

## The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5EtBuReU0s&list=PL0QKHh\\_IUzjFgygbLSKdWcJ4nDnD-Nmst&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5EtBuReU0s&list=PL0QKHh_IUzjFgygbLSKdWcJ4nDnD-Nmst&index=8)

### **Moderator:**

Henry Smith, Jr. is the administrative director of Shiloh and archaeological excavations Israel for the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR). He graduated with a BA in economics from Rutgers in 1992. With a 13-year business background he earned an MA in theology with an emphasis on apologetics from Trinity Seminary with high honors in 2005. He earned his MAR from Westminster Theological Seminary in 2015.

Henry is presently ABR's lead researcher for the Genesis 5 and 11 Research Project found online at [www.biblearchaeology.org](http://www.biblearchaeology.org). So please give us a warm welcome for Henry Smith.

### **Henry Smith:**

I'm glad to be here. Very grateful for the opportunity to speak to you. As our moderator said, my name is Henry Smith. I'm with the Associates for Biblical Research and I'm the administrative director of the archaeological excavations at biblical Shiloh. ABR is located in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania and you can find us online at [biblearchaeology.org](http://biblearchaeology.org).

My paper today of course here is entitled, The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11. This particular paper is the result of a number of years of ongoing research as I've been heading up the Genesis 5 and 11 Research Project for a number of years.

My interest in the subject goes back probably about 15 years, but due to my lack of training and just not having the time, I hadn't been able to really delve into the subject.

If you're familiar with it at all, you know ... a gentleman came up to me last night and said you know, I tried to figure this out for two years and I gave up. So more serious efforts I've been doing with the ABR ministry since 2014.

There have been two main thrusts to the research project as it relates to Genesis 5 and 11 because there's a lot of questions about it. There's a lot of different views and so on.

There's been two main thrusts. First the goal has been to evaluate the text itself. To really demonstrate and reestablish the chronological interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11 as what I believe is the most faithful and accurate representation of the sacred text – that is God intended for us to be able to calculate a chronology from Adam to Abraham.

Second, and the focus of this particular paper is not to focus on the exegetical interpretive issues but is to focus particularly on the divergent numbers in the three textual witnesses. We have the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

My goal has been to evaluate the data and attempt to present a historically grounded viable theory that can adequately explain the large-scale differences that have taken place and the deliberate alterations of the numbers. There's no question that the numbers in each witness ... there's divergences between the three of them. What is the reason for the divergences and what theory, or theories, can we develop to explain these divergences in the text? Of course, this involves the three witnesses as I mentioned.

Now many biblical scholars who interpret the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 as yielding a chronology typically argue that the Hebrew Masoretic text preserves the original begetting ages for the patriarchs. So, the total for the MT from Adam to Abraham is 2,008 years.

The Samaritan Pentateuch presents markedly different chronological data for each epoch, for a grand total of 2,249 years. close to the MT, but they arrived there in different ways.

Now calculations derived from the primary manuscripts of the Septuagint yield a total of 3,394 years for this period. That's a difference between the MT and the Septuagint of 1,386 years of time.

Now, the Masoretic is classically represented by the Ussher Chronology. Those of you familiar with that places the Flood around 2348 and Creation around 4004 BC, with some variations depending on what your view is on the Egyptian sojourn, the divided kingdom, and so on. But by and large the Ussher Chronology sort of is the classic representation.

The Septuagint is markedly different, as I mentioned. When you look at the primary manuscripts of the Septuagint and you do the calculations, you come to a date about 3300 BC for the Flood and about 5500 or so for the date of Creation.

Now for us young earth creationists the big difference really is is the Earth 7,500 years old or 6,000 years old? Well, in that respect, not much of a difference. We're all still in the same camp. But in terms of the post-Flood epoch and trying to correlate the chronology with archaeological evidence, they are of great significance.

And so, the apologetic task of correlating this evidence with the primeval history is dependent on determining the accuracy of the beginning ages and the chronology. If we don't have the original chronology, then our apologetic arguments aren't going to work well when we try to re-evaluate or evaluate the archaeological data.

In this paper I'm going to propose that the Septuagint preserves most of the original numbers, which is sort of a new idea, but an old idea. Most of the Masoretic chronology in Genesis 5–11 I do not believe represents the original text and is the result of a deliberate and systematic corruption and deliberate deflation.

So, what we'll do is bring together external witnesses, internal and external evidence, text critical and Septuagint studies, and historical testimonies along with arguments that rebut what I call Septuagint inflation hypotheses. And I'll explain to you what those are momentarily.

In the paper I give explanations for important accidental scribal errors because we have evidence of two things: deliberate alterations and then scribal errors that happen in the normal transmission of the text, particularly in the Septuagint because of its large dissemination throughout the Mediterranean world in the church.

I will focus on certain areas of my paper, but because of time I cannot be exhaustive. So I respectfully ask you to, if you're weighing this particular subject, to carefully read this paper along with others that you can find on our website that we've already published related to the subject. The subject is deep and wide and thick and too important to be decided upon hastily. So my encouragement to you, if you're weighing this, is to evaluate the work that we've done on it carefully and to read through it cautiously and slowly and see if you think it's persuasive.

In the case of Genesis 5 and 11, as I've mentioned, we have two phenomena: the large-scale deliberate alterations and the accidental scribal errors. Now if you look through the liberal

scholarship, the typical kind of stuff that you find, you'll find typically helpful observations at the micro level. I found a lot of nuggets when I've been studying this material from the liberal scholarship, similar to what we do in the Creation Movement. We go in and we pluck out data that fits and is useful to us.

But the origin and the reliability of the Old Testament from a liberal standpoint that doesn't work for us from a standpoint of an orthodox view of Scripture.

Hendel's perspective here is fairly representative. He says the problems of Genesis 5 and 11, meaning the three witnesses, are accounted for by the theory that a redactor incorporated the *sepher toladot 'Adam* into a pre-existing text. So, this is a human perspective on the writing of the Book of Genesis. This writer wrote chronology here and this one over here and we see all these different numbers because they tried to fit it together and they messed it up. That's the standard liberal view to explain the witnesses and why the numbers got garbled.

But, of course, our approach would be a different one. We would want to argue that the original numbers that were given to Moses were historically accurate, internally consistent, and mathematically correct. And that the Lord has preserved the text throughout history, but perhaps through various witnesses. And I would argue that Scripture itself does not promise exactly the detailed way in which God would preserve His Word, only that He would preserve it and preserve it for His people throughout history.

Let's go to our table on page 118. (*ICC* 2018).

You can see on this table, it's a little hard to see here now, but if you read it, if you have a printout or read it online, all the different numbers that you find for the patriarchs from Adam to Abraham and the various differences in between, that's where we get the calculations from for the different chronologies in the three witnesses. Many of them match. Many of them do not. You have lifespans, remaining years, and begetting ages all throughout.

If you're familiar with the subject at all, you know about these divergences and the problems have been the subject of discussion since the time of Eusebius in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. So, the problem goes back at least to his time and he documents them in his chronicon in the fourth century.

We have a snapshot in history of his access to the three witnesses during that period of time. So this simply stated, the goal is to determine:

1. who made the changes?
2. why were they changed? and
3. what are the original numbers?

Before we begin looking at the witnesses, let me give a brief discussion of the Septuagint. First, it's an interesting phenomenon that prior to the Reformation, the large majority of Christians who were dealing with Genesis 5 and 11 believe that the Septuagint preserved the original chronology. And even though the reformers largely accepted the MT's numbers as original, there were still a number of Christian chronologists who argued that the Septuagint fundamentally preserved the original figures and that the MT's chronology was deflated deliberately in the post-70 AD period, that is after the destruction of the temple.

These include scholars such as Goodnow, Hayes in 1741, Jackson in 1752, Russell in 1865, and Savefarth(?) in 1859, and numerous others. Unfortunately, when you read through the

conservative scholarship, there's been little engagement with the arguments presented in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and instead what you find typically are superficial reasons for dismissing the Septuagint's primeval chronology. They are widespread throughout the conservative academic literature.

So part of the goal is to examine those and challenge some of those perspectives.

1. Kainan's inclusion or exclusion in Genesis 11, and
2. Methuselah's begetting age in the Septuagint

are often used to pummel the credibility of the Septuagint.

I refer you to the appendix of my paper and an upcoming issue of *Bible and Spade* on the issue of Kainan [summer 2018]. Ultimately if Kainan is not original to the text, there were many ancient authors who still held to the longer chronology

So, while it's important, Kainan's inclusion is not fundamental to holding to it. Josephus, Julius Africanus, Eusebius held to the longer chronology but did not include Kainan in it.

Regarding Methuselah, I would refer you to my article from the *Answers Research Journal* from last summer [2017] and you can see the analysis there about his begetting age and whether or not he lived through the Flood in the Septuagint.

Also, evangelicals tend to quickly dismiss the Septuagint because of the substantial and often and numerous problems that are found in other books outside of the Pentateuch—books such as Job, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—or because of unsubstantiated theological predispositions that favor the Masoretic Text.

You can find my survey critiquing these arguments on pages 117–120. Hopefully in future research we'll be publishing more substantive interaction with some of these perspectives.

It's often not understood properly that the Septuagint was translated over time. The first five books were done in Egypt, but the rest of the books were done over time in Israel, over the course of a long period of time. So, books such as Job and Ezekiel have different problems in them and they should not be used to just dismiss the Book of Genesis recording of the numbers in Genesis 5 and 11.

The oldest known witness to the chronology, that is, of course, we would argue that Moses originally wrote the numbers, but the oldest witness that we actually have that we can tie to a particular time is the Septuagint itself, translated around 281 BC in Alexandria.

This means one of two options:

1. the Hebrew text that was being used by the Septuagint translators actually contained the longer chronology, or
2. the translators fabricated the chronology.

Many proponents of the Masoretic's numbers have argued that the second explanation must be true, the Alexandrian translators inflated the chronology to equal or surpass Egyptian chronology known in antiquity.

I referred to these theories and those that are like it as Septuagint inflation hypotheses. This is the most common argument, but there's been other reasons given in the literature, most of them are speculative and somewhat superficial, I would say.

Let's take a look at what I call the inflation hypotheses. I'll give you nine reasons why I think it doesn't work and should be rejected as such because the evidence I don't think holds up.

Let's take a look first here at the way that contemporary Jews embraced and used it for several centuries before the advent of the Church. If the chronology had been inflated by the Alexandrian translators, then Hebrew texts with the shorter chronology would have been everywhere else in the diaspora. And these inflations would have been quickly exposed as fraudulent.

But instead the Jews actually used the Septuagint for centuries. And, in fact, the highly exaggerated "Letter of Aristeas" is actually a Jewish apologetic for the Septuagint. So even though a lot of the elements are fanciful, it shows that they held it in reasonably high regard.

I argue that the translator simply could not have gotten away with doing that kind of radical change to the text. I don't feel they could have gotten away with it given the historical circumstances.

And, even later after the advent of the Church, the diaspora still used the Septuagint text, although they did update it and make changes to it to improve the translations, which are called Jewish recensions.

1. Indeed, it's often forgotten that the Septuagint was a thoroughly Jewish enterprise.
2. Second, we have no testimonies from antiquity that make this claim. The latest I've been able to trace the theory back to is the year 1834. Perhaps there's someone before, that but I haven't been able to find that yet in the academic literature.
3. Third point, why I think this idea fails is because it fails to achieve the specified goal. Here we have a quote from Paul Ray from 1985, "The suggestion that the Septuagint chronology resulted as a response to Manetho or any other Egyptian chronology is inadequate." Now Ray goes on to explain how up until recently it was thought that beneath those chronology was almost 5500 years in length and so therefore at the time that the Septuagint was being written, what we have in the Septuagint's chronology is inadequate to achieve the goal that allegedly was motivating it to be inflated.
4. A. In fact, indeed it could be if the goal was to equal or surpass Egyptian chronology then the Septuagint's chronology should be much longer than it actually is presently.
4. B. When we look closely at the text we can see that most of the begetting ages, especially in the pre-Flood period, could have been inflated by several hundred years. I went through it and you can expand the pre-Flood chronology by 2,000 years and still have an adequate chronology that works. If you wanted to beat the Egyptian chronology you could have added this amount of time to the pre-Flood text. And in Genesis 11 could have been inflated by several centuries as well.

Instead, we have a chronology that just doesn't add up as far as beating the Egyptian chronological claims.

5. Now Septuagint scholars also note the conservative nature with which the Book of Genesis was translated by the translators. We don't see any significant evidence of conformity to Egyptian worldview claims. And I would suggest this makes it doubtful that the translators would have deliberately corrupted the text to conform it only to Egyptian chronology and not other elements of Egyptian theology and worldview claims.

Along these lines, this is from Robert Hanhart. He says the translators never had the freedom to take over non-Israelite tradition in its written form in the context of their translations. The freedom given to them was not of alteration, but theirs was the responsibility of preservation.

You see this throughout the literature in this uh on the Septuagint of Genesis in particular that there's a very conservative treatment of the Hebrew text as it's translated into Greek.

6. Also, when you survey, you go through the Septuagint and Old Testament scholarship, the argument is generally that the numbers found in the Septuagint should be attributed to the Hebrew text being used and not an invention of the translators. That is in the Hebrew *Vorlage*, is what the term is used, but it's the Hebrew text that they were using when they did their translation.

Emanuel Tov, who's an expert in this area, says, "Although the Septuagint has been transmitted into Greek, these details should not be ascribed to the translator, but the Hebrew text. ... "they did not go as far to recalculate the logic or the system of genealogical lists. The LXX translation of Genesis is relatively literal, and there's some small freedom ... but no large scale changes" ... made to the text.

This is what we find in this version. ... "Accordingly, any recalculation of chronological lists by the translator is highly unlikely." Then he goes on to say this is particularly the case because "the Septuagint version of the lists has much in common with the Samaritan Pentateuch, especially in chapter 11, strengthening the assumption that the two phenomena took place at the Hebrew level."

So, Tov's argument is that the numbers that we find in the Septuagint of Genesis 5 and 11 were not inventions of the translators, but came from the Hebrew text that was being used by them.

7. One of the great difficulties here for this inflation hypothesis, beyond the six points that I just surveyed, is that it cannot explain the matching begetting ages found in the Samaritan Pentateuch of Genesis 11. Now the Samaritan Pentateuch comes from Hebrew text, not the Septuagint. Therefore, they were using a Hebrew text, which they would have had to make changes separately and identically from the Septuagint if the inflation hypothesis were true.

But what we find in Genesis 11 of the Septuagint is that the beginning ages minus Kainan match one another. Two separate independent witnesses geographically, and in terms of the text that they're using. And that's the point that Tov is making.

8. The internal evidence, which I'm going to review a little bit later, I suggest betrays chronological deflation in the Masoretic Text, not inflation in the Septuagint text. We'll return to that towards the end
9. I suggest that there's substantial external evidence—we're talking about witnesses that were using Genesis texts and writing in antiquity that contained the longer primeval chronology in the first century AD and earlier. And not only using the Septuagint but using Hebrew texts that had the longer chronology.

These three witnesses include what's called *LAB: Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, which I'll talk about in a moment; Josephus; and the Jewish historian Eupolemus.

So, we'll start with our first witness. This is from the first century AD. We call this book *LAB*. It's kind of unknown to a lot of folks. It's sort of *Pseudepigrapha* but it's not in that category. It's really a chronicle of biblical history. It's a Hebrew work. It's obviously not canonical and includes some parallels from other Jewish traditions.

*LAB* chapter 1 cites the begetting ages and the remaining years of life from Seth to Lamech. Now what's interesting about this is the remaining years are usually not found in external witnesses. External witnesses are usually interested in the begetting ages because you use those to construct the chronology and the lifespans because they're so long and people in antiquity were interested in discussing why people live to be 700, 800, and 900 years old.

But the remaining years make *LAB*'s witness very helpful to us. Here we have on the chart of Table 3 in the proceedings. You can see the three witnesses for Genesis 5—the Septuagint, Josephus (who I'll talk about in a minute), and *LAB*.

I had never heard of *LAB* before I started really digging very deeply into the subject, and I went about trying to read everything, as much as I could that's been written about it. And so every scholar that I've encountered who's studied it extensively makes the following arguments:

1. It was derived from the Hebrew text of Genesis,
2. It was written in Hebrew, and
3. It was written in the first century in Israel proper, possibly before the time of Jesus. Not 100% sure about that.

But nonetheless it makes it makes *LAB* a very significant first-century witness.

Now typically what will be said about this, as soon as you see the longer chronology, the higher begetting ages in a work from antiquity, the usual response is to say, "oh they're just parroting the Septuagint's numbers." And that's sort of understandable to a degree. That's also said of Josephus. You see that all throughout the literature. But, when you look at it closely, there's reasons not to follow that line of thinking.

First here we have this quote from Jacobson who wrote a complete commentary on *LAB*. He says it's "hard to understand why someone who could write such a skillful Hebrew prose in biblical style and clearly had an expert knowledge of the Hebrew Bible would have felt the need [or desirability] to consult" the Septuagint or any other translation of the Bible.

Over and over again in the literature we find these scholars consistently arguing that *LAB* was written in Hebrew, came from a Hebrew text, was written in Israel in the first century AD.

Now here's a data point that I think supports my argument and that is Lamech's begetting age, the father of Noah. Now in the Masoretic Text the age is 182. And I suggest in my article, you read through it, that this number was not deflated, it was left unaltered by the rabbis in the first and second century. *LAB* records 182 as well.

Now the Septuagint universally has 188 and there's some complicated reasons why there's that six-year difference. I think some kind of accident occurred in the text and then they tried to correct it. My argument is that the Masoretic Text preserves the correct number, and this is affirmed by *LAB*'s recording of 182. Now if the *LAB*'s author had been using the Septuagint, he would have written 188 because there are no manuscripts of the Septuagint that have 182.

In my view this supports the argument that *LAB* came directly from a Hebrew text of Genesis. It's also supported by a statement made by Jerome in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, who says that he

had manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch that had 182 for Lamech's begetting age. That number is different than what we have today in the Samaritan Pentateuch for Lamech.

Now let's turn our attention to Josephus, the infamous Jewish historian. When I first began looking at Josephus I was bewildered and confused because when you read about Josephus's recording of Genesis 5 and 11, that's exactly what you find in the literature.

Some claim that he was confused. Others say that he had both chronologies in his possession at the same time and got it all messed up. And others believe that he was just parroting the Septuagint, which I think is just a circular argument if you don't look carefully at the scholarship on Josephus.

I wasn't satisfied with the depth of the treatment of the Josephus material, so I looked into the manuscripts myself and tried to delve into the vast scholarship produced in the last few decades on Josephus. And that became a research project in and of itself inside of a larger research project.

So let's just talk a little bit about that. You'll see in my paper a detailed discussion of Josephus's manuscripts. First his overarching statements are clearly only compatible with the longer chronology from Adam to Artaxerxes. "Those antiquities contain the history of 5,000 years." And here he claims that he translated directly from the Hebrew into the Greek. And then the same thing in *Antiquities* 1:13, they embrace a history of 5,000 years. That number is only compatible with the longer chronology.

The longest period that you can get from the Masoretic Text for this time is about 3,900 years, and that's the max that you can get from the numbers in the Masoretic for that period of time. If you accept the long sojourn, you have to accept the long sojourn and otherwise it's even shorter period of time.

Now Josephus claimed that he used Hebrew text in his recitation of Genesis and other books. What's interesting is a lot of people just sort of blow this claim off by Josephus. "He wasn't using Hebrew text here and here and there." And he certainly used the Septuagint for later books. There's no question about that. But what you find in the Josephus scholarship is universal agreement that he was using a Hebrew text of Genesis and for most of the Pentateuch when he wrote *Antiquities*.

It was really fascinating when I discovered this insight about his work. Examples include Henry Thackeray, who died in 1931, but still is a highly and well-respected Josephus and Septuagint scholar. He used a "Semitic" text for Genesis through Ruth. Louis Feldman, who just died a couple of years ago, he examined *LAB* and Josephus extensively and argued that they're closely related to each other at the level of the biblical Hebrew text.

And then, Nodet the French scholar who also has written a new critical apparatus of Josephus which is extremely helpful, except it's in French. So, I'm trying to find somebody who can translate French because I don't know French. It's hard enough to do Greek and Hebrew and English. But his ultimate source is quite close to the Hebrew text underneath or being used by the Septuagint translators for the Pentateuch.

So you'll see these arguments in the literature. They're extensive. These works that I just cited are very in-depth and they go through great argumentation to argue that Josephus was using a Hebrew text.



So, the next thing that I did was take a look at the manuscript evidence. Because if you read through Winston's Commentary, for example, from 300 years ago, or other commentaries online, there's contradictions in the numbers. Winston said that Josephus had the shorter chronology before the Flood and the longer one after, for example. But now we have a lot more manuscript evidence from Josephus that helps us to reconstruct the original text that he used. You can find that in Thackeray's work. I did some minor refinements, a couple things I disagreed with, but they were very small.

But when you look at the evidence from the manuscripts of Josephus, in my view there's no question that he was using the longer chronology. There are some manuscripts that have some of the elements of the shorter numbers and it's clear that in the Christian community the numbers were being changed in the manuscripts, but the vast majority of them have the longer chronology. You can see that discussion in my paper and take a look closely at that.

In my mind the internal evidence also points to the longer chronology original to Josephus. And the manuscripts themselves also vindicate the longer chronology.

So, this makes Josephus a witness of the first century in Rome to the longer chronology. And the argument from modern scholars on Josephus that he used the Hebrew text points us to the use of a Hebrew text where he got the higher numbers, the begetting ages. This is again supported by this unique variant on Lamech. You'll see my discussion in the paper about the discrepancies in the Josephus manuscript, but it points to 182 once again. And if Josephus had been using the Septuagint, he would have recorded 188.

My argument is that he had 182, which is consistent with Jerome's manuscript, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Masoretic Text, and *LAB*, all pointing to a Hebrew exemplar text being used by Josephus.

Our last external witness, we go back to 160 BC is Eupolemus. Now in his chronology, in his work on the kings in Judea, he calculates 5,149 years from Adam to the reign of Demetrius the first, which yields a creation date that you see here [5307 BC]. This is obviously in accord with the longer chronology.

Now according to scholarship on Eupolemus, he used both Hebrew and Septuagint texts. So, we're not 100% sure which text he was using for his chronological calculations. But I would say the following when we look closely at his role, his place of authorship, and the context that he's writing in. His writing would have been under what I would say intense scrutiny in Jerusalem.

Eupolemus was an official delegate sent to Rome by Judas Maccabeus. He was part of the priestly family of Jerusalem, and he would have had access to the scrolls in the Temple. He used Hebrew. He wrote, was able to understand, Hebrew and Greek. He knew both languages. And he wasn't living out in the backwater. He was a very important part of the Jewish aristocracy of this time.

I would suggest that he would not have used, if the Septuagint's chronology was in fact false and had been inflated 120 years before, he would not have used the longer chronology if it didn't closely match the Hebrew texts of Genesis that were available to him.

So when you pull together the whole argument, I suggest that his choice of an erroneous inflated chronology would have embarrassed himself, the priesthood, and the nation. If you place it all in context, I think it points pretty strongly to the fact that his longer chronology came from a Hebrew text from the Book of Genesis.

Now let's hit the pause button here. So, I went through a whole bunch of reasons why:

- A. I don't think the Septuagint was deliberately inflated, and
- B. Some external witnesses that point to Hebrew texts that had the longer chronology.

So now this naturally brings up the question, which is a difficult question for us to grapple with as the Church and those of us who have a high view of Scripture, is if the Septuagint was not inflated and it points to the original numbers, then how did these other witnesses get deflated and why. And is there evidence to support this theory or idea?

Now, I totally understand if you're hearing this for the first time, a hesitation or resistance to the idea that the text may have been altered. For some the idea is scandalous or even impossible to believe. Conversely it's kind of become fashionable to just slander the Alexandrian Jews for being compromisers and they just inflated the text because they wanted to compete with Egyptian worldview claims.

It's really not a fair characterization, I don't think, of the Alexandrian translators and I think it unfairly elevates the rabbis to a status that makes them above reproach. And I just simply don't think that's the case based on what we see from Second Temple Judaism and more importantly the rabbinic opposition to the gospel.

So, the idea that it would have been impossible for them to influence the text, I don't think we can make that argument. So, you'll see in a couple of articles on our website. An important article written by Jeremy Sexton talks about the exegetical issues in Genesis 5 and 11. He wrote it in the *Westminster Journal* and we republished it. He talks about evidence regarding what I call the rabbinic deflation theory.

And then Jeremy and I co-authored an article. It's a layman's article in *Bible and Spade* in 2016. Both are on the website and also on page 122 of the *ICC Proceedings*. Here I survey these arguments. So I'm going to do that now here with you. So, I hope you'll follow along with me and at least consider this idea.

In order for someone to be motivated to radically alter the chronology of the text, there have to be number of things in place.

1. First there has to be what I would say is an adequate motive. Knowing that ancient Jews, for the most part, in handling the text knew they were handling the Word of God. What is it that could have motivated them to deliberately change the text? That's a very serious charge against them. It's a serious charge against the translators in Alexandria to say they inflated it just as much as it is to say someone else deflated it.

So there must be an adequate motivation. Ad hoc explanations that are found in the literature are not adequate.

2. Means: Did they have the means to do so, the authoritative means. Did they have the structures in place to change the text and to do it successfully?
3. And then opportunity: Do the historical circumstances provide the opportunity to change the text?

So let's roll through it.

What I found in my research is there is actually a strong motive that I think is a viable motive and is the probably the reason why I believe that the text was changed. That is the phenomenon of Chrono-Messianism in Second Temple Judaism.

Here Beckwith says there's strong evidence to show the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Zealots all thought that they could date the time of the coming of the Messiah and this was based on the chronology of Genesis 5 and 11 and depending on your interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel. There are all kinds of different variations of this in the ancient literature. But the point is that chronology related to Messianic arrival was very, very important in Second Temple Judaism.

Here Silver says this. So if you add the idea of Messianic chronology to the view that came out of Second Temple Judaism, that since God made the world in six days, each day represents a thousand years of history, and thus the world would last a total of seven thousand years.

You see in the early Church Fathers this idea actually made its way into the Church. And there were different people that argued for it—Africanus argued for it, Eusebius was opposed to it, for example, and even Martin Luther sort of agreed with this idea.

Some said that the Messiah would arrive in the sixth millennium and usher in the kingdom in the seventh. Others argued that He would arrive in the year around 4000 AM from creation, which is an idea that's found in the rabbinic literature later on.

So now take this idea and combine it with the rabbinic chronology of the *Seder Olam Rabbah*, which is the official Jewish world history based on the Masoretic Text. You'll see that this number for Creation is actually even shorter than the Ussher date of 4004 BC. And I would suggest that they fudge the chronology here to put Jesus outside the 4000-year date. So that would put *them* on the verge of the messianic visitation. And you could see various critiques in the literature of the *Seder Olam*. There are clear errors in it.

So I believe that the motive was to discredit the messianic office of Jesus because of this phenomenon of messianic chronology in the Second Temple Period.

This motive has strong theological support from the New Testament, that is, the opposition that the unbelieving Jews had against Jesus as the Messiah. And this was just one of many ways that they opposed the Church's argument that He was the fulfillment of what was promised in the Old Testament.

Now, the second pillar of the argument goes to authority. Who is in place in authority to radically change the text? It's a very serious matter to mess with the Word of God in this way. But somebody did it, and the question of this investigation is to try to figure out who. We have the powerful Rabbi Akiba who allegedly had 40,000 rabbinic disciples and he was executed by the Romans in the Bar Kokhba revolt. He had the authority and the power to remove manuscripts from the Temple and institute the use of new ones.

Indeed, if you read about Akiba, he was a fierce enemy of the gospel and he may have been one of the key figures in this. We don't know that for sure. But I think this is someone that is worthy of consideration as it relates to this idea.

Now, the last part is opportunity. What are the historical circumstances taking place in Israel in the first century AD? Well, we have the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and the survival of one sect of Judaism, and that is the rabbinic sect. And I would suggest that after the destruction of Jerusalem it was possible to introduce this deflated chronology.

We have a number of ancient authors who attribute this to the rabbis including Eusebius, Julian of Toledo in Spain, Jacob of Edessa at the same time. So, in Syria and in Spain, two ancient authors saying that it was the rabbis who deflated the text. And then byzantine chronologists Syncellus and in Armenia Bar Hebraeus.

So, my argument is when you look at the total timeline that you find in the Masoretic Text you can't find a reliable witness before the fourth century that testifies to the whole timeline. And this is a problem. So naturally you ask the question, what about the lower ages in Genesis 5? I can't cover that today and I can't didn't cover that in my paper. But if you go online, you can read this extensive article that I wrote providing what I think is a viable theory as to what's going on with the Samaritan Pentateuch in Genesis 5. I leave that for your consideration.

So internal evidence as we wind down here. I've just got a couple minutes left. You'll note when you look internally at the text of the Masoretic that certain figures were not deflated or changed because they would have created errors.

And I argue that the rabbis failed to account for Genesis 25:8, which I will survey now. It states that Abraham was 175 years old, "died in a good old age, an old man and full of years." This is contradicted by four points on the Masoretic's chronology.

1. Eber was still alive at 464.
2. Shem died 25 years before Abraham, and he was three times as old.
3. Remarkably Noah died at the age of 950, two years before Abraham was born.
4. And since Genesis 11 indicates that the patriarchs had sons and daughters, many of them would have been alive and living to ages in the 400s when Abraham died at the age of 175, making the statement contradictory to the context that Abraham was in.

But if you use the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch chronology, you find that this fits very perfectly with the text that the ages had dropped to a point where Abraham's epitaph was coherent and accurate. And I suggest this is an internal argument that exposes the deflation, and it cannot be reconciled internally with Genesis 25:8.

So, in conclusion I just dumped the whole boatload of stuff on you. Everything I said is mainly in the paper. I've proposed a theory where I think the longer chronology is the correct one. We're going to continue to work towards that end in the research project and I ask for your prayers and critical examination of this vast, difficult, deep, and complicated subject.

Thank you very much.