

article<sup>1</sup> is appropriate at this late point, I think.

First, Watson was absolutely correct in calling me on the carpet<sup>2</sup> regarding my comments in my original Letter to the Editor about his work.<sup>3</sup> He correctly notes that I said that 'the whole of the context of Genesis 10-11 is on Mesopotamia' citing Genesis 10:15-20 as an obvious example of how my statement is false. I admit *mea culpa*. I should have written:

*'the whole of the context of Genesis 10-11 is on Mesopotamia as the originating point for the spread of the nations described therein'.*

On the other hand, the immediate context of Genesis 10:21-31 seems to point to Mesopotamian regions of Elam (Iraq-Iran today), Asshur (Iraq) and Aram (Syria), and it is in this context that Peleg is named. The reader may wish to consult further with Allen P. Ross on this issue.<sup>4</sup>

Too, Watson claims to have utilised Strong's gloss for *plg* as a channel in his article. The problem as I see it here is two-fold. First, he presents the gloss earthquake as the favoured reading. Second, he injects the further idea of the channel being filled with sea water because of the tectonic events. This is going too far in imposing a scientific model on the semantic field of *plg*, which basically means a channel or canal dug for irrigation. One would not like to use sea water for this purpose.

As I understand the level of Biblical scholarship coming from both the progressive creationist (and theistic evolutionist) and young-Earth perspectives, I see two problems. Both of these must be addressed on either side of the issue. First, many on both sides act in seeming ignorance (generally speaking) of scholarship done by Biblical scholars in basic grammar, syntax, etymologies and semantics. Our tendency is to think that every believer can properly interpret the Word of God. While this may be theoretically true, what has resulted is an amazing amount of difference of opinions. I think that

perhaps we often involve ourselves in eisegesis to support our scientific models rather than yielding our models to solid exegesis.

This tendency may be symptomatic of the second problem: both sides seem to be placing natural theology (general revelation) on the same plane as the supernatural (special revelation). This is certainly the case for the progressive creationists and increasingly the case of the young-Earthers. As a Biblical scholar and conservative theologian, I would not yield the testimony of God's Word to the testimony of God's world. Though both are subject to interpretation, the Word is infallible, whereas the world itself is fallen, filled with fallen, finite people with limited capacity for interpreting the vast amount of data which confronts us in nature.

Because of this I would appeal to creation scientists to thoroughly

employ Biblical scholars and scholarship in an effort to develop scientific models which are consistent with the Biblical records as interpreted within the grammatical-historical milieu in which they were written, and cease basing those same models on a stroll through **Strong's Concordance** alone.

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## REFERENCES

1. Watson, J. A., 1997. The division of the Earth in Peleg's days: tectonic or linguistic? *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(1):71-75.
2. Watson, J. A., 1997. Earth's division in Peleg's day. *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(1)325.
3. Fouts, D. M., 1997. Earth's division in Peleg's day. *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(3)323.
4. Ross, A. P., 1988. **Creation and Blessing**, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 221-232.

## CAINAN OF LUKE 3:36

Dear Editor,

Evangelicals should be concerned with Derel Briarley's letter in *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(3):328. In his attempt to reconcile Luke 3:36 and Genesis 11:12, he theorises that Luke used an inaccurate source to compile his genealogy. This blatantly contradicts the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture (II Timothy 3:15-17). Certainly the Holy Spirit sometimes inspired the writers to consult sources

(for example, Luke 1:1-4), but surely we can believe that He would have made sure the sources were **accurate** in the places cited.

Note that Henry Morris in his later work, **The Genesis Record**,<sup>1</sup> has a different solution to the Cainan problem. He points out that it could not be an error in the God-breathed original autographs of Scripture, but one of the extremely few copyist's errors in the manuscripts available today. Note that the Greek New Testament was originally written without punctuation or spaces between words. So Luke 3:35-38 could have

<p>τουσερουχτουραγαυτουφαλεγτουεβερτουσαλα τουαρφαξαδτουσημουνωετουλαμεχ τουμαθουσαλατουενωχτουιαρεδτουμαελτουκαιναν τουενωστουσηθουαδαμτουθεου</p>
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Table 1. Probable original Greek New Testament text of Luke 3:35-38.

<p>τουσερουχτουραγαυτουφαλεγτουεβερτουσαλατουκαιναν τουαρφαξαδτουσημουνωετουλαμεχ τουμαθουσαλατουενωχτουιαρεδτουμαελτουκαιναν τουενωστουσηθουαδαμτουθεου</p>
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Table 2. Probable original Greek New Testament text of Luke 3:35-38 with possible copyist insertion.

been originally written as in Table 1. In this manuscript,  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\nu\alpha\nu$  (*the son of Cainan*) could have been on the end of the third line.

But suppose an early copyist was copying the first line, and his eyes glanced at the end of the third line at  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\nu\alpha\nu$ . Then he could have written it on the first line as well, as shown in Table 2.

Now, if a scribe copying the Septuagint (LXX) had an errant manuscript of Luke, he might have inserted the name Cainan into his copy. The oldest manuscripts of the LXX do not have the name in Genesis 11.

As Morris points out, this is the likely source of the error. Knowing the meticulous accuracy of Hebrew copyists, it is less likely that the first 'Cainan' was left out in the Hebrew (and Samaritan) Old Testament manuscripts than Gentile copyists adding it to Greek New Testament manuscripts, then to the LXX. It is especially unlikely that the Hebrew Genesis manuscripts are wrong, because they are corroborated by I Chronicles 1:18.

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## REFERENCE

1. Morris, H. M., 1976. *The Genesis Record*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 281-282.

## HUMANISM AND MODERN MATHEMATICS

Dear Editor,

The paper in this issue by Stephen Ferguson (pp. 107-114) is critical of my paper entitled 'Humanism and modern mathematics' published in 1988.<sup>1</sup>

There are a few helpful points which Ferguson mentions. When researching for my paper, I didn't come across Platonism, nor Predicativism. These appear to have some merit, and

I will have to do further reading, and keep an eye out for these strands of mathematical thought. Ferguson has also chosen wording in some instances which improves on the wording I used, to express the ideas I was trying to communicate. I do believe that modern mathematics is 'irreverent in its treatment of the infinite' (p. 108); and I do assume that mathematics is a structure having an independent existence, and every bit as real as the rest of God's creation (p. 112).

On the other side of the coin though, I have many points of disagreement with Ferguson. May I firstly explain my motivation in preparing the paper.

It seemed to me that some people criticise Christianity for the allegedly anti-mathematical nature of the Christian doctrine of the trinity; and mathematicians themselves seem to endorse the difficulty when they define mathematics as '*a system of necessary truths, which must be true in any possible world*'. I believed I had a refutation for this attack, so started research into the subject to prepare a paper. But in the course of my research I came across even more serious problems. For one thing, I found that modern mathematics is divided into a number of factions, who do not agree on what is acceptable and what isn't. Until late last century, mathematics embodied a collection of **truths** on which all rational people could agree; but in the twentieth century, it consists of a number of schools of thought each blindly following its own leader. In my opinion, this is a disaster; mathematics needs to be restored to a unified position. And the biggest problem is that mathematicians no longer believe they can find absolute truths. This major problem is evident from this lengthy passage by Eric Temple Bell, a very highly regarded modern historian of mathematics:-

*'Up until the early decades of the twentieth century it was quite commonly thought that mathematics has a peculiar kind of truth not shared by other human*

*knowledge. For example, E. Everett (1794-1865) expressed the popular conception of mathematical truth as follows: "In the pure mathematics we contemplate absolute truths, which existed in the Divine Mind before the morning stars sang together, and which will continue to exist there, when the last of their radiant host shall have fallen from heaven*

*One modern instance of the same sort of thing, and we shall pass on to something more profitable. The astronomer and physicist J. H. Jeans (1877-1946) declared in 1930, "the Great Architect of the Universe now appears as a pure mathematician". . .*

*Against all the senseless rhetoric that has been wafted like incense before the high altar of "Mathematical Truth", let us put the considered verdict of the last of the mathematical giants from the nineteenth century. Mathematics, according to D. Hilbert (1862-1943), is nothing more than a game played according to certain simple rules with meaningless marks on paper . . . This is rather a comedown from the architecture of the universe, but it is the final dry flower of centuries of growth. The **meaning** of mathematics has nothing to do with the game, as such, and pure mathematicians pass outside their proper domain when they attempt to give the marks meanings. Without assenting to this drastic devaluation of mathematical truth, let us see what brought it about. . . It is like chess. The "elements" in chess are the thirty-two chessmen. The postulates of chess are the statements of the moves a player can make and of what is to happen if certain other things happen. . . . Only a very original philosopher would dream of asking whether a particular game of chess was "true". The sensible question would be, "Was the game played according to the rules? ". . .*