

Primeval Chronology: Primeval Chronology- A Hermeneutical, Exegetical, and Textual Sketch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVZGY4tRubs>

I'm Henry Smith with the ABR ministry. I'm the administrative director of the Shiloh excavations plus a couple of other responsibilities. One of the things that I've been working on is the very deep subject of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. Now if you were here perhaps for a couple of presentations I did a few years ago, some of this is a little bit of an overlap. For some of you who may be new, hopefully it will prove to be interesting.

What we're going to do is do a sketch because the subject is so vast and deep and involves major areas of study—worldview, hermeneutics, origins—I mean the depth of it is quite deep. When you're studying the subject in the early chapters of Genesis you have to make a lot of decisions about big picture and exegesis of the text, how it influences your view of the Bible, the history of Genesis 1 through 11, your doctrine of Scriptures, a lot of things that impact the way that you will deal with these passages.

So bear that in mind. That's always the case in dealing with the Bible. But in these early chapters we're dealing with worldview paradigms and the conflicts are very powerful and irreconcilable in many cases.

The major goal of the project is to try to understand these genealogies. There's three major areas of investigation that I've identified as being important. So what are the hermeneutical or doctrinal principles that we're going to use to go into this? This is where I was mentioning about the bigger picture of the doctrine of Scripture, hermeneutical method, what kind of hermeneutical method do we use to interpret the text? And that involves well what do external truths claim and what kind of impact should they have on our exegesis of the text? Should they have any impact at all? And so on. That's sort of the first part.

Now in that regard, we'll circle back to that in a moment.

The second is after many several years of doing this I do believe the chronological interpretation of these genealogies is actually the best way to understand the text. I think it's the correct interpretation. I'm going to show you some of that through today, through our sketch and our time. But it's got to be sort of integrated with a biblically grounded hermeneutical method.

So I'm just going to talk about that a little bit. The exegesis is kind of the key to sort out how this works.

Then the third part: to complicate matters even further is the issue that in the three textual traditions we have diverging numbers: the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Masoretic Text, and the Septuagint. We'll talk about that at the end. I'm not going to talk about that a lot today, but if you go to our website or you see me afterwards, I can point you to the articles that I've kind of worked through some of these issues and where I think the evidence has led me to conclude. We have to take into account it's a full forensic investigation. Just a mere text critical study will not resolve the problem of these divergences.

We have to take into account external witnesses, ancient testimonies, a forensic investigation. That's how I've tried to approach the subject. It's quite a unique problem because the numbers

have been deliberately changed and therefore there's motives behind changing them. We have to identify what those are, so we understand why they've been changed.

In the Septuagint we also have a lot of scribal errors that have worked into the manuscript tradition so those have to be explained as well. That's a subset of the investigation. That kind of lays out the framework.

It has to account for the vast volume of data. That was the trouble I ran into when I began in this is that every theory I ran across couldn't explain all of the data adequately. So there's a lot of different theories as to why the numbers are different. I would run down a road of a theory, and then well that can't explain x, y, and z. So I have to go back. That's kind of the way that this all worked for me.

Let's give you an overview of these major categories of thought that are involved in this.

The starting point has to be the hermeneutics question. It really does involve what do we view Scripture as, as the speech of God, and what is our understanding of the doctrine of Scripture and our hermeneutical method? Do outside sources influence hermeneutics, has God spoken clearly and sufficiently in the text? All of those questions have to be wrestled with as you're dealing with this particular area of scripture.

So I've tried to lay out what I think is kind of a problem in sort of evangelical thought. It's what I call "wild west hermeneutics." Now I know that sounds a little snarky. It's not intended to be that way. What I find in a lot of the reading material is it's the preferred hermeneutical method that drives my interpretation of the text. And that seems to me to be not the ground that we want to work from. Can we work from within the authority structure of Scripture in terms of developing hermeneutical methods?

So these two articles have been published if you're interested contact me I can send you a copy. I'm working on the life spans of the patriarchs as part of an ongoing sort of investigation into what my thought process is in all of this.

That's sort of going to be the foundation in the book. My conviction is in all of this is that we're always remembering that it's God who is speaking in the text. When we run into things in the text that go against everything that we think we know about the world, we have to ask the question about authority, about clarity, about sufficiency, and so on. You just can't get away from that issue, particularly in the early chapters of Genesis.

It's exegesis, biblical theology, systematics, and then the servants to the text: historical theology archaeology, and so on.

So that's my way of thinking about it, always reminding myself that it is God who is speaking in the text even though what I might be reading seems incredible.

Let's shift our attention now to the chronological interpretation. That's going to be the focus of my talk today. And to sort of go through some exegesis of the text and so on.

One thing that's interesting you can read through the history of reflection on just about any doctrine and you'll find a whole bunch of different opinions. You know my colleague Scott Stripling always says where there's two archaeologists, there's three opinions.

Well, what's interesting about the interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11 before the advent of Darwinism is that there was a universal consensus that Genesis 5 and 11 should be interpreted chronologically, that the life spans were literal, and that the text was to be interpreted that way.

That's a very interesting point that's to be brought in because why did people interpret the text this way for 2,000 years? What are the reasons why? You can talk about Demetrius of Alexandria, the Book of Jubilees, Library of Biblical Antiquity, which is a Pseudepigrapha, the Church Fathers, ancient Jews. And the fact that the three textual traditions have been altered means those who altered the traditions interpreted the text chronologically. That's the reason why the texts were changed, because they were trying to achieve certain goals in changing the text.

This is a secondary argument, but an important point that has to be grappled with when you're wrestling with this area of stuff.

That was the consensus by and large. Even someone like Origen, as much as he allegorized the text in his dialogue with Celsus, said the world was less than 10,000 years old and that meant that he was interpreting Genesis 5 and 11 chronologically. Right? So even someone like him, who we would not follow his exegesis, even he believed that the text should be interpreted that way.

But nonetheless let's go back to William Henry Green here of Princeton, because he published an article this was a critical article in 1890 called "Primeval Chronology". He made the case that the text should be interpreted non-chronologically, that there were chronological gaps in the text of Genesis 5 and 11. He used a series of arguments to make that case. And that eventually supplanted what you would call the conservative view over the millennia. Like through the 1950s is when that sort of really started to take hold in conservative scholarship. I use the term "conservative" broadly. I realize it requires a lot of qualification. But I'm just being very general.

So his fundamental argument was, "look, you have all these genealogies in the Bible and they have names missing. So why aren't their names missing in Genesis 5 and 11?" Seems like a reasonable supposition.

One of the challenges here is, of course, that none of these genealogies, which do have missing names, have the numerical information in them for starters. And secondly, we need to deal with Genesis 5 and 11 on its own terms first, and then these can be drawn on analogously. This is secondary information. We want to focus on the primary text itself that we're dealing with.

So his ultimate conclusion was that missing names necessitate missing time. It's my view that he conflated genealogical with chronological gaps, and I'll show you what I mean by that in a few moments.

That really is in all the conservative literature, almost all of it, you will see Green's fundamental argument repeated over and over and over again. I've found 40, 50 different sources from different commentaries. It's kind of the same argument repackaged a little bit, but fundamentally the same.

So let's go to the grammar. We're going to go with Jared here because the Masoretic and the Septuagint match each other here. So I'm just going with this, just to keep it kind of simple as far as the numbers go.

When Jared had lived 162 years he brought forth or he caused Enoch to be born. That's sort of the literal sense of the text. We have in Genesis 5:19 that Jared lived 800 years after he brought forth Enoch, and he brought forth or caused to be born—we'll talk about this in a moment—other sons and daughters.

So that's sort of the repeated structure of both Genesis 5 and 11. Now Genesis 5 has an epitaph with the lifespan Genesis 11 does not, with the exception of Terah. The key here to understanding how the Hebrew text here is constructed is it's in the hifil stem, which is causative, which makes sense. The male is causative in the birth of the named direct objects, for obvious reasons.

It is true, if you study through the Hebrew Bible, that the hifil of *yalad* can refer to remote descendant, or it can refer to an immediate descendant. So the direct object however is always stated.

Two examples of that are in the toledot at the end of Ruth—the genealogy of David. There are names missing there, but the hifil of *yalad* is used to say so-and-so brought forth so-and-so. There are names missing in there. You can go to other places in Scripture to determine that.

Then Deuteronomy 4:25. We're going to just focus on Deuteronomy 4:25 as an example, because this would seem to support Green's contention that, "listen, this could be a remote descendant and therefore there's names missing in the text and therefore there's time missing." So you follow the logic of that. Just follow along with me.

Here we have Deuteronomy 4:25. It says "when you have had children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land." It takes as its object both children and remote descendants. If you think about this this could be your children—say you're 30 years old when you have your children—direct object, or you're 60 years old—your grandchild is brought forth—but in either case the person being brought forth or being born is the one who is the direct object of the action of the verb.

Now in this case we don't have any time indicators in the text like we do in Genesis 5 and 11. But nonetheless, this shows us the semantic range of the hifil of *yalad*, that it can refer to a remote descendant.

Let's return now to Genesis 5:18. We see here in the text that Jared is 162 years old when he brings forth Enoch. He causes him to be born, literally, hifil of *yalad*, direct object. Now since we have no other information in Scripture as to the relationship between Jared and Enoch, in theory Enoch could be his grandson or his great-grandson or even his great-great-grandson. But as far as chronology goes, it doesn't matter, because when Jared is 2 and 60 and 100 years old, as the Hebrew text says, Enoch is brought forth. He is born.

Maybe names are missing. I don't know if there are names missing. We don't know from Scripture whether or not there are other descendants in between Jared and Enoch. But we know that Jared is 162 years old at the time that Enoch is brought forth. Therefore, even though names may be missing, time is not. Because the time between Jared's age and Enoch's birth are interlocked together. This is the key to understanding the text.

While it was my desire as one who's involved in the field of archaeology and knowing what the archaeologists say about ages of time before Abraham, I wanted there to be more time in here. I'm going to be honest with you, but I can't escape from the force of the syntax of the text. And the text in my view constrains. Because it's God speaking in the text. It is God breathed and

therefore it has authority greater than what we might say outside of the text that may contradict it.

Now we have other instances, before I move on here within Genesis 5 and 11, where we know the son is a direct son: Adam and Seth, Seth and Enosh, Lamech and Noah. I see these as literary inclusions on the end of Genesis 5 to indicate to us that we ought to interpret the rest of it chronologically as well. Because there are no names missing between Adam and Seth.

The same thing with Noah and his three sons. So the precedent is there. There's a literary artifice that's in place to assure it's a hermeneutical construct to tell us, "look, if you're not sure about this, Adam and Seth, Seth and Enosh, Lamech and Noah at the end, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth at the end of each end of Genesis 5.

So again there's not someone else being born when Jared is 162 years old. It's Enoch who's being born.

Let's go further now with the syntax. Oh I'm sorry. Forgive me here. I already covered this part. The actual relationship is irrelevant to the construction of a chronology.

Now Green and other interpreters have attempted to insert an unstated direct object between Jared and Enoch so someone else is born in that 162nd year. And when that happens, some unnamed ancestor, and when that happens, then you break the chronology. Then you don't know what the time period is. But the text doesn't say that another person is being born in the 162nd year. It's Enoch who's being born in the 162nd year. So that's sort of the semantic argument that goes on with the text in terms of this relationship.

Now another component of this. You read this in Waltke and O'Connor's discussion of the hidden use of the hiphil. The direct object participates in the event expressed by the verbal root. That makes perfect sense when it comes to birth. Who's participating in being brought forth? Enoch, when Jared was 2 and 60 and 100 years of age.

So that reality of how this works solidifies that interpretation. And it's hard to get out of it in my judgment. It's Enoch and not his anonymous ancestor who's participating in the event of being born at that particular time.

The Septuagint uses the accusative case. It doesn't pick up on the nuance of the hiphil. It just uses the standard verb for being born.

So the semantics of causative is lost a little bit. But it uses the accusative case, which makes it clear that the translators believe that Enoch was the recipient of the action and he was the one being born at that time. It's confirmed by the direct object marker, which is not translatable, and the addition of the Maqqef by the Masoretes when they interpreted and translated the text and added the vowel points.

Then to add to sort of the syntactical argument that I'm making, we have the second part of the formula: Jared lived 800 years when after he caused Enoch, or after Enoch was brought forth (Patriarch B). That's the pattern.

They brought forth other sons and daughters. That's written in the infinitive form, but the effect is the same. The recipient of the action again is Enoch and not some unnamed ancestor. So together both parts of the formula throughout Genesis 5 and 11 cohere and come together to make it clear what the author is intending to tell us about the text.

As if that wasn't enough, we have then the epitaph. All the days of Jared were 962 years and he died. If you add up 162 plus 800 and you get 962. Actually quite simple. And to be honest, I'm not an expert in Hebrew, but I actually find ... and you know going to school Westminster and having to try to translate poetry I found that to be very difficult. I don't find this to be very difficult to translate. It's actually not difficult Hebrew. It's very basic in my view.

It's really hard to escape from the syntax and the force of what the text is telling us. So I've concluded and you can read more about this in the articles that we have online, that the conflation of genealogical with chronological gaps is an illegitimate exegetical maneuver. And I think we need to revisit it.

If there's a case to be made for chronological gaps, it's got to be developed in a different kind of way. The name argument doesn't work because of the way the syntax is structured throughout the text.

We find that again throughout Genesis 5 and 11, fifty-five times the hiphil of *yalad* is used throughout the two genealogies.

In recent times there's been a couple of different, sort of what you might call "interpretive maneuvers," the sort of thought process over time with exceptions. The move from chronological to non-chronological to non-literal has sort of been the development. A lot of evangelicals have moved towards, "well, we know that people can't live to be that old. There's got to be some other interpretation of the text."

There's a variety of them out there. There's honorific formulas. There's symbolic—a combination of honorific and symbolic. Mystical, like sort of Jewish Kabbalism—the numbers have some kind of mystical meaning that we have to uncover. Secret numerical systems, you'll find that in the liberal critical literature.

We're going to find and discover what this small group of people were really doing with these numbers. Astronomical calculations are brought in and all kinds of different theories are brought in to try to explain numbers.

If you move in that direction as an evangelical, you have to grapple with the doctrine of Scripture. A secret gnostic knowledge is required to understand the Word of God correctly. That's basically the inference that flows out of that. So you have to work through your doctrine of Scripture if you're going to move in that kind of direction.

So you see where this multi-layered way of looking at things comes into play.

Others will say that it's derived from Ancient Near Eastern mythology, such as the Sumerian king list. There does seem to be some relationship between Genesis 5 and 11 and the Sumerian king list, but it's undetermined in the academic literature. And there's no definitive evidence that the author of Genesis 5, which I think is Moses, was dependent upon some external piece of mythology to put the text together.

Then the last category is more recent. William Lane Craig is saying this is mytho-history. These are the different ways that professing evangelicals are trying to deal with these incredible numbers, especially in Genesis 5.

Let's say for a moment you've seen through the exegesis and I hope that perhaps is persuasive to you. Let's say for a moment that these numbers are symbolic and really Jared was only 35 years old when Enoch was born. We've seen kind of the force of the syntax here. So let's plug in the

number 35 just for the sake of argument. They live to ages like us. What ends up happening here is very interesting if you do this.

There's a view that I'm seeing Gordon Wenham seeming to move in this direction. Steve Collins, Craig Olson. I believe they believe these figures are historical. The people, but not the numbers. That's kind of their viewpoint.

Let's plug this in here to think about this exegetically. What happens? Well, what happens is you actually don't expand the chronology, you collapse it. Because now Enoch is born when Jared's 35. Instead of them being 162 years apart, they're 35 years apart.

Go through the Genesis 5 chronology and now if you take it non-literally, and you plug in their actual ages, you collapse the chronology. So the very goal of interpreting in this way is to allow for the external evidence, actually undermines the exegetical maneuver.

Lower begetting ages collapse the chronology. I don't think that that maneuver works when you start to press it and try to apply it to the text. In fact, if you wanted to increase it, you would have to increase the beginning ages to accommodate for the external claims about the time frame. It's the only way you can get the chronology to be long enough to sort of withstand the conventional chronologies that are out there.

I see this is problematic. It's tempting to move in this direction because again, as I've stated several times, it's quite incredible to believe that people live to be this old, and that they had their children at 162 years old, and so forth.

But the syntax, it just seems to me, doesn't allow for that. So we're back to what we do with the text when it presses in on us in such a manner? When we're reminding ourselves that it is God who is speaking in the text.

Non-literal interpretations also yield exegetical absurdities in the life of Noah. Now if you study this very carefully, you will see how absolutely precise the chronology of Noah's life is related to the Flood, and his sons, and his grandsons. Our facts had after the Flood and a whole series of texts that are integrated with one another that all cohere chronologically.

The first is Genesis 7:11. "In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the 2nd month, on the 17th day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth." If you plug in some sort of mystical number in there, what does this mean, in the 2nd month of what year? 35th year? 50th year? What year is it? Or how does the text make sense when we do that to it?

I want you to think about that. And then on the other end of the Flood, we have another chronological marker. "In his 600 and first year." So the studies of the Flood narrative imply that you know the Flood lasted about a year or so. That's the typical way of understanding it with some variations. But nonetheless, very precise chronological markers in the life of Noah, which when you plug them in, if you try to plug in some kind of mystical meaning or something like that, the text starts to become meaningless.

Then you add to that what I call this matrix of texts—Genesis 5:32, 7:11, 9:24—the epitaph for Noah's life. He lived 350 years after the Flood. He lived 950 years his total life, and he died. When you begin to sort of put this all together, they all integrate together with one another.

We find out that Japheth was the eldest. Some translations do say that Shem was the elder, but I think Japheth was the eldest son, born at the age of 500. Ham was the youngest, Genesis 9:24.

I should just comment here in Genesis 5:32. This is often taken to mean that Shem was the oldest, but I think this is a Messianic designation that Shem is first in the Messianic line because of these other texts. So the infallible principle of interpreting Scripture is Scripture interprets itself. Because God has given us so much detailed data, you can feel pretty strongly and confident that this whole matrix around the Flood actually works.

A lot of liberal scholars sort of latch onto all this and say how it's incoherent and inconsistent. But when you actually look very closely at it, it's actually quite the opposite.

If we can continue on here, just sort of looking at the broader canonical kind of look at these. We don't have the numbers elsewhere in the text, but we have historicity. So if we're going to make the maneuver that this is just a literary construct or a mytho-history, then we've got to deal with the doctrine of Scripture. We have the genealogies listed in 1 Chronicles. What does that do for our doctrine of inspiration?

Luke 3:34–38 Adam to Abraham; the genealogy of Jesus going all the way back to Adam.

And, of course, to Adam, which is, I know, a huge area of debate, historical Adam, but nonetheless, he's there in the text. The Apostle Paul, Hebrews 11 amongst the heroes of faith there are three men before the Flood, right next to Abraham, and all the others that we would consider to be historical.

So if the non-historical maneuver is the way one wants to go, now you've got a doctrine of Scripture you've got to reformulate. You've got to rethink how that's going to work.

I obviously get the sense for me that I don't think that works, but if you're moving in that direction, you've got to formulate a doctrine of Scripture that can stand up to scrutiny.

Then we throw into the mix the New Testament authors, people like, well, Jesus Himself, exegeting the early Genesis narrative of marriage. For example, Adam and Eve in the Fall is right there. Your hardened heart is the reason why Moses allowed for divorce. That's the Fall Jesus is referring to. 2 Peter and 1 Peter referring to eight persons on the ark. These are examples of larger canonical arguments, points the Holy Spirit is speaking in all of Scripture.

This is kind of the methodology that I've tried to approach this with. What does the text tell us and what does the Holy Spirit say in these other books about Him? And I should add that Paul mentions that Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born explicitly. Now that's the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul

Advocates of these other interpretations have said that Abraham was not 175 years old when he died, that he was a normal age and therefore these numbers are not actual historical numbers. But when you read this in the New Testament, again you've got to wrestle with the doctrine of inspiration and how that works. Who's speaking? Is it Paul speaking or is it the Holy Spirit speaking of Scripture?

We're coming down to the end here. I didn't leave much time for the textual tradition aspect of it, which is in my book, 300 pages long. I'm going to talk to you for about five minutes for it. How's that?

We have three traditions. The numbers all diverge. If you're here, you probably are very familiar with that. We have three chronologies that are yielded from the text: the Masoretic, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Septuagint. All this information is in the online articles. Obviously

they diverge from one another. I've been making the argument that I believe we have two phenomenon: large scale deliberate alterations and accidental scribal errors.

The million dollar question is who did it? Who changed the text? I've been making the argument that I think the Septuagint preserves most of the original numbers based on the Hebrew text that the translators were using in Egypt in the early 3rd century BC. There's a number of reasons why I make that argument.

First you have to put together a theory: who did it. Who had the motive to change the text? Who had the means to change the text? Who could control the manuscripts after they were changed? Then who had the opportunity historically? Who was able to do such a thing?

You can't have a renegade scribe changing the text because it would have been found out and snuffed out. It's got to be people in authority changing the text and the text getting into that religious community as authoritarian. It's got to be people who are in control of the manuscripts. It can't be a renegade scribe. I think that the rabbis deflated the Masoretic Text in the post-70 AD destruction of the Temple. That's my theory.

Before you start throwing stones at me that the Masoretic Text has been changed, you got to think about your doctrine of preservation. That's another area: what does God tell us in His Word about how His Word's going to be preserved? That's got to be worked out. We all have different views of what we think preservation is, right? So I've got to defend that, too. and I can't get into that because I got three minutes.

I think the motivation was what's called "Chrono-messianism". This is a major phenomenon in Second Temple Judaism. The argument came forth that people thought that they could calculate the time of the coming of the Messiah. I'm going to cut this a little bit short because I'm going to go along if I belabor the point.

It's based on Daniel 9 and other texts. They would try to calculate when is the Messiah going to come? This was a major area of debate in the first century in the inter-testamental period. This worked its way into the early church. If you've read anything of the Church Fathers you'll know that this was an area of debate. Eusebius opposed this whole construct, for example, but others adopted it.

The rabbis thought that God would bring an end to the world after 7,000 years. There were two views that the Messiah would come around the sixth millennium, or the beginning of the sixth millennium, or the fourth. That idea is found in the Babylonian Talmud.

There were debates about this. There's debates in the literature about it, and in the early church, and between the church and the rabbis about when the Messiah would come. The bottom line is I think the Masoretic Text was reduced to discredit the office of Christ as the Messiah. They wanted to put Him outside of the time of the coming of Messiah and basically the argument was He came too soon. Your Messiah's a false Messiah and therefore we reject Him. That's the bottom line of the argument that I'm making now.

I've got like 70 pages where I developed this in my book, but the point is this is the overall theory. Somebody changed the text. So it's no small thing to accuse people of changing the text. Don't get me wrong, but somebody's got to be accused of it because somebody did it.

That is the ultimate argument that I make as far as the Masoretic Text goes. We have the motivation. We have the authority—the rabbis were in complete control of the manuscripts that

survived the destruction of the Temple, and they had opportunity, they had control. If we didn't have the Dead Sea Scrolls, all we would have is the proto-Masoretic Text that survived through the rabbis. It was possible to introduce a corrupted chronology at this time. That is my working argument.

We have ancient support. Eusebius claims this happened, so does Julian of Toledo. By the way, Jacob of Edessa claimed that there were Hebrew manuscripts in his time that matched the Septuagint. Very interesting.

So I propose the theory of reconstruction based on the numbers and blah, blah, blah. And I think the Septuagint has the strongest evidence favoring its originality. So I'm trying as I'm working through the text, I realize the conflict with the external claims outside. You know it. We know it. We know this is the issue that we have to deal with when we're dealing with the early chapters of Genesis. But I'm always going back to Martin Luther in my ear saying, if you can't understand how this was done, grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are, Henry. So I've really wrestled with this a lot. But this is where I've landed because I think this is where the evidence leads us.

God is speaking in the text. The last thing I'll say is from the late don't know weeks this is difficult to accept in the cultural moment. But it's always been that way when we study the Book of Genesis. There's always been pressure for us to allegorize the text, to conform with Plotinus or Aristotle, or some other human philosophy. We act as though this is a unique modern problem and it's not. This goes all the way back to the early origin of the church. We're not alone in facing the onerous task of holding to this view of cosmic origins and human origins which is out of sympathy with the premises of culture.

That's where I think the evidence leads. I'm still working a lot of it through. I'm not making any more predictions about when my book is going to be done. I've uttered three false prophecies about it. No more dates.

We've got two minutes.

Q: What are the oldest manuscripts about this?

A: The oldest Hebrew manuscripts that preserve Genesis 5 and 11 are the medieval ones. There's no early stuff from Qumran. The earliest manuscripts that preserve Genesis 5 and 11 are all Septuagint. So we don't have any early Hebrew texts, Hebrew manuscripts. We do have three Greek. Yes, early third century is the earliest we have. Papyrus 911 of Septuagint preserves sections of 5 and 11 and some of the numbers.

Q: Have you looked at how it lines up in the hiphil, chronological or the other lists even though they don't have names? They don't have numbers?

A: The only other genealogy that I can recall that has the hiphil of *yalad* is the Ruth one. Now that skips generations. There's no question about that because we can find that out from other areas of Scripture. That's where it's demonstrated that you can have a remote descendant as the direct object. But because the numbers aren't there, it's not quite analogous to [Genesis] 5 and 11.

Q: Well it's written in the original???

A: The purpose behind it? Broadly speaking some of the purpose is the same, trace ancestry, right? But not to construct the chronology in Ruth clearly because the numbers aren't there.

Q: How do you reconcile ...

A: Well, this is a more broad statement about origins. You know I'm talking about the patriarchal lifespans in particular, but, you know, the question of the days of creation, the question of the scope of the Flood, the history of the Flood. There's always been external philosophies that have contradicted that historical understanding. So the pressure has always been there. How do we as the church deal with it I think is the point that we're trying to make. So even though the chronological interpretation ... Actually your point is pretty good. That's the one interpretation that's persisted over the centuries. That's a great point I haven't quite thought of, that nuance. Thank you.

Q: Any of our evangelical, conservative seminaries ... have any of the old testament cross conceded that your case that they buy into your argument.

A: I don't have that kind of influence. I'm hoping in time that we can get the argument out there and maybe minds will be persuaded. The dominant view is still Green's view. But the fact that the Masoretic numbers are irrelevant because there's no chronology in Green's view, so the numbers don't matter.

The Masoretic has precedence, but Green's view makes the numbers irrelevant. So there's not an interest in trying to figure it out all.