

Creation Date of Adam from the Perspective of Young-Earth Creationism

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Abstract

Within orthodox Christianity, a group of theologians, philosophers, and scientists have affirmed that Adam was created by God around 10,000bc to 4000bc. They are known as young-earth creationists. Within the category of young-earth creationists are two subsets: (1) chronogenealogical young-earth creationists who believe that the Bible does not allow for genealogical gaps in Genesis 5 and 11, thus establishing Adam's creation around 4000bc and (2) non-chronogenealogical young-earth creationists who believe that the Bible allows for the possibility of genealogical gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 that would not violate hermeneutical rules, thus allowing for a creation date of Adam up to 10,000bc. This article reveals how young-earth creationists have concluded this approximate age of Adam and to explain the reason for a 6,000 year range between both groups.

Keywords: young earth, creation, genealogical, hermeneutics, Genesis

Creation Date of Adam from the Perspective of Young-Earth Creationism

Within orthodox Christianity, a group of theologians, philosophers, and scientists have affirmed that Adam was created by God around 4000BC to 10,000BC (Ashton 2001; Chaffey and Lisle 2008; Moreland et al. 1999; Morris and Parker 1987; Mortenson and Ury 2008; Whitcomb and Morris 1961). These researchers are known as young-earth creationists. This belief is a minority perspective within the scientific community and a shrinking view within evangelical academic institutions (Ham, Hall, and Hillard 2011). However, within local evangelical churches, the doctrine seems to maintain a firm place of residence with the success of the Answers in Genesis' (AiG) Creation Museum in Kentucky, the Institute for Creation Research in Texas, and Creation Ministries International worldwide. The body of Christ, at least in some part, has not abandoned what most consider to be the traditional interpretation of Genesis. The young-earth creationist interpretation states that God created humanity on Day Six of the Creation event and that God and the biblical writers left textual clues throughout the Bible to delimit the age of humanity within a relatively tight historical timeline. The purpose of the this article is (1) to reveal how young-earth creationists have concluded this approximate age of Adam, and (2) to explain the reason for a 6,000 year range. What this paper will not address is the differing perspectives of the age of Adam as understood by other evangelicals who are not young-earth creationists, the debate of the use of the Hebrew word *yom* (English word "day"), and the scientific interpretation of data that currently purports to affirm an age of Adam older than 12,000

years. The goal after reading this article will be that the reader will understand the two perspectives and most importantly how to extend grace within the differing viewpoints.

Young-Earth Creationists and the Age of Adam

The age of Adam, as defined by young-earth creationists, is based upon the age of the earth. A grammatico-historical exegesis (Stallard 2000) and the influence of narrative genre (Boyd 2012) in Genesis 1–11 leads young-earth creationist scholars to conclude that the earth is around 6,000 to 12,000 years old. With Adam only six days removed from this event, he can be safely dated as having lived approximately 6,000 to 12,000 years ago (Chaffey and Lisle 2008, p.23; Moreland et al. 1999, p.49; Morris 1976, p.45; Mortenson 2009, p.176; Mortenson and Ury 2008, p.455; Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.489; Wise 2002, p.71). Within the young-earth creationist group a majority of scholars affirm an age closer to 6,000 years based upon their understanding of closed gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (Chaffey and Lisle 2008, p.23; Freeman 2008, p.308; Wise 2002, p.71). However, Morris and Whitcomb¹ allow for the possibility of genealogical gaps (Morris 1976, p.285; Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.489) that would extend the age of Adam to no older than 10,000 to 12,000 years. Nelson and Reynolds (Moreland et al. 1999, p.49), who affirm a recent creation but not necessarily a young-earth creationist perspective, do not list an exact age for Adam. Thus, young-earth creationists in general ascribe to a creation date no older than 12,000 years, with most embracing an age closer to 6,000 years. Although this parameter defines the position of a vast majority of young-earth

¹ Dr. Tom Davis, Academic Dean at Word of Life Bible Institute, Schroon Lake, New York also affirms that there are genealogical gaps. However, his writings are limited to only a couple of pages of emails. I am grateful for the numerous emails we have had and his willingness to save and share what he has written to others on this matter.

creationists, it should be noted that B.B. Warfield confessed that he did not think the earth was much older than 10,000 to 20,000 years old (Warfield 1911, p. 12), extending the date for the age of both the earth, and the age of Adam by around 8,000 years past most other young-earth creationists. John Davis (1984, p.31), who is a young-earth creationist, purports that the age of Adam could be closer to 20,000BC.² These two individuals, separated by 75 years of research and expertise in different disciplines, do not seem to embrace the normal definition of orthodox young-earth creationists; however, in comparison to the belief that Adam could be as old as 130,000 years old (Collins 2011, p.117), these men should be placed, at minimum, much closer to the young-earth creationist framework than any other system. How, then, do young-earth creationists arrive at the approximate date for the age of Adam based upon their hermeneutical methods, and how do they obtain this firm belief that the earth and its inhabitants are young? It begins with their view of Scripture.

Hermeneutics of Young-Earth Creationists

Based upon the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, young-earth creationists affirm that the Scriptures should be

Interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. [They] deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship (Sproul 1996, p. 52).

The Bible is understood based upon grammar, word order, historical context as defined by the literary context, canonical theology, and most important, the author's intended meaning. E.D. Hirsch, Jr. has influenced evangelical hermeneutics and states that meaning "is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent" (Hirsch 1967, p. 8). Arp conveys that authorial intent is understood "by studying the text in which he (author) expressed that meaning" (Arp 2000, p.36). The author of Genesis (assumed to be composed by Moses) meant to communicate a particular meaning with his choice of words (Archer 2007, p.134). This meaning cannot be found outside of the original author, but rather discovered through his intended meaning based upon the meaning assigned to the words in a particular context. Stallard and Johnson suggest that this

approach is similar to the method when Ezra read the writings of Moses and how Israel heard the law of God based upon the plain or normal sense of the word and then came to understanding (Johnson 1990, p. 9; Stallard 2000, p. 15).

Within the Bible, there are two authors—human and divine—and young-earth creationists affirm the duality of both. The meaning is discovered by understanding the author's words in the context of the entire Bible. The affirmation of divine authorship precludes the possibility that the co-human author did not communicate the intended meaning that God desired. God, who worked through his human agent and communicated his intended meaning without violating the will of the human author, ensured that his meaning could be understood. So exactly what is meaning? Meaning is that which has "relation to other words and to other sentences which form its context" (Osborne 1991, p. 76). Meaning is not found exclusively in the word, for the word carries with it a range of meaning that has been assigned based upon the cultural and literary context. Meaning is found in the text of the passage (Arp 2000, p. 40) as it is placed there by the author. Young-earth creationists believe that the intended meaning of the words in Genesis 1–3 (and for all of Scripture) can be understood within its context.

The opening line of Jud Davis' article in *Answers* states as an example that "Top Hebrew scholars all agree that the writer of Genesis intended the word day to mean 24 hours" (Davis 2012, p. 67). He quotes James Barr from Oxford

So far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1–11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that (a) [the] creation [event] took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by the simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story (Davis, 2012, p. 68).

Davis supports his idea by quoting Hebrew scholars from Cambridge, Hebrew University, and Oxford, who all concur with Barr. Although I might squabble with who is considered a top scholar in Hebrew or Old Testament, it is interesting that Davis had to go outside of the evangelical community to find proponents of the traditional reading of Genesis. As a young-earth creationist, Davis' article points to the issue at hand; that is, if the plain, normal, historical,

² John Davis holds to a position almost identical to the position that Whitcomb and Morris expound (belief in no gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, six consecutive 24-hour days in the Creation event, and a global Flood). The only difference is that he believes that there are genealogical gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 that likely exceed 10,000 years. This places his position outside of the traditional view of a young-earth creationist but not far enough that his views cannot be combined with Whitcomb and Morris to consider the non-chronogenealogical perspective.

grammatical hermeneutic is applied to the exegesis of the first few chapters of Genesis, then the reader will conclude that the best interpretation is that God created the world in six consecutive 24-hour days. Thus as narrative literature—not as poetry—Genesis should be interpreted as such to accurately conclude the meaning found within the context of the historical account. It should be interpreted like one would with the account of David and Goliath—as true history.

Narrative Literature

With over 40% of the Old Testament written in narrative literature, the assertion is that Old Testament narrative literature constructs its representation of the historical accuracy through literary devices—character, plot, theme, climax, and resolution. Fee and Stuart describe narratives as

purposeful stories retelling the *historical* events on the past that intended to give meaning and direction for a given people *in the present* (emphasis Fee and Stuart 2003, p.90).

Within Old Testament narrative literature, there are three levels of story (story meaning “a true account”) represented in the text. One, the metanarrative, that is, the whole universal plan of God working in his universe; two, the redemption of humankind by God; and three, the hundreds of smaller narratives that are found throughout the text (Fee and Stuart 2003, p.91). Within this mix of levels, the emphasis upon the biblical theology of the event should not be lost. The event-behind-the-text was not the focus of the author rather the God-interpreted-event as found in the text. God ensured that selective events were preserved to be weaved into His larger story of redemption, and His meta-narratological story of Himself as the main character.

Lying behind the composition of the Pentateuch is a clearly defined theological program rather than raw data in need of explanation (Sailhamer 2009, p.284).

Young-earth creationists insist that the biblical theology of the real event found in the text of narrative literature continues to be underscored and that, in particular, the historical, normal, grammatical, and plain meaning of the text should be the emphasis of any interpretation.

Is Genesis Narrative Literature?

Sailhamer who views Genesis as narrative stresses

the first task of the author in shaping the Pentateuchal narrative into a single, coherent story was to arrange its various parts into a chronological framework (Sailhamer 2009, p.285).

Genesis is a book of beginnings. Within the book is the account of the beginning of the world, mankind,

origin of sin, first death, genealogies from Adam to the sons of Jacob, and the establishment of the nation of Israel.

The various texts were not haphazardly thrown together; the author had a clear idea of how the various written texts should be fit together (Sailhamer 2009, p.284).

The author of Genesis mainly composed this book by the genre of narrative. There are certainly other genres such as genealogy (Genesis 4 and 5), poetry (Genesis 2:23), and commentary (Genesis 2:24) but the main portion of Genesis is narrative. Genesis 1 narrates the Creation events, Genesis 2–3 narrates the beginnings of Adam, Eve, and their descendants, Genesis 6–9 narrates the account of Noah and the global Flood, Genesis 11–25 narrates the life of Abraham, and Genesis 26–50 narrates the lives of Isaac, Jacob and his 12 sons. Within those sections is the overarching theme of Genesis 3:15—the seed of the woman. Who will be the obedient one promised in Genesis 3:15 that will one day crush the head of the seed of the Evil One? Genesis reveals in chapters 5 and 11 which family lineage will carry the obedient seed line and in chapters 12–50 which son of the patriarch will carry this seed line. The author of Genesis reveals early on that the obedient seed line originates with Adam, then to Seth, to Noah, to Shem, to Abraham, which is authenticated by the direct link of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (Ross 1997, p.250) and then to Isaac, to Jacob, and ends with a promise to Judah’s family (Genesis 49:10). Thus it would seem that the author is not primarily interested in determining the age of Adam. This would appear to be secondary or even tertiary in importance. I would agree that the primary or even secondary focus of Genesis is not necessarily to determine the age of Adam. Nevertheless, within the greater body of evangelicalism is an erroneous teaching that Adam was created as long 130,000 to 150,000 years ago (Collins 2011, p.117; Rana 2012). This belief is not based upon the interpretation of Genesis rather it is exclusively established by the latest evolutionary theory. To state in another way, the Bible is being reinterpreted not by studying the text but rather through an anti-God philosophy which has been imposed upon the plain and normal reading of Genesis 1–11 to accommodate current evolutionary thinking. Thus a shift has happened from biblical theology (studying the text) to apologetics (are there any textual clues in Genesis or in the Bible that could counter old-earth creationism?). Young-earth creationists believe that there are and that the divine and human authors of Genesis and the Bible have left the reader clues which will indicate that the approximate age of Adam can be determined and that there are limits on the upper range which if exceeded

would “do violence to the chronological framework of all subsequent Bible history and prophecy” (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 485). Given this background, has the author left the reader textual clues to determine the exact age of Adam, or does the reader have to make textually bound estimates to determine the age of Adam? This is where our discussion will lead us next to comprehend how young-earth creationists calculate the age of Adam with a range of 10,000BC to 4000BC.

Chronogenealogical and Non-Chronogenealogical Perspectives

Two primary views exist within young-earth creationists in regard to the age of Adam: the chronogenealogical perspective and the non-chronogenealogical perspective. Those who hold to the chronogenealogical perspective believe that

Genesis 5 and 11 contain the names of actual historical figures, but also that those names form a continuous (without generational omissions) linear genealogy from Adam to Abraham (Freeman 2008, p. 290).

The non-chronogenealogical perspective holds that Genesis 5 and 11 also contain the names of actual historical figures but also that those names may possess genealogical gaps, which may extend the creation date of Adam up to 10,000BC (Morris 1976, p. 45; Whitcomb 1986, p. 133; Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 489). Within young-earth creationists, the dominant perspective is the chronogenealogical perspective; however, worthwhile consideration should be granted to the non-chronogenealogical perspective, especially in light of the influence of Old Testament scholar Dr. John Whitcomb and creation scientist Dr. Henry Morris.

The Chronogenealogical Perspective

The age of Adam is calculated as follows:

1. The initiation of creation until the end of the end of Day Six was six 24-hour periods of time.
2. Day Six of the Creation event until the Noah entered the Ark was approximately 1,656 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, p. 19).
3. The day Noah entered the Ark until the birth of Abraham was approximately 352 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, pp. 19, 22).

4. The birth of Abraham to the birth of Jesus was approximately 1,992 years (Jones 2005, p. 27; Ussher 2007, p. 779).
5. The birth of Jesus to current day is approximately 2,017 years.
6. The sum total for the age of the earth from a strictly biblical perspective³ is approximately 6,017 years.

The timeline from the birth of Abraham to the current date is not in question. There might be some technical wrangling over the exact date of Abraham, but these arguments total only approximately 100 years (Morris 1976, p. 309). This conclusion, then, leaves the major discussion on how only 2,000 years is calculated between the beginning of the Creation event and the birth of Abraham.

The chronogenealogical perspective posits that the normal reading of Genesis 5 and 11 will produce around 2,000 years based upon the “19 sub-time frames,” which they believe are free of genealogical gaps (Ice and Johnson 2002). The list is as follows and provides the proper overlap to explain how oral tradition or written tradition (*toledot*) was preserved through the age of Abraham (and eventually transcribed by Moses):

1. 130 years—the period between the creation of Adam and the birth of his son Seth;
2. 105 years—the period between the birth of Seth and the birth of his son Enosh;
3. 90 years—the period between the birth Enosh and the birth of his son Cainan;
4. 70 years—the period between the birth of Cainan and the birth his son Mahalalel;
5. 65 years—the period between the birth of Mahalalel and the birth of his son Jared;
6. 162 years—the period between the birth of Jared and birth of his son Enoch;
7. 65 years—the period between the birth of Enoch and the birth of his son Methuselah;
8. 187 years—the period between the birth of Methuselah and the birth of his son Lamech;
9. 182 years—the period between the birth of Lamech and the birth of his son Noah;
10. 600 years—the period between the birth of Noah and the outbreak of the global Flood;
11. 2 years—the period between the outbreak of the global Flood and the birth of Shem’s son Arphaxad;

³ Beyond the scope of this article is Ancient Near Eastern literature and cosmologies. Within evangelicalism is the belief that the prehistory of Genesis 1–11 borrowed from Ancient Near Eastern literature or was influenced by these ancient texts. The implications are that Genesis 1–11 texts are either myth, largely figurative, or partly figurative. I conclude that Ancient Near Eastern literature had no bearing upon Genesis 1–11 primarily for two reasons. One, historically Moses (assumed author of Genesis) composed Genesis considerably much later than these Ancient Near Eastern texts were purportedly written which would indicate minimal similarity, and two, hermeneutically that Moses composed his version of the historical events to produce a theological interpretation of the real events. Moses wanted the reader to understand the text not the event-behind-the-text. The historical context although real is not what Moses described to his readers rather he composed a verbal version of those events that is bound within the text and not in the event. For further rebuttal on Ancient Near Eastern see Beall (2008) and for a detailed discussion on hermeneutics see Ross (1997); Sailhamer (2009, pp. 59–148).

12. 35 years—the period between the birth of Arphaxad and the birth of his son Shelah;
13. 30 years—the period between the birth of Shelah and the birth of his son Eber;
14. 34 years—the period between the birth of Eber and the birth of his son Peleg;
15. 30 years—the period between the birth of Peleg and the birth of his son Reu;
16. 32 years—the period between the birth of Reu and the birth of his son Serug;
17. 30 years—the period between the birth of Serug and the birth of his son Nahor;
18. 29 years—the period between the birth of Nahor and the birth of his son Terah;
19. 130 years—the period between the birth of Terah and the birth of his son Abraham.

With this particular timeline and linear reading, Adam's lifespan overlapped all of the patriarchs before the Flood except Noah. This suggests that Adam could have influenced the seed line of Seth to know Yahweh. Evidence of Adam's influence could be found in Enoch, who "...walked with God..." similar to what Adam may have experienced before the Fall (Genesis 3:8), and experienced no death, in Methuselah whose name it is assumed to mean "when he dies" (Morris 1976, p. 155) which may "suggest that God may have waited for his death to bring judgment upon the earth" (Wise 2002, p.51), and then for approximately last 56 years of Adam's life could have influenced Lamech in the righteousness of Yahweh. This may explain why Lamech was used by God to prophesy that Noah "...will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed" (Genesis 5:29). The chronogenealogical perspective sees no gaps between these antediluvian patriarchs, which should not provide any theological difficulties for a wide range of biblical scholars. Martin Luther believed a similar overlap existed between Noah and Abraham. Mortenson and Ury cite

but Noah saw his descendants up to the tenth generation. He died when Abraham was about fifty-eight years old. Shem lived with Isaac about 110 years and with Esau and Jacob about fifty years (Freeman 2008, p.302).

As stated previously the author of Genesis, in particular chapters 1–11, does not necessarily focus upon this overlap but rather highlights the obedient seed line which begins with Adam and culminates with Abraham in chapter 12. Nevertheless, if there are no genealogical gaps between Adam and Abraham then the above proposal is worthy of reasonable consideration as an apologetic approach to defend against the belief that Adam was created closer to 150,000 years ago. Accordingly, this overlap might explain why the historical revelation was preserved so

meticulously until the time of Moses. Based upon the chronogenealogical perspective's time frame, Lamech could potentially have received historical information from Adam, Lamech could have then relayed it to Noah as third-hand information, Noah to Terah as fourth-hand information, then Terah to Abraham as fifth-hand information, then Jacob was overlapped by Abraham for 15 years for sixth-hand information, Jacob overlapped around 17 years with his grandson Kohath (Genesis 46:8, 11, 47:28) for seventh-hand information, and Kohath's life seemed to overlap with Moses (Exodus 6:18, 20) which would potentially mean that Moses received eighth or ninth-hand information of the Creation event and the lives of the patriarchs (Wise 2002, p. 17). The chronogenealogical perspective supports their position with a few more arguments.

1. Jude 1:14 declared that Enoch was seventh in the genealogical order. When comparing this statement to Genesis 5, the reader will see that Enoch was the seventh from Adam, counting inclusively. It would seem that Jude is supporting the chronogenealogical perspective, which states that no gaps exist between the genealogies of the patriarchs.
2. The insertion of Cainan in Luke 3:36 is a scribal error. In Luke 3:36, Cainan is listed as the son (or descendant) of Arphaxad, and he is not found in genealogies of Genesis 11. For the non-chronogenealogical perspective it advocates that there are genealogical gaps, thus suggesting that the names listed in Genesis 11 (possibly in Genesis 5 as well) are fluid as a listing of key men in the genealogical family tree. From the chronogenealogical perspective, the name Cainan is not found in the Masoretic text in Genesis 10:24, 11:11–14, and 1 Chronicles 1:18, 24. The chronogenealogical perspective adds that the oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint do not contain Cainan, the earliest known extant copy of the Septuagint omits the extra Cainan, Josephus does not mention him, and Julius Africanus—the first Christian chronologist historian—mysteriously neglects to insert his name (Chaffey and Lisle 2008, pp.181–182; Sarfati 2004). Niessen, as cited by Mortenson and Ury (2008), asserts that the word Cainan, whose name is found in the Septuagint, probably was inserted as a red flag "to indicate that they were more or less forced to add time to the Hebrew chronology" (Freeman 2008, pp.309–310). Some holding to the chronogenealogical perspective believe that Septuagint writers, who were financially supported by King Ptolemy Philadelphia II, felt compelled to inflate the ages of patriarchs in Genesis to parallel the recent writings of Manetho (Freeman 2008, p. 310). Chronogenealogical perspective proponents

note from Niessen that Cain in the Hebrew has the idea of “acquisition” and Cainan as an extension of Cain was “the Septuagint translators’ way of indicating that this particular name [Cainan], in this particular place, was ‘acquired’ or superfluous.” Additional corroboration is that Cainan might have been a play on words of *kainos* (“time” in Greek) to hint that these elongated ages in the Septuagint were strange or *kevos* (“empty” in Greek) (Mortenson and Ury 2008, p.310). In other words, Cainan was never intended to be a part of Luke 3:36 because he never existed and was not part of a genealogical gap between Arphaxad and Shelah.⁴

Summary of the Chronogenealogical Perspective

The chronogenealogical perspective teaches that the age of Adam can be easily deduced by reading the texts of Genesis 5 and 11 to determine the date when Abraham was born. They then calculate the years from that point to the birth of Christ, and then follow that by adding the years from Christ to the current date on the calendar. The text of Genesis 5 and 11 should be read in a linear manner. There are no gaps in both passages, and Luke 3:36 is an example of scribal error which, when properly understood, affirms the chronogenealogical perspective position that Adam was created approximately 6,017 years ago.

The Non-Chronogenealogical Perspective

The age of Adam, as calculated by those holding to a non-chronogenealogical perspective, is slightly different, although a number of similarities still exist. The non-chronogenealogical perspective argument runs as follows:

1. The initiation of creation until the end of the end of Day Six was six 24-hour periods of time.
2. Day Six of the Creation event until the Noah entered the Ark was approximately 1,656 years (Jones 2005, p.26; Ussher 2007, p.19) however, a “possibility which perhaps cannot be ruled out completely” is that genealogical gaps could exist (Morris 1976, p.154).
3. The day Noah entered the Ark until the birth of

Abraham was approximately 352 years (Jones 2005, p.26; Ussher 2007, pp.19, 22); nevertheless “biblical evidence leads us to the conclusion that the Flood may have occurred as much as 3,000 to 5,000 years before Abraham” (Whitcomb 1986, p.33; Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.489).

4. The time from the birth of Abraham to the birth of Jesus is approximately 2,162 years (Morris 1976, p.309).
5. The birth of Jesus to current day is approximately 2,017 years.
6. The total number of years from the creation of the earth and its inhabitants is approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years.⁵ “The Bible will not support a date for the creation of man earlier than about 10,000BC” (Morris 1976, p.45).

The similarities between the chronogenealogical perspective and the non-chronogenealogical perspective are that they both insist on a grammatico-historical hermeneutic, narrative genre in Genesis 1–11, and a young earth not to exceed 12,000 years. Where they are divided is in their belief of potential genealogical gaps that “would not violate hermeneutical principles” (T. Davis, pers. comm.). This, nevertheless, seems to be a strong possibility, especially in Genesis 11 (Morris 1976, p.284; Whitcomb 1986, p.133) and worthy of investigation. Between the two authors—Whitcomb and Morris—Morris does not deny that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 may have gaps; nonetheless, he crafts his choice of words in such a way that his endorsement rings almost hollow, as if he wished he did not have to leave that door open. This leaves the main proponent of the non-chronogenealogical perspective to be Whitcomb with support by J. Davis⁶, by T. Davis⁷, and with marginal support from Morris.

For 38 years, Dr. John Whitcomb was an Old Testament professor at Grace Theological Seminary. He, along with Morris, wrote the groundbreaking book *The Genesis Flood* (Whitcomb and Morris 1961), which sparked the modern young-earth creationist movement. Since his retirement over 20 years ago, Whitcomb has continued to speak on the topic of the early earth and the Flood. While at Word of Life Bible Institute in Pottersville, New York, I had the privilege

⁴ Jones (2005, pp.33–36) who holds to a chronogenealogical perspective affirms that Cainan was both not originally listed in the Hebrew Masoretic text and was originally listed in the Greek New Testament text. Jones believes the Greek New Testament lists Cainan to highlight that the blessing was passed over him to his son(?) Shelah (Jones 2005, p.34). Also see Freeman 2007 to ascertain an additional perspective on chronogenealogical perspective genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11.

⁵ John J. Davis a young-earth creationist purports that the Creation date could be closer to 20,000 BC, thus potentially 8,000 years outside the current limits of young-earth creationism. I argue in this article that there are biblical patterns that limit the extent of time that can be reasonably inserted in Genesis 5 and 11 without causing harm to the text. His creation date would seem to stretch the credibility of the text beyond what is allowed (assuming that the non-chronogenealogical perspective is the correct view).

⁶ See footnotes 2 and 5.

⁷ Tom Davis advocates a creation date of Adam of 10,000 to 12,000BC, thus potentially 2,000 years outside the current limits of young-earth creationism. Word of Life Bible Institute is listed on Answers in Genesis Creation College link (<http://www.answersingenesis.org/colleges/>) which means the president of Word of Life Bible Institute has affirmed the following statement: “Scripture teaches a recent origin for man and the whole creation, spanning approximately 4,000 years from Creation to Christ.”

of listening to Dr. Whitcomb speak as a guest lecturer on this very topic. He was firm in what he believed and presented a clear talk on the reasons for holding to a young-earth position.

He postulates a few reasons that there could be gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 (but mainly Genesis 11). First, he identifies evidence of gaps in other genealogies in the Old Testament; second, the best Greek manuscripts list Cainan in Luke 3:36; third, Cainan, as listed in Luke 3:36, would provide symmetry to ten generations in chapters 5 and 11 of Genesis; fourth, the unlikelihood that Noah lived 55+ years after the birth of Abraham; fifth, drastic drop in age in Genesis 11:18; and sixth גר (beget) and בן (son) can sometimes mean descendant.

Old Testament Evidence of Genealogical Gaps

Matthew 1:8 states that Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. The first two were father and son relationships, whereas the last one, Joram and Uzziah, was the great-great grandfather and great-great grandson. There were three generations listed between these last two kings. Part of the reason for this rendering was that Matthew was creating three 14-generational links from Abraham to David, David to Babylon, and Babylon to Jesus. Whitcomb (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, pp.475–476) argues that here is an example where literary symmetry influenced how the author decided to list the genealogies. Thus, it is possible that there are genealogical gaps of a similar type that may be part of Genesis 5 and 11. T. Davis adds

No one seems to have addressed the issue of sexual maturity in the ancient Biblical world. It appears that Adam had Cain and Abel within the first several years of his existence but all the other men in the list are over 50 years of age when they had their “first” (?) child. Seems to me that not only are we skipping some generations but that we are ignoring earlier children to announce the birth of a subsequent child that was the significant next-link in the chain (T. Davis, pers. comm.).

A second example is 1 Chronicles 26:24 where the text declares that “Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was was overseer of the treasuries.” When investigated, the gap between Gershom (the son of Moses) and Shebuel (officer of the treasure for King David) was over 400 years. Thus, it is possible that this type of genealogical gap may be part of Genesis 5 and 11.

A third example can be found in Exodus 6:20, which states that

...Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father’s sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred

and thirty-seven.

Whitcomb comments that the

manner [is] strikingly similar to that of the genealogy of Genesis 5. So it is with profound amazement that we turn to Numbers 3:17–19, 27–28, and discover that in the days of Moses that...the families of Amram’s three brothers numbered 8,600! (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.481)

He continues by suggesting that

unless we are willing to grant that the first cousins of Moses and Aaron had over 8,500 living male offspring, we must admit that Amram was an *ancestor* (emphasis of Whitcomb) of Moses and Aaron, separated [...] by [...] 300 years (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.481).

Ozzane rebuts Whitcomb’s evidence, based upon Israel living in Egypt around 215 years before the Exodus, and demonstrates that Kohath—the grandfather of Moses could have had a family numbering 8,600.

Supposing that Amram was born fifty-five years after the descent into Egypt and forty years constitute a generation, it is only necessary to allocate seven males to a family (Butt, Bass, and Thompson 2002)

to arrive at 8,600. With 160 years remaining before the Exodus Moses could have had seven brothers during the first 40 years, then 49 nephews during the second 40 years, then 343 great-nephews the third 40 years, and then 2,401 great-great-nephews during the last 40 years. This number could be multiplied by the four sons of Kohath—Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel to reach the numerical value calculated in Numbers 3:28.

Archer disagrees and believes the sojourn in Egypt lasted 430 years (Archer 2007, p.194) and he notes that 1 Chronicles 7:25 records nine or ten generations between Joseph and Joshua for that 430-year period of time while 1 Chronicles 6:1–3 only records four generations between Levi to Moses for the same period of time. This, for Archer, is a clear indication that Exodus 6:16–20 is not a full genealogy and that Amram is not the parent of Moses but rather an ancestor. The difficulty with upholding this view is that the author of the Hebrew Scriptures records at least three separate times that Amram is the father of Moses (Numbers 26:59, 1 Chronicles 6:3, 23:12). With regard to the generations listed in 1 Chronicles 7:25 if Israel sojourned in Egypt 430 years (Archer 2007, p.194; Davis 1984, p.33) and not 215 years (Butt, Bass, and Thompson 2002) then the nine or ten generations fit quite well. However, if the duration is only 215 years then 1 Chronicles 7:25 becomes more difficult to explain if a generation is about 40 years. The purpose of the non-chronogenealogical perspective is to show some examples where the text seems to indicate that the authors of particular

books of the Bible skipped generations for literary purposes. If this is accurate then there could be gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. Next I will look at how the non-chronogenealogical perspective proponents interpret Luke 3:36 which according to them would seem to indicate a genealogical gap in Genesis 11.

Cainan in Luke 3:36

Does Cainan belong in the genealogical listing of Luke 3:36, thus allowing for the possibility of a gap in Genesis 11? When evaluating this passage based upon the number of Greek manuscripts in favor or against the insertion of Cainan, the evidence might not be as clear cut as non-chronogenealogical perspective proponents would desire. Listed below are the Greek manuscripts that favor the insertion of Cainan in Luke 3:36 and those manuscripts that favor the omission of Cainan. To assist the reader each manuscript is signified with a symbol and labeled with the century that New Testament scholars believe it should be dated. For example \aleph which is called Codex Sinaiticus is dated a fourth century manuscript (Metzger 1992, p. 42).⁸

Witnesses for Each Reading

For the insertion of Cainan: \aleph (fourth), B (fourth), A, (fifth), L (eighth) 33 (ninth), the majority of all Greek manuscripts, and Philoxenian Syriac Bible version (sixth).

For the omission of Cainan: P⁷⁵ (AD 175–225) and D (fifth).

Based upon the external evidence the insertion of Cainan should be considered (although not conclusively) because of

1. Date and character are supported by the three prominent manuscripts, Codex \aleph , B and A. The first two are Alexandrian text types from the fourth century, and the third is a Byzantine text type from the fifth century. However, the omission of Cainan is found in P⁷⁵ a second century papyri of the Alexandrian text type dating back as far as AD 175–225, which is the earliest known copy of the Gospel of Luke. This would mean that as much as 200 years before Codex \aleph the Gospel of Luke manuscript did not contain the insertion of Cainan. In addition to P⁷⁵, there is the manuscript D—a fifth century western text type.
2. Genealogical solidarity favors the insertion of Cainan with more manuscript evidence from Alexandrian and Byzantine text families than the two manuscripts in favor of the omission.
3. Geographical distribution would also favor the insertion because of it being found in the regions

where Alexandrian, Byzantine, a majority of Greek manuscripts, and Syriac manuscripts have been located, although the omission does have Alexandrian and Western text type, albeit only one of each.

The internal evidence seems to side with the omission. To side with the omission of Cainan is more probable because the original text of Luke 3:36 would have been written in Uncial form. Thus, originally the Greek manuscript might have looked like this:

TOUSAROUCTOURAGAUTOUFALEGTOUEBERTOUSALATOUKAINAN
TOUARFAXADTOUSHMTOUNWETOULAMECTOUMAQOUSALA
TOUENWC TOUIAREDTOUMALEHLEHTOUKAINAN
TOUENWSTOUSHQTOUADAMTOUQEOU

If the original manuscript of Luke did not include the first TOUKAINAN (of Cainan), but the copyist looked at the third line, it is possible that an unintentional change known as dittography occurred. Dittography is when the

eye of the scribe picked up the same word or group of words a second time and as a result copied twice what should have appeared only once (Metzger 1992, p. 190).

However, if the first line of original manuscript of Luke did not include Cainan it would be seem unlikely that the scribe would have inserted Cainan in the first line as a result of the third line read. Therefore; the more probable reading would be the harder reading—the omission of Cainan which can more easily explain the textual variation.

Conclusion of the Evaluation of the Textual Apparatus of Luke 3:36

With relatively strong external evidence for the insertion as well as relatively strong external evidence for the omission and rather weak internal evidence for the insertion, a verdict that is in favor of the omission of Cainan seems more probable. T. Davis argues against this conclusion with this commentary against Sarfati (2004) who concluded that the second Cainan was not part of the original Gospel of Luke.

He [Sarfati] wants to dismiss it as a scribal error but it isn't even footnoted in the UBS Text as questionable, nor mentioned in the UBS Textual Commentary by Bruce Metzger as a variant (T. Davis, pers. comm.). T. Davis' point is that the United Bible Societies' *Textual Commentary* which was written to help Greek scholars and students ascertain which variants within the Greek manuscripts are important to discuss does not include Luke 3:36 as a variant to evaluate. If the insertion of Cainan in Luke 3:36 is as suspect as the chronogenealogical perspective is suggesting how was this textual variant overlooked by the late Dr. Bruce Metzger? The short answer is that Metzger missed

⁸ For further clarification of each Greek manuscript see Metzger 1992, pp. 36–92.

this textual variant and although his commentary is normally helpful, this time his book shed no light and the reader is required to research the textual variation on his own. In addition for the omission is Africanus who lived during the early to mid-third century and would have had access to a copy of the Septuagint, Hebrew Text, and the Gospel of Luke yet does not mention the second Cainan (Schaff 1885) and Josephus who lived in the first century and would have had access to a copy of the Septuagint and Hebrew Text did not list a second Cainan (Josephus 1897).

Davis (1984, p.30); T. Davis (pers. comm.) and Whitcomb (1961, pp.475–476) conclude differently and believe that the insertion of the second Cainan was part of the original text of the Gospel of Luke and gives evidence that Genesis 11 originally included Cainan. Assuming the insertion is included allows non-chronogenealogical perspective proponents to develop their next line of argument—the symmetry of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

Symmetry of Genesis 5 and 11

The non-chronogenealogical perspective affirms that the insertion of Cainan in Luke 3:36 was originally part of the inspired Greek Scriptures and that it was originally part of the Hebrew Scriptures in Genesis 11. Whitcomb and Morris pronounce that “the Septuagint does give us the full list of names as they appeared in the original Hebrew text” (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 475). They further declare that if Cainan is included in the genealogical list in Genesis 11, then there is symmetry with the genealogical list in Genesis 5. Davis adds

ten generations are listed in this chapter, perhaps to make it parallel to chapter 5 [and] it seems obvious that these genealogical lists were schematically arranged and contained considerable gaps (Davis 1984, p. 151).

The following list demonstrates the symmetry of the

Adam	Shem
Seth	Arphaxad
Enosh	Cainan
Kenan	Shelah
Mahalalel	Eber
Jared	Peleg
Enoch	Reu
Methuselah	Serug
Lamech	Serug
Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japeth)	Terah (Abram, Nahor, and Haran)

ten patriarchs based upon the insertion of Cainan and with the tenth having three sons:

If this was the original intention of the author of Genesis based upon the insertion of Cainan, then the aid to memorization would seem be more plausible that Moses had originally included Cainan rather than omitted his name. However, the insertion of Cainan as described above doesn’t seem to be part of the original Hebrew nor Greek text. Whitcomb and

Morris still believe there is symmetry with Cainan.

Even if the name of Cainan were not in the original text, the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 would still be symmetrical: Adam to Noah, ten generations; and Shem to Abram, ten generations (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 476).

The difficulty with this position is “that the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies are not really symmetrical” (Freeman 2007). Adam to Noah (and his three sons) is ten generations in Genesis 5 but Genesis 11 lists nine generations Shem to Terah (and his three sons). To use the same symmetry that Whitcomb suggests would be 11 generations from Adam to Shem (the son of Noah) compared to ten generations from Shem to Abraham (the son of Terah). The author of Genesis could be implying some similarity in the early chapters of Genesis as he does with the two Lamechs speaking in Genesis 4 and 5 (T. Davis, pers. comm.) or schematic arrangement with the ending of Noah and his three sons in Genesis 5 and ending with Terah and his three sons in Genesis 11 but to argue for symmetry between both passages is not well supported.

Noah lived 55+ years after the birth of Abraham

If the genealogies of Genesis 11 are strictly applied, then according to the timeline of Genesis, Noah lived 58 years after the birth of Abraham, and Shem lived 35 more years after the death of Abraham. This would also signify that Shem lived 110 years into Isaac’s life and for 50 years into Jacob’s life. This idea might not be difficult to comprehend, except that Joshua 24:2 reveals that Terah the father of Abraham served other gods. Whitcomb and Morris add

If all the postdiluvian patriarchs including Noah and Shem, were still living in Abram’s day, this statement implies that they had all fallen into idolatry by then (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 478).

The strict linear chronology of the chronogenealogical perspective would seem to indicate that Noah’s last years of his life were serving pagan gods. However, the author of Genesis emphasized that Lamech prophesied that Noah would give rest (Genesis 5:29), that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8) during a time of tremendous wickedness, God established a covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18), and the New Testament underscores that Noah preached the coming judgment of God (2 Peter 2:5). This appears to press credulity of the reader beyond a breaking point that righteous Noah, if he were alive during the life of Abraham, would not have influenced his Messianic lineage. The non-chronogenealogical perspective proponents would argue that this also appears to point towards the assertion of genealogical gaps in the Old Testament narrative.

An additional point to support genealogical gaps

is the confusion of Genesis 11:26, which gives the impression that Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was born, in comparison to the actual age of Terah based upon Genesis 11:32 and Genesis 12:4. Genesis 11:26 exclaims that Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran at the age of 70. It is possible that they were triplets; however, Terah was not 70 when Abraham was born. Terah died at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:32), and then, Abraham left for Canaan, at which point Abraham is listed as being 75 years old. This means that Abraham was born when Terah was 130 years old, thus Nahor and Haran were twins or one of them was born when Terah was 70. The non-chronogenealogical perspective argues that Abraham was listed first because of the significance in the story line of the Messiah (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 479). Considering this, Whitcomb proposes that this same type of literary device could have been designed for the preceding patriarchs, leaving genealogical gaps between Noah and Abraham (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 480). The difficulty of this assertion is that the length of time is only 60 years. This is not a literary device which would lead the reader to believe that hundreds or even thousands of years could be inserted into past genealogies. Because the reader already knows the time span this option does not seem as viable as Whitcomb and Morris would like to suggest.

Drastic Drop in Age for Genesis 11:18

The next argument that the non-chronogenealogical perspective advocates is the dramatic decrease in the ages of the patriarchs, stated in Genesis 11:28 and the reason suggested by Genesis 10:25. Shem lived 600 years, Arpachshad lived 438 years, Shelah lived 433 years, Eber lived 468 years and during his life a division happened in the earth (Genesis 10:25), which resulted in Peleg living to only 239 years. The following patriarchs continued with similar ages. The view that those holding to the non-chronogenealogical perspective (and many proponents of the chronogenealogical perspective) affirm is that Genesis 10:25 is the literary clue for when God confused the languages at the tower of Babel. Whitcomb and Morris believe that the Tower of Babel happened sometime during the lifetime of Peleg (who lived 239 years) which would mean that Abraham followed God into an ancient world that had only existed for no more than 200 years. Yet in Genesis 10:5, 20, and 31 these verses seem to indicate otherwise,

the Bible implies that the world of Abram's day, with its civilizations and cities, was ancient already; and we are left with the unmistakable impression that its peoples had long since been divided "after their

families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations" (Whitcomb and Morris 1979, p. 478).

Morris adds that

the apparent suddenness of the drop suggests that a gap of unknown duration may have intervened, during which life spans were gradually declining⁹ (Morris 1976, p. 284).

This possibility, along with other arguments, leads those holding to a non-chronogenealogical perspective to another conclusion: that is, there might not always be a father-son relationship listed in Genesis 5 and 11 but that an ancestor-descendant relationship should be regarded as being present.

יָרָה (Beget) and בֵּן (son) Can Sometimes Mean Descendant

The non-chronogenealogical perspective cumulatively concludes, based upon the previous arguments of potential genealogical gaps, that the word יָרָה (that is, to bear, beget, bring forth or to father) and בֵּן (that is, son, grandson, or child) can sometimes mean descendant (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 1996). A couple of examples are Matthew 1:8 where Joram begat¹⁰ (or was an ancestor of) Uzziah but 2 Kings informs the reader that three names are omitted and Ezra 7:1–5 where the phrase "son of" is used to describe the genealogy of Aaron but when compared to 1 Chronicles 6:3–14 the reader will notice that Ezra omits six names that are included in 1 Chronicles. Given this, the non-chronogenealogical perspective suggests that Genesis 5 and 11 may contain the same genealogical gaps which would allow for the age of the earth to exceed the 6,000 plus years that the chronogenealogical perspective espouses. Freeman argues against this view

to change the wording of the formula [in Genesis 5 and 11] from, "When X had lived Y years, he became the father of Z" to "When X had lived Y years, he begat someone in the line of descent that led to Z" would change the author's intended meaning and would constitute a major violation of a well-established hermeneutical principle (Freeman 2007).

T. Davis responds,

Not if the word "father" is regularly used for "ancestor"

and that

there are no other occurrences in Scripture of a list of men with their ages when a particular son was born for exegetes to use in a comparison (T. Davis, pers. comm.).

Thus a non-chronogenealogical perspective would not see a violation of the young-earth creationist hermeneutical principles if the word begat also

⁹ See Menton and Purdom 2010, pp. 129–138. Retrieved from <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/adam-and-noah-live-for-a-genetic-explanation-for-the-sudden-drop-in-the-ages-of-genesis-11>.

¹⁰ This is the Greek translation (γενναω) of the Hebrew word יָרָה.

included the idea of a genealogical gap between “father” and “son.”

Conclusion of the Non-Chronogenealogical Perspective

The non-chronogenealogical perspective allows for potential (though not certain) gaps in the genealogical records of Genesis 5 and 11 based upon the

1. the evidence of gaps in other genealogies in the Old Testament,
2. the best Greek manuscripts listing Cainan in Luke 3:36,
3. Cainan being listed in Luke 3:36 such that symmetry is maintained for ten generations in chapters 5 and 11 of Genesis,
4. the unlikelihood that Noah lived 55+ years after the birth of Abraham,
5. the drastic drop in ages in Genesis 11:18, and
6. the assertion that יָרָא (beget) and בֵּן (son) can sometimes mean descendant. These gaps, without stretching the credibility of the text, could extend the age of Adam upwards of 10,000 to 12,000 years. Yet how does a believer determine which view is correct? And when compared to old earth creationism that dates Adam at least 130,000 years ago and evolutionary theory which dates Adam into the millions the reader might wonder why there is even a debate between a chronogenealogical perspective and non-chronogenealogical perspective.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Chronogenealogical Perspective and the Non-Chronogenealogical Perspective

At one level there is really is not much difference between both views. Each affirms no gaps in Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, six 24-hour days of Creation, a global Flood, and revelational foundation of cosmogony. Choosing which side is correct (or most correct) at times makes me feel like a child having to choose which parent I like the most. I have personally received instruction from both viewpoints and find that I am not convinced that either perspective can provide all the explanatory power to the age of Adam.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Chronogenealogical Perspective

1. The genealogical records in Genesis 5 do not give the impression that there are gaps. Although the author of Genesis does not summarize how many years elapsed from Adam to Noah like the author in Exodus (12:40) and the author in Kings (1 Kings 6:1), he does provide a genealogical list that when calculated ends perfectly with the Flood.
2. The insertion of Cainan in Genesis 5 seems quite dubious based upon the textual evidence to the contrary in the Hebrew and Greek text.
3. There is no symmetry between the Genesis 5

and 11 genealogical list if Cainan is not part of the original text. Whitcomb believes there is still symmetry without Cainan—Adam to Noah, ten generations and Shem to Abram, ten generations. However, when compared to how the author lists the patriarchs in Genesis Adam to Noah (and his three sons) is ten generations in Genesis 5 and Shem to Terah (and his three sons) is nine generations in Genesis 11. To use the same symmetry that Whitcomb suggests would produce 11 generations from Adam to Shem (the son of Noah), compared to ten generations from Shem to Abraham (the son of Terah). The chronogenealogical perspective presents arguments and counterarguments that the non-chronogenealogical perspective has trouble defending with clarity.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Non-Chronogenealogical Perspective

1. Other biblical authors provide evidence that genealogical gaps are used for literary purposes. Matthew 1:8 lists Joram and Uzziah as father and son, however, in 2 Kings they are listed as great-great grandfather and great-great grandson. Non-chronogenealogical proponents believe the author of Genesis has used a similar literary method. This is a valid consideration except that the only way the reader can know that there are gaps is to know that there is a complete record without gaps. When Genesis 5 and 11 is compared to the genealogical lists of 1 Chronicles 1:1–4 and 1:24 they are identical. If there are genealogical gaps the reader would not be able know this from reading the text.
2. If the genealogies of Genesis 11 are strictly applied, then according to the timeline of Genesis, Noah lived 58 years after the birth of Abraham and Shem lived 35 years more after the death of Abraham. To suggest that if Noah’s (a man who found favor in the Lord, a preacher of righteousness, an obedient follower of the Lord, had a covenant established to him by God, and who experienced the global wrath of God [Flood]) life overlapped Abraham he would not have influenced his family seems difficult to comprehend. Joshua reveals that Terah was an idol worshipper (Joshua 24:2) which would imply his father Nahor was as well. At what point did this Messianic seed line turn from Yahweh? Both Noah and Shem, if the genealogies are strictly applied, would seem to indicate that even they were idol worshippers. This appears to indicate that there were gaps in the Genesis 5 genealogies. Although this argument is based mainly upon silence the counterargument could be when the earth was divided (Genesis 10:25) which seems to be when God confused his people at the Tower of Babel that Noah and Shem were separated from their family

lineage. This could explain why Terah and mostly likely Nahor were idol worshippers and that Noah and Shem had no influence upon Abraham. This counterargument is also proposed from silence leaving us unsure as to which view is correct. A clue might be to compare the father and son relationship between Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When considering them on the whole Abraham seems to be non-existent in the life of Isaac after his marriage to Rebekah, and Isaac seems to be equally absent after he sends Jacob to Laban. The main reason is that both times the son was physically living in a different land from his father. This may give an explanation as to why Terah is an idol worshipper and Noah and Shem are still alive—Terah moved away from the family and adopted the pagan customs of the land (compare Genesis 31:19).

3. The author of Genesis does not summarize the years of Adam to Abraham like other biblical authors do for other periods of time. The author of Exodus, who is assumed to be the same author of Genesis, summarizes the time that Israel lived in Egypt (Genesis 12:40) and the author of 1 Kings summarizes the time from Israel leaving Egypt to Solomon building the temple (Genesis 6:1). This lack of calculation may indicate that the author of Genesis did not have access to the duration of time from Adam to Abraham, although this would seem almost pointless to assume since the divine author could have relayed this accurately. Thus for some reason the author (divine and human) chose not to record the summarization of time from Adam to Abraham. The chronogenealogical perspective argues that this timeline is found in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and they may be correct. Nevertheless, to be fully confident without a summarization should cause us to pause and consider the non-chronogenealogical perspective as a possibility for reading Genesis 5 and 11.
4. The verb “to beget” and the noun “son of” can sometimes mean descendant. This is already shown to be true in Matthew 1:8 and in a comparison of Ezra 7:1–5 and 1 Chronicles 6:3–14. Both words can mean ancestor or descendant rather than a direct father and son relationship. If Genesis 5 and 11 are designed in this literary manner then the non-chronogenealogical perspective is correct and the case is closed—there are genealogical gaps. And T. Davis is correct “there are no other occurrences in Scripture of a list of men with their ages when a particular son was born for exegetes to use in a comparison” (T. Davis, pers. comm.). However, this view is then not falsifiable

and the reader is left never knowing for sure if there are gaps or not. The non-chronogenealogical perspective proponents maybe correct that there are gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 but if the only place in the Scriptures where this could be compared is the very passage in question then how does the reader know unless a presupposition is granted first? A look at Genesis 5 reveals that with full certainty Adam and Seth were father and son (Genesis 4:25), Lamech was the father of Noah (Genesis 5:28) and Noah was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 6:10). With a high degree of certainty Jude 1:14 declares that Enoch was seventh from Adam and when compared to Genesis 5 he would seem to be either the son of Jared or the father of Methuselah. This takes the ten generations in Genesis 5 and trims them down to six generations (Seth to Enosh, Enosh to Cainan, Cainan to Mahalalel, Mahalalel to Jared, either Jared to Enoch or Enoch to Methuselah, and Methuselah to Lamech). Taking 1 Chronicles 26:24 as the upper limit of genealogical gaps between descendants (400 years between Gershom and Shebuel) then at most there might be 2,400 years of gap in Genesis 5. Although, the burden of proof rests upon the non-chronogenealogical perspective to show in Genesis where such gaps are certain when they do not have additional evidence of a genealogical list that contains more names than the ten already listed. In regards to Genesis 11, the non-chronogenealogical perspective may have more solid footing to stand upon. This is based upon the time when the earth was divided (Genesis 10:25), ages decreased significantly (Genesis 11:16ff), the chronogenealogical perspective’s strict chronology that Noah lived 58 years into the life of Abraham and Shem lived 50 years into the life Jacob, and the elapsed years between when the Tower of Babel and the life Abraham do not allow for enough time for civilization to develop. J. Davis underscores “stratified mounds in the Mesopotamia and Palestine show an unbroken sequence of occupation as far back as 7000 BC” (Davis 1984, p. 30). T. Davis based upon “pottery style dating and carbon-14 dating suggests that the flood took place sometime from 10,000 to 8000 BC” (T. Davis, pers. comm.). Does this mean that there are 5,000 to 6,000 years of gaps in Genesis 11 during a period which the chronogenealogical perspective demands is 352 years? Based upon the strict reading of Genesis 11 gaps would not be permitted; however, if there are gaps and we used the 400-year pattern found in 1 Chronicles 26:24 of the seven generations in Genesis 11¹¹ then the

¹¹ Excluded is Shem to Arphaxad because they are father and son and Terah to Abraham because they are father and son.

most that could be inserted would be about 2,800 years.

Summary

Within the two dominant perspectives of the young-earth creationist position, the chronogenealogical perspective teaches that the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies are consecutive without any gaps, whereas the non-chronogenealogical perspective teaches that the Bible allows for an interpretation of these passages in which there could be potential genealogical gaps. Both groups affirm the same hermeneutical approach of interpreting the Scripture, which is a normal, plain, and grammatico-historical understanding the Scriptures. Authorial intent is significant for capturing the meaning, for the meaning is bound by that which the author intended to communicate. This assertion is based upon the meaning assigned to the words within a particular context. Meaning cannot be defined by the reader or else the authorial meaning is lost. The genre of Genesis is narrative; therefore, the interpretation would be no different than how a reader would elucidate meaning from a normal pericope found in other Old Testament historical narrative literature.

The age of Adam according to the chronogenealogical perspective is around 6,017 years. This conclusion is based upon the following six steps which, when summed together, give a total number of years.

1. The initiation of Creation until the end of the end of Day Six was six 24-hour periods of time.
2. Day Six of the Creation event until Noah entered the Ark was approximately 1,656 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, p. 19).
3. The day Noah entered the Ark until the birth of Abraham was approximately 352 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, pp. 19, 22).
4. The birth of Abraham to the birth of Jesus was approximately 1,992 years (Jones 2005, p. 27; Ussher 2007, p. 779).
5. The birth of Jesus to current day is approximately 2,017 years.
6. The sum total for the age of the earth from a strictly biblical perspective is approximately 6,017 years.

The age of Adam according to the non-chronogenealogical perspective is approximately 6,000 to 12,000 years based upon a similar understanding of Genesis 1–11, but with some different potential conclusions.

1. The initiation of Creation until the end of the end of Day Six was six 24-hour periods of time.
2. Day Six of the Creation event until Noah entered the Ark was approximately 1,656 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, p. 19) however, a “possibility which perhaps cannot be ruled out completely” is

that genealogical gaps could exist (Morris 1976, p. 154).

3. The day Noah entered the Ark until the birth of Abraham was approximately 352 years (Jones 2005, p. 26; Ussher 2007, pp. 19, 22) nevertheless “biblical evidence leads us to the conclusion that the Flood may have occurred as much as 3,000 to 5,000 years before Abraham” (Whitcomb 1986, p. 133; Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p. 489).
4. The time from the birth of Abraham to the birth of Jesus is approximately 2,162 years (Morris 1976, p. 309).
5. The birth of Jesus to current day is approximately 2,017 years.
6. The total number of years from the creation of the earth and its inhabitants is approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years. “The Bible will not support a date for the creation of man earlier than about 10,000BC” (Morris 1976, p. 45).

Closing Comments

I have attempted to represent both viewpoints fairly and critique with equal vigor. My theological heritage is indebted to both, initially under the teaching of Whitcomb and T. Davis and continuing with Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis. My own perspective is that I am a combination of chronogenealogical perspective and non-chronogenealogical perspective. I struggle with seeing how the Scriptures would permit genealogical gaps in Genesis 5 while I am cautiously open to possible genealogical gaps in Genesis 11. Both viewpoints make strong arguments for their positions. The most dominant position, as endorsed by Answers in Genesis, is the chronogenealogical perspective; although they acknowledge that other young-earth creationists believe that Adam could be as old as 12,000 years (Hodge 2010). The non-chronogenealogical perspective is mainly supported by Drs. Whitcomb, J. Davis, T. Davis, and with a less-than-enthusiastic approval from Dr. Morris. They are in the minority when it comes to published books and journal articles but my hunch is that their perspective is viewed no different by the general public than chronogenealogical perspective. As I close, the thoughts of my Bible college professor seem appropriate and hopefully helpful for you as you determine which view(s) you will embrace. His sentiment to me in an email was that “it is perfectly fine for you to prefer to view Genesis 10 and 11 through the lens of chronogenealogical perspective but the arguments for non-chronogenealogical perspective should cause you to be gracious to those who take a differing view.” May you draw a conclusion of which interpretation you espouse and then realize that your differences with the other viewpoint should not cause

division but rather a healthy—gracious respect for where you disagree.

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