but at the age of 20 he chose to be a Pharisee instead. Since Essene training lasted three years, it is unlikely that he completed the program and qualified to learn their secrets before he became disillusioned and began to search for another affiliation. While he makes useful statements about them, the key statement that advocates for the Essenes identity is found in Pliny the Elder. This Roman historian wrote a ten-volume work called *Natural History*. He lived 56 years and died in rescue efforts during the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius (79 AD), so he was born 23/24 AD. While accompanying Titus in the Jewish Wars he came to visit and describe the Eastern Mediterranean.

After explaining the western part of what is today modern Israel, Pliny shifted east to the Dead Sea area, writing first of Jericho, then Engedi and lastly of Masada. He did not mention Qumran which is located on a prominence over a mile from the Northwest shoreline of the Dead Sea, about nine miles south of Jericho or the three or four settlements found to the south of Qumran because they were insignificant. He next speaks of Engedi which was about 20 miles south of Qumran. Eight miles further south was the last holdout of the Jews, the rock called Masada. Masada marked the southern border of Israel in the area at that time. Jericho, Engedi and Masada were all major sites.

In a long paragraph summarized below Pliny wrote that the home of the Essenes was on the west side of the Dead Sea. Since Qumran was on the west side of the Dead Sea, that statement is frequently cited to support the contention that the Qumranians were Essenes. But Pliny was more specific. He went on to say that their home was near Engedi. The Essene advocates ignore or explain away this more specific location stated here by Pliny:

On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes.... Lying below the Essenes was formerly the town of Engedi.... Next comes Masada, a fortress on a rock, itself also not far from the Dead Sea. This is the limit of Judea.⁸³

As you can see the ancient geographer actually told where along the west side of the Dead Sea the Essenes lived. He wrote that below them was the town of Engedi. Those of the view that the scroll keepers at Qumran were Essenes interpret “below” as directional, i.e., south of or downstream from their home at Qumran was Engedi. This interpretation conflicts with the record. One scholar searched the writings of Pliny and found that 15 of Pliny’s 17 uses of this phrase refer to elevation, not direction. Another noted Pliny did not locate the Essenes in a town but in an area so this could not refer to the compact settlement of Qumran. Yet another spent ten pages to show Pliny was referring to altitude rather than direction.

If “below” refers to altitude, Pliny would be saying that Engedi was at a lower elevation than the area occupied by the Essenes. This interpretation not only agrees with the overwhelming number of times Pliny used the construction to refer to altitude, but also makes sense of his statement about their home being “out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast.” By living somewhere above Engedi their drinking supply was not affected by the unhealthy waters of the Dead Sea. We shortened Pliny’s quote but he also stated that the Essenes’ only company was palm trees. The Engedi area was noted for its palm trees while Qumran was not.

Damage to Christianity from the Essene Identity

Simply stated, Pliny’s quote does not support the idea that the scroll keepers at Qumran were Essenes. Nevertheless, on the basis of the known characteristics of the Essenes and Pliny’s statement about the Essenes living on the west side of the Dead Sea, a majority of the scholarly community concluded and still maintains that the Qumranians were Essenes. Among the scholars were those who took the story to the next step, speculating that John the Baptist and Christ had gotten many of their ideas from the Essenes at Qumran. According to this line of thinking Christianity was merely a product of man, built on the religious teachings of the Essenes and, of course, Christ was merely the most recent prophet or reformer mouthing these ideas. Journalistic sensationalists pounced on the most radical speculations of the DSS scholars. The public was learning about the Qumranians from these sensationalists who wrote things like “the early church was rooted in the Jewish sect of the New Covenant, the Essenes sect. It borrowed a large part of its organization, rites, doctrines, patterns of thought and mystical/ethical ideas from the Essenes.”

The pulp sensationalists went so far as to suggest that those scholars under Christian orders (Catholics) and those with rabbinical training (Jews) tended to ignore the problems the scrolls

⁸³C. Plinius Secundus, *Natural History*, 77 AD, V.15.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Natural_History_\(Rackham,_Jones,_%26_Eichholz\)/Book_5](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Natural_History_(Rackham,_Jones,_%26_Eichholz)/Book_5)

introduced. They concluded that their biases disqualified them from answering the question of who the Qumranians were. One highly influential journalist wrote that the DSS were a menace to rooted assumptions of tradition and dogma (ie, the Old Testament Masoretic Text and the New Testament itself). He charged that almost without exception those of the Christian or Jewish faith have boycotted the DSS.

Dr. William Sanford LaSor of Fuller Seminary wrote that these were serious charges, not just questioning the academic ability of these scholars but their very integrity. More importantly, he stated that they were patently untrue. LaSor was responsible for the bibliography of DSS articles and noted that by 1954 at least 43 scholars of all persuasions had published articles on the DSS and in the next few years many more would. Yet, the pulp sensationalists' articles attacking historic Christianity became the extent of the public's understanding of the authors of the DSS.

Dr. LaSor was asked to serve on a panel to discuss the Dead Sea Scrolls and he discovered that the entire auditorium of college students and even the other panelists had only heard the sensationalists' side of the story—that the keepers of the DSS were Essenes and that John the Baptist and Christ had gotten their ideas from Qumran. One of the panelists was the dean of a law school. Another was a prominent historical author. Subsequently, Professor LaSor wrote a 281-page book entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* to show how far afield such ideas were.

While both Essenes and Qumranians were ascetic, separatist, secretive and largely celibate, they also had major differences. Most differences involve complicated intellectual arguments but here are some very clear but simple differences. Qumranians required an oath for membership. Essenes disavowed oaths. Qumranians used oil in their sacrifices. Essenes believed oil defiled. The Sons of Light (Qumranians in the War Scroll) would fight the sons of darkness. Essenes refused to engage in warfare. Qumranians required a two-year initiation process while Essenes required three. Beyond this LaSor took up the major doctrines of the New Testament showing that in every case these two ascetic, separatist and legalistic orders had major differences.

However, even though the Qumranians were not Essenes, they were far from the teachings of Christ. Their sole objective was fully keeping the Law of Moses. While they collected over 200 Old Testament scrolls, they acquired or composed three times that many in their efforts to attain the righteousness required by the Law. This was their passion—to achieve the holiness, the purity required by the Mosaic Law. To that end they separated from what they considered apostate Judaism and adopted ascetic practices. Even though John the Baptist ministered in the Lower Jordan River area not far from Qumran and Christ preached in towns close by, not a single reference to the Baptist or to Christ, their teachings, New Testament books or even quotes from New Testament books are found in their 700+ religious but non biblical scrolls.

The argument that the Qumranians were Essenes and therefore the DSS should be disregarded has failed.

8.7 - Weighing the LXX's Textual Quality

As has been pointed out, the *LXX* and *MT* follow different textual families. As a result, scholars now are saying that much of the *LXX* is an excellent translation of the base Hebrew texts that were used. The translation began with the Torah in 250 BC. As many as four generations of Jewish translators had their fingers in it between 250 and 100 BC until all of the OT books were included.

In places the *LXX* is superior to the *MT*. We will speak of four. In I Samuel 11:1-2 the *MT* tells how the Ammonite King said that if the city surrendered, he would gouge out the right eye of each male. This seemed harsh for simply being defeated in warfare. The *LXX* has an entire paragraph that is missing in the *MT*. It explains that Jabash-Giliad had rebelled, breaking a treaty with the Ammonites and that the penalty for such duplicity was to gouge out the right eye. In this case the *MT* scribe made an error called "homeoteleuton" wherein the scribe's eye looks away and comes back to the wrong place. In doing so he omitted an entire paragraph that explained this cruelty. This paragraph was found in a Qumran manuscript and of course most of the biblical manuscripts at Qumran were in Hebrew. So the Hebrew text used for the *LXX* was right while the Hebrew text that became the *MT* was wrong.

Another example is Deuteronomy 32:8 which speaks about the dividing of the land of the earth among all the nations. The *MT* says God divided it among the "sons of Israel" while the *LXX* says He divided it among the "sons of God." Obviously, it was divided long before the birth of Jacob, the Jewish patriarch whose name was changed to Israel. The "sons of God" would be referring to the human race in the same way that Adam was a son of God. Even the *ESV* which is translated from the *MT* explains this problem in a footnote but inserts the correct reading in the verse.

Psalms 145 is an acrostic Psalm. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and each verse starts with the next Hebrew letter. In the *MT* verse 13 starts with the Hebrew letter mem while the next verse skips the letter nun and starts with the Hebrew letter samech. As a result, in the *MT* there are only 21 verses in Psalm 145. The *LXX*, however, contains the verse that starts with the missing letter so it contains 22 verses. Even though the verse is obviously missing due to a scribal error, scribes after that faithfully copied the mistake. This shows the care with which they attempted to copy their sacred writings. [The *ESV* also places the missing verse in the text while it explains the problem in a footnote.]

In a fascinating article Conrad Gren explains the most remarkable example yet, that of Psalm 22:16.⁸⁴ The *MT* reads "like a lion my hands and my feet" while the *LXX* says "they pierced my hands and my feet." Bedouins had discovered a Hebrew scroll containing this psalm in the 1950's but it was not examined by scholars until the 1990's. This scroll was written in a Herodian bookhand which dates it between 50 and 68 AD. It contains the Hebrew equivalent of the *LXX* reading "they pierced my hands and my feet." The difference in Hebrew between "like a lion" and "they pierced" is just one letter, the fourth and final letter of the two associated Hebrew words. The two Hebrew letters are similar in appearance. The first (a yod) looks somewhat like an apostrophe while the second (a waw/vav) starts as an apostrophe but has a tail that comes straight down. It would have been easy for a scribe to mistake the waw (vav), "They pierced..." for a yod

⁸⁴Conrad R. Gren, "Piercing the Ambiguities of Psalm 22:16 and the Messiah's Mission," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, June 2005, 283-299.

“Like a lion...”, possibly due to failing light or a faded tail on the waw. [The *ESV* provides the correct reading in the verse.]

Whenever this copying error occurred, it was not in the Hebrew textual family used by the *LXX* translators, so the *LXX* preserved the correct text while the extant *MT* bears the copying error. We have cited four examples where the *LXX* contains the correct text while the *MT* contains a scribal copying error. This does not mean we can’t trust the OT, but it does mean we need the work of textual scholars to get it as close to the original writings as possible and that they need every possible tool including the *LXX*.

On the other hand, Scholars have noted many examples of errors in the *LXX* such as the manipulated numbers in the genealogies of Adam and Shem, Methuselah dying 14 years after the Flood and leaving out 12% of the book of Jeremiah. One in which the *LXX* translators themselves took liberties with the text involves the location of Abraham’s homeland. By the time of the *LXX* the location of Abraham’s homeland of Ur had been long forgotten, so the translators substituted “land of the Chaldeans” for “Ur of the Chaldeans” in all four occurrences of this phrase (*LXX*-Genesis 11:28, 31; 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7). This is called harmonization.

Since the historic land of the Chaldeans was Upper Mesopotamia, Ur was identified as the city of Urfa by many Bible commentators through the centuries. In this way the *LXX* translators introduced an error into Scripture. Urfa, recently renamed Sanliurfa, is about 25 miles northwest of Haran. Both the Koran and the writings of Joseph Smith copy this error as the very word of God writing at length about Abraham in Urfa. In the 1920’s archaeologists identified the true Ur where Abraham grew up. It was not the dusty village of Urfa but possibly the leading city of Southern Mesopotamia in Abraham’s day, 700 miles southeast of Urfa and Haran.

8.8 - The Extra Name in Shem's Genealogy

The DSS expose an error commonly repeated by creationists who defend the *MT*. It has to do with a second Cainan in Luke's genealogy of Christ. Luke 3:35-38 reads:

³⁵. . . the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. (Underlining ours.)

The name "Cainan" that falls between Shelah and Arphaxad in the Gospel of Luke is not found in the three pertinent *MT* genealogies (Genesis 10, Genesis 11 and I Chronicles 1) but it is found in the *LXX* of both Genesis chapter ten, Genesis chapter eleven and some copies of I Chronicles chapter one. *MT* defenders say this name entered the Gospel of Luke through a scribal error late in the third or fourth centuries. They say that as a scribe was copying the genealogies in Luke 3:36, after copying "the son of Shelah," he looked down at the wrong line and copied "the son of Cainan" from verse 37.

That Cainan in v37 was actually the great grandson of Adam. Then the scribe continued by correctly copying "the son of Arphaxad" and two lines later, after "the son of Mahalaleel" he copied the right Cainan into the text. Thus, the name "Cainan" appears twice in just two successive verses of Luke chapter three, verses 36 and 37. They say this error occurred long after Luke wrote his Gospel. They further say that this son of Arphaxad is never mentioned in any Hebrew writing until long after Luke was written.

Apparently they have not heard about the Dead Sea Scrolls which speak often of the other Cainan. Some 15 copies of the *Book of Jubilees* have been found among the 900 scrolls and innumerable fragments at Qumran. Fifteen is more than the number of the manuscripts of most of the biblical books and indicates that *Jubilees* was widely used at Qumran. *Jubilees* devotes six verses to this Cainan, the son of Arphaxad and father of Shelah. *Jubilees* is even considered canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and recognized by other Christian bodies as belonging to the class of sacred writings called the Pseudopigrapha. Never mentioned in any Hebrew writing until long after the writing of Luke? How could they be so wrong?

Jubilees is something like a commentary on Genesis and Exodus up to the point where God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and supposedly gave the revelation it contains. It consists of 50 chapters of verse-by-verse elaboration and divides all time to that point into groups of 50 years or jubilees. This combination of numbers acknowledges God as the creator of time, the Lord of all history. It expresses the belief that all human history is the story of God at work so all time belongs to God and is a record of His divine activity.

Jared Olar⁸⁵ believes this second Cainan was an original and authentic part of Genesis and I Chronicles. He makes a strong argument for this second Cainan being in Hebrew texts of the OT and this argument is hard to refute. He reasons that since *Jubilees* is like a commentary on Genesis, the

⁸⁵ Jared L. Olar, "The Second Cainan," *Grace and Knowledge*, Issue 15, November 2015: no page numbers. www.graceandknowledge.faithweb.com/cainan.html. Accessed 7/25/17.

Hebrew copy of Genesis used by the author of *Jubilees* must have contained this second Cainan (the biblical manuscripts at Qumran are mostly in Hebrew).

Since the *Book of Jubilees* is dated about 150 BC, this second Cainan was well known to the Qumran community from its beginning sometime after 100 BC. For this Cainan to have gotten into the *Septuagint*, the Hebrew text they used would have contained this Cainan in 250 BC. Clearly, to maintain that this second Cainan first showed up in the Gospel of Luke in the third or fourth centuries AD is incorrect. In fact more than half of the OT quotes found in the NT are from the Greek *LXX*, not the Hebrew *MT* and Luke's list follows the *LXX*.

This is so new to most of us that you may be thinking that you must be misunderstanding me, so I will restate the above: a certain Hebrew text family contained this Cainan when the *LXX* translators began their work in 250 BC. They used that Hebrew text in translating Genesis 10 and 11 into Greek. This explains how this second Cainan got into Genesis 10 and 11 of the *LXX*. But after translating the Pentateuch, the work on the *LXX* proceeded by fits and starts over the next 150 years. It could have been as late as 100 BC before the translation of I Chronicles was completed. By that time, maybe there was a difference of opinion by this newest generation of translators, so some copies of I Chronicles contained this Cainan and others did not. The author(s) of *Jubilees* followed the Hebrew text family that contained this Cainan as he (they) composed *Jubilees*. Luke simply copied this second Cainan into his genealogy of Christ in Luke chapter three from that list in Genesis 11 of the *LXX*.

Why do later manuscripts lack this Cainan? Olar suggests that in the early Christian era, a scribe accidentally omitted this second Cainan from the text he was copying at Genesis 10 or 11. Then later scribes were confused with the absence of "Cainan" in the one place and decided to omit it in the other as well. As to Chronicles, since that had always been a mystery, it was not a difficult decision to omit it there as well.

Olar suggests the following sequence of Cainan's appearing and disappearing: This Cainan was in certain Hebrew texts of Genesis and possibly I Chronicles before 250 BC. Demetrius, who lived about 200 BC, spoke of this Cainan as well as Polyhistor who lived about the time of Christ. While the writings of Demetrius have been lost, those of Polyhistor exist and in speaking of this Cainan, Polyhistor said Demetrius spoke of this Cainan. *Jubilees* speaks of this Cainan. The Qumran community was taken up with the unique subject matter associated with this Cainan. The *LXX* speaks of this Cainan. All manuscripts of Luke but one speak of this Cainan.

Then some scribe accidentally omitted this Cainan and over time the other references were removed. That explains why the earlier sources contain this Cainan while the later sources do not. Olar says that while it is possible to explain how this Cainan eventually fell out of the text, he has never heard a satisfactory explanation of how he could have showed up in the three different passages of the *LXX* translation between 250 and 100 BC by accident. As to the early Lukan manuscript that omits him, scholars have discovered that it is not always reliable and therefore could be faulty at this point.

Eric Lyons writes for Apologetic Press and while apparently not aware of Olar's ideas, makes commendable observations on the overall problem which is just below the surface—that some would use this situation to charge that the Bible contains errors. He points out that "terms such as 'father,' 'the son of' and 'begot' occasionally have a much wider connotation in the Bible than might

be implied when such words are used in modern English.”⁸⁶ That is what *HB* has maintained for 300 pages.

Lyons speaks of the Pharisees who called Abraham “our father” in John 8:39 and Jacob who called Abraham “my father” in Genesis 32:9. He says the term obviously means “ancestor” in these passages. He uses the example of the first verse of the New Testament that we cited. There Matthew wrote “Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.” Lyons says, “Obviously Matthew knew Jesus was not an immediate son of either David or Abraham. Matthew simply used them in the same flexible way that ancients used them.”

Lyons notes that Matthew intentionally omitted Joash, Amaziah and Azariah (Matthew 1:6-16 compared with I Chronicles 3:11-12) and observes that if the gaps represented a legitimate discrepancy, “the Jews would have brought it to the attention of Christians 2000 years ago as they sought to discredit Jesus’ royal lineage.” Then he shares this remarkable insight: “The simple fact is, just because one genealogy has more (or fewer) names than another genealogy does not mean that the two genealogies contradict one another. The controversy surrounding Luke 3:36 is readily explainable when one considers the flexibility that the ancients employed in recording the names of ‘fathers’ and ‘sons.’” Lyons must be commended for this great insight. He goes on to state his preference for the later scribal omission explanation, but it is clear he had not seen the large body of information about the early knowledge of this Cainan given by Olar.

We suggest there could be even more complex explanations for the growing disappearance of Cainan. The authorities in Jerusalem rejected the radical teaching of groups like the Qumranian community. Possibly over time they attempted to counter their teaching in any way they could. According to *Jubilees* chapter eight the second Cainan searched too deeply into a forbidden subject—the mystery of fallen angels cohabiting with human women in Genesis six. This subject also fascinated the Qumranians. Omitting the second Cainan from future copies of the Old Testament would be one small step in countering their influence. So as the Pharisees commissioned new copies of the Old Testament, they could have made sure this Cainan was left out. This would all have been happening before the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem. Over time Christian scribes would come to be unsure about him and begin to omit him as well.

So to say that this second Cainan is never mentioned in early Hebrew is the wrong answer. It could be that his inclusion in Luke was the result of a scribal error. But it could be that the Holy Spirit guided Luke to include it as Dr. Luke used the *LXX* which contained the second Cainan’s name and that the author of the *MT* left his name out in order to balance the three names after the 35-55 generation omission between Eber and Peleg with the three names before the 35-55 generation omission. We will find out in heaven, but meanwhile we must be careful not to use dishonest arguments in our defense of the *MT*.

⁸⁶ Eric Lyons, “Was Cainan the Son of Arphaxad?” *Apologetic Press*, 2002.
<http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=668>

8.9 Arguments from Symmetry and the Meaning of Names

A very different approach used by some creationists to determining whether the *LXX* or *MT* of Shem's line is the correct reading is to study the meaning of names. They observe that Cainan means "smith, a forger of metal" and find that the oldest foundry in the world was located just miles northwest of Greater Ararat. They reason that metal would be needed in the new world so this man born in the second generation following the Flood pursued the vocation of producing metals. His settling close to where some say the ark landed is also used to argue that until the Ice Age waned the Ark survivors stayed in the vicinity of Ararat. These folks conclude that since the second Cainan's name is found in the *LXX* list of Genesis 11 but not in the *MT* text, the *LXX* text is the correct text for this paragraph of Genesis.

Basing interpretations on the meaning of names is not an exact science. This kind of argument seizes on the name Peleg (division) to be referring to the dividing of tongues judgment at the Tower of Babel. We previously showed that there were not enough workers to build the Tower and the city by the time Peleg was born (if this list is complete). So they argue he got his name "Peleg" after he was grown. Those who argue that way say Cainan also got his name sometime after he developed his trade as an adult.

This complex explanation for the second Cainan has a problem. The first Cainan (Kenan) was born in the fourth generation after creation, making him a great grandson of Adam. There is no record that he was a worker of metal. Rather, Scripture says that an eighth generation man named Tubal-cain was a "forger of all instruments of bronze and iron" (Genesis 4:22). Even worse Adam's first son, Cain, also bears a name from the stem meaning "smith." Yet Scripture tells us specifically that he "was a worker of the ground" (Genesis 4:2), i.e., a farmer. Clearly, the explanation that the meaning of the post-Flood Cainan's name informs us he met an early need after the Flood by working with metal is speculative and cannot assure us that he truly was the son of Arpachshad.

Then some creationists use the argument from symmetry. In this case it can go either way: Unger speaks of ten names in Genesis 5 and ten names in Genesis 11. His ten names are Adam to Noah in Genesis 5 and Shem to Abraham in Genesis 11. But if the second Cainan belongs in the list beginning with Shem, the second group of ten names would be Shem to Terah. That is not a problem. This argument regarding symmetry appears sound. It is used to argue that the two lists are tailored to ten names per list (which would indicate that names were omitted).

The symmetry argument is also used for the inclusion of the second Cainan in Luke's list. That argument is fraught with difficulty. Luke's list contains 78 names including that of God. Leaving out the name of God and starting with Adam, the symmetry argument suggests that there are seven groups of ten names and then a final group of seven names ($10 \times 7 = 70 + 7 = 77$). The symbolism is found in the special numbers ten, seven and four. The number four is found in the fact that each of the first four groups of ten names introduced a new beginning: Adam, the beginning of man; Shem, the beginning of population growth after the Flood; Abraham, the beginning of God's chosen people; Sala (Salmon) the beginning of living in the Promised Land. The difficulty is that name #28, Admin, in Luke's list is a scribal copying error. Remove that name and Sala is the last name in the third group of ten rather than the first name in the fourth group of ten. As a result, the symbolism of the number four is lost and the last group of seven is short a name. Thus, while many arguments support the inclusion of the second Cainan in Luke's list, this argument is not one of them.

The additional years in the *LXX* have appealed to some creationists who feel the Flood occurred well before 2348 BC. As a result, they have adopted those numbers and even the arguments from names and symmetry as evidence those numbers are correct. How much better is the hidden beauty of Hebrew genealogies as a more sure foundation to earlier dates.

Dr. Luke (Luke 3:23-38) provides the longest genealogical list in Scripture—78 names including the name of God. Luke carefully researched his subject and included every name he found in the historical records. Yet, for all his diligence, his list did not include the 35-55 generations omitted between Eber and Peleg (Luke 3:35) or those omitted between Ram and Amminadab (Luke 3:33) or those omitted between Sala and Boaz (Luke 3:32). For a fact, God did not supply him with the names of those skipped in the earlier lists. Clearly, God Himself was not concerned with us having all those names. If that is God's position, why should we make this such a concern?

In conclusion to the two Cainan issue, we have argued that the years given in Shem's line in the *LXX* seem contrived. Thus, we doubt that those numbers are reliable. However, it could be that the *LXX*'s inclusion of the second Cainan is correct. Textual scholars seldom find that one entire passage of a text is totally correct, while another is totally incorrect. So this additional name could be correct while the numbers are incorrect. However, more evidence will be needed to settle the issue beyond doubt. Since the appearance of the second Cainan in the *LXX* could well explain his appearance in the Gospel of Luke, further evidence for inclusion in the one would, depending on its nature, be further evidence for inclusion in the other.

So, why strain over differences such as the second Cainan being found in the *LXX* but not the *MT*? Maybe someday further textual findings will settle the issue one way or the other. But what is important is that both Matthew and Luke achieved their objective—to show that Jesus was human and the descendant of David and Abraham thus fulfilling promises God made to them, even though an occasional scribal error may have crept into the text.

11.1 Fourteen Reasons for Dating Job Early

1. **Job's longevity.** Job lived 280 years, 41 years longer than Peleg and 105 years longer than Abraham who was born about 2166 BC. If Shem's list is complete following Peleg, Peleg was born about 2417 BC and Job was born eight generations before or about 2700 BC.
2. **Names for God.** The early name for God, Shaddai, found 41 times in the Bible, occurs 31 of those times in Job. God revealed himself to Abraham 500 years later as El Shaddai, Almighty God and to Moses 1200 years after Job as Jehovah, the eternally existing one.
3. **Ice age related weather.** Job contains more such references than possibly all the other books of the Bible put together. His first 140 years paralleled the closing portion of the Great Ice Age. Both the climate and its effect on the earth underwent a great change by Abraham's day.
4. **Dinosaur-like creatures.** They were still common in Job's day but not in Abraham's day.
5. **Sound theology.** A high view of the true God prevailed throughout Job's area as witnessed by Job's four counselors. It was lost by the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Job contains no hint of idolatry, pagan pantheism or mythological exaggerations that characterized other ancient writings.
6. **Source of suffering.** Mankind had not yet come to realize that Satan was a source of suffering and thought all suffering was punishment for sin and was caused by God. This error blemished the character of God and needed to be snuffed out as early as possible.
7. **Message of Job.** The major purpose of the book is to identify man's most mortal enemy, Satan. This message was needed at the earliest possible point in God's revelation to man.
8. **Divine discourse on creation.** In Job God speaks more of creation than all the rest of the Bible, even Genesis. Since the physical creation and God's sustaining of it is the primary argument for the existence of God and His love for mankind, providing this material at the earliest possible moment was critical.
9. **Land of Uz.** Job lived in Uz which was named after the oldest son of Aram. Uz, born in the second generation after the Flood, would have established the land of Uz long before Job was born, but his godly influence extended all the way down to his descendant Job.
10. **Primeval history.** Casual references to primeval history—creation, the fall, the Flood, Babel—are mentioned as if they were still fresh in those people's minds.
11. **Table of Nations.** Job contains references to people named in the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) rather than those who lived after Abraham entered Canaan: Uz (1:1), Sabeans (1:15), Chaldeans (1:17), Temenites (2:11), Shuhuites (2:11), Naamathite (2:11), Buzites (32:2), Ethiopia (28:19), Sheba (6:19) but not Canaanites, Amorites, Amalakites, Ishmaelites, Midianites, Moabites, etc.
12. **Constellations.** Job contains more references to heavenly constellations than any other book in the Bible. Some commentators suggest certain constellations were the Bible of early man and associated stories contained the essential theology God wanted man to know. Since the Flood did not change the starry heavens, their message was the same both before and after the Flood.
13. **Obvious omissions.** No references to Abraham, Israel or the ten commandments.
14. **Animal sacrifice.** Job begins and concludes with animal sacrifice for sin which reaches back to Abel's animal sacrifice which God accepted and Cain's fruit sacrifice which God rejected.

16.1 Tower Builders Available 91 Years after the Flood (AF)

(See chapter 16, pp 225-227 for details)

Available Workers. Even if every son fathered 12 children (six sons and six daughters), there would not be enough workers to build a substantial portion of Babel and its tower by Peleg's birth (101 AF). Why? 1) Year of adulthood; 2) Raising 12 children; 3) Location; 4) Willingness.

Year of Adulthood: 32. Following the Flood people could have children and do a full day's work when they reached the age of 32. **Raising 12 children.** It would be a full-time job for the father to provide food for 14 mouths and the mother to nurse multiple children for 24 years and be pregnant 1/3 of the time. **Location.** Some people remained in the mountains of Ararat and would be far distant from helping build Babel. **Willingness.** Some would refuse to rebel against God. HB uses ¼ for the number who did not help build either due to location or willingness.

Two tables. The first shows even 12 children per family would not produce enough workers to have the project judged by the time Peleg was born. The illustrious commentators Keil and Delitzsch recognized this and proposed that if each son had eight children, the project could reach judgment 150 or 180 years AF.

Table One: Twelve Children Per Son

Generation	Name	Year Born	Year of Adulthood		Workforce	
			1 st Child	12 th Child	Potential	Actual
First	Arpachshad	2 AF	34 AF	56 AF	36	27
Second	Shelah	37 AF	67 AF	89 AF	216	0
Third	Eber	67 AF	97 AF	119 AF	0	0
Totals						27

Table Two: Eight Children per Son

Generation	Name	Year Born	Year of Adulthood		Workforce	
			First of 8	Last of 8	Potential	Actual
First	Arpachshad	2 AF	34 AF	48 AF	24	18
Second	Shelah	37 AF	69 AF	83 AF	96	72
Third	Eber	67 AF	99 AF	113 AF	384	288
Fourth	Peleg	101 AF	133 AF	147 AF	1536	1152
Fifth	Reu	131 AF	163 AF	177 AF	6144	4608
Sixth	Serug	163 AF	195 AF	209 AF	0	
Total workers at 147 AF: 1530				Total Workers at 177 AF: 6138		