

➤ **2 Sam. 21:19** In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

➤ **1 Chr. 20:5** In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

The second is likely to be the correctly preserved transcription. Inerrantist Hebrew scholar Gleason Archer provides a plausible explanation how the first passage could arise by scribal error:²

1. a copyist mistook the sign of the direct object before *Lahmi*, which was '-t, for a b-t or b-y-t (the Hebrew original only has consonants). This results in *Bêt hal-Lahmî* ('the Bethlehemite');
2. the copyist also misread the word for 'brother' (אָח '-h) as the sign of the direct object (אָח '-t) before 'Goliath' (g-l-y-t). This made 'Goliath' the object of 'killed' instead of 'brother' as per the original reading in Chronicles;
3. the word 'weavers' ('-r-g-ym) was after 'a beam' (so 'a beam of weavers'). But it was misplaced to come after 'Elhanan ben Yair' making the patronymic *ben Y'-r-y '-r--giym* 'son of the forests of weavers', a most implausible name for a father!

Certainly, the preservation of Scripture is far higher than any other ancient document. Appeals to copyist error should be sparing and only with objective justification.

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References

1. See discussion in Holding, J.P., Copyist errors and estimations in the text of the Bible, <www.tektonics.org/copyisterrors.html>.
2. Archer, Gleason L., Jr., *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 178, 179, 1982.

Fr Seraphim's Rose's book, Genesis, Creation and Early Man

In my review of Fr Seraphim's Rose's book, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*¹ I state that Eastern Orthodoxy

'denies the doctrine of original sin, which they wrongly claim was invented by Augustine, although he merely expounded upon the Biblical teaching in passages such as Romans 5:12-19.'

Thanks to criticisms from one reader and after further study, I have seen that this statement is not totally accurate and I wish to correct the wrong impression given. Though rejecting the Augustinian view, EO theologians do believe that Adam's sin affected all his posterity both physically and morally. Man was now subject to disease, pain and death as well as frustration, boredom, depression and inward alienation. The divine image in man was obscured but not obliterated. His free choice has been restricted in its exercise but not destroyed. Original sin means that people are born into an environment where it is easy to do evil and hard to do good, but sinful man is capable of doing some good, although not sufficient to save himself. So, all people automatically inherit Adam's corruption and mortality. But EO rejects the notion of inherited guilt from Adam and insists that every person is guilty by virtue of his own sins, which imitate Adam's.²

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References

1. Mortenson, T., orthodoxy and Genesis: what the fathers really taught, *TJ* 16(3):52, 2002.

2. See Ware, K., *The Orthodox Way*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, pp. 59-62, 1995 and; Ware K., *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, London, pp. 222-224, 1997.

Flood boundary debate

Concerning the current Flood Geology debate, my own school text book will feature both views.

However a number of issues trouble me, regarding the Recolonisation view. Chief among these is exemplified by Robinson's admission that 'Were there no geological or archaeological evidence to bear on the question, the genealogy might be complete and thus provide the basis for an absolute chronology, but it cannot, exegetically, be assumed to be complete.'

For all the detail of Robinson's arguments, I would need more than external scientific theory to move me from a plain reading of what scripture says. Only an acknowledgement that the textual context required an alternative meaning would suffice. But the context makes no such demands. I am bound to say, therefore, that we have been here before, in terms of re-interpreting scripture to fit with the theories of the age.

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Flood models and chronogenealogy

It appears that only an interpretative whisker separates the 'Main Flood' adherents from those who prefer the 'Recolonisation model' in their understanding of Genesis.

Your comments at the end of the correspondence between Carl Froede and Steven Robinson imply that discussion on the attractive option of Recolonisation ends because the

Genesis genealogies have ‘no gaps’. Or in other words the meaning of the Hebrew word *yalad*, translated in the KJV ‘begat’, means and can only mean ‘was the biological father of’.

As we all believe the Bible is an inspired whole, is that the meaning of *yalad* throughout the Old Testament?

Previous correspondents have noted that Paul in Galatians 3:17 implies a 430 year gap between the giving of the promise to Abraham and the Exodus. However the promise given to Abraham was ‘Know for certain that your descendants we be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated 400 years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves and afterwards they will come out with great possessions’ (Genesis 15:13). So surely Paul is referring to the time between the initial fulfilment of God’s promise to Abraham and the giving of the law. Any interpretation of Paul’s 430 years as being from the birth of Isaac or the beginning of Abraham’s sojourn in Canaan would make God’s promise of 400 years of mistreatment very inaccurate.

This being so we can safely take Exodus 12:40 as meaning 430 years from when Jacob and sons arrive in Egypt in the middle of the famine, to the very day that Pharaoh let Moses *et al* go.

If we add to that the length of time that elapsed until Solomon began the Temple, which (1 Kings 6:1) is 480 years; we arrive at 910 years between the arrival in Egypt and the building of the Temple.

How does this effect genealogies and the meaning of *yalad*?

If we assume that Hezron, son of Perez was at least 1 year old on entering Egypt, because he is mentioned in the list of relatives in Genesis 46:12 (he could have been older), and that the 1 Chronicles or Matthew genealogies names are correct after Hezron, we have Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David and Solomon. We know Boaz was older than usual when he married Ruth so may have been 60 at the birth of his

son. Jesse may well have been 50 at the birth of his youngest son, David. And David may have been 52 at Solomon’s birth. Solomon may have been 25 at the start of building the Temple. These being approximately so, that leaves 722 years for the combined begetting dates of Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, and Obed. I somehow think we would have heard that these gentlemen were all 120 at the birth of their named descendant if their feats of fertility were greater than Abraham and Moses.

I am forced to conclude that OT genealogies are meant to be shorthand, naming the important people of the day. So our Royal Family genealogy might read as follows: When Edward 3rd was 29 he begat James 1st, When James 1st was 29 he begat George 3rd, When George 3rd was 28 (via his 3rd son Edward, who was never king) he begat Victoria, when Victoria was 22 she begat Elizabeth 2nd. These take us from 1312 to 1926. The Royal family succession is very complicated during this period as the Genesis genealogies may have been, so only the key people in our discussion need be mentioned.

This can then mean that the period between Noah and Abraham can likewise be longer than by adding the dates together. Between Adam and Noah, we may have less flexibility unless Jude’s mention of Enoch being the 7th generation from Adam is flexible. I am very worried when we become more rigid than the Holy Spirit, who clearly gave us some additions but not others, and gave us the extra Cainan in Luke’s genealogy that I would not want to dismiss lightly as a mere typo.

May God grant that we do not adopt such rigidity that we fail to recognise a Galileo of our day. Galileo was, in my view, correctly censured for going against the plain meaning of Eccles 1:6. The Bible does say that the sun hastens across the sky. Yet for reasons of science, we accept the phenomenological argument and accept that the earth rotates.

Perhaps we can now allow some extra time between Adam and Abraham and see where it leads us.

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Jonathan Sarfati replies:

The editorial comments in that issue refer to my article¹ in the same issue, which addresses most of the points Anthony Bush raises.

No one doubts that *some* genealogies in the Bible have gaps—I even said so. But I explained that none of these gappy genealogies have *the ages of the father at the birth of the next son in line*, as the genealogies from Adam to Abraham do. Nor do I doubt that begetting *in some contexts* can be more than a father-son relationship. However, I showed that in the Genesis 5 and 11 chronologies, the structure of the Hebrew reinforces the direct connection between the father and son. This structure is not evident in the post-Abraham chronologies Mr Bush appeals to. It is folly to take meanings from one context and apply them to a different one. That means we cannot take genealogies where the author intended gaps and apply this to explicitly tight chronologies. It is the same error that day-agers commit—find places in the Bible where day doesn’t mean 24 hours, then claim that it’s OK to bring that interpretation into Genesis 1 where the context forbids it.²

The analogy of the English monarchs is a good example of this faulty thinking. If a historian were to write that when Edward III was 29 he begat James I, who we know from history lived 250 years later, we would cry false and treat anything else by that author as suspect. Is this how we are to read the Bible?

About Cainan, this begs the question of whether the Holy Spirit gave this name in the first place. The very earliest manuscripts and chronologies based on these do not have this extra

Cainan, and I explained how this could have slipped in later. Note that inspiration and thus inerrancy applies to the *originals*, and it is fallacious to apply it to copies or translations.³

Contrary to Mr Bush's statement, we think there is great value in discussion of various Flood models, and thus encourage supporters of the recolonization model to provide quantitative support for it, without detracting from the plain reading of the Bible. Those who propose a Paleozoic or earlier Flood/post-Flood boundary have yet to explain how they fit all their geology (massive erosion, sedimentation, volcanism, tectonic movement, folding and faulting, formation of extensive coal beds, sea-level fluctuations, earthquakes and meteorite impacts, etc.) into at most a few hundred years post-Flood.⁴ Robinson's position on the end of the Flood places all known rocks post-Flood, while those who hold to the mid to late Paleozoic place the majority of Phanerozoic rocks post-Flood.

Even if we were to accept say an extra 10,000 years or about 250 generations, it is hard to imagine how any person (or animal) could have survived, let alone built cities and planted vineyards. The geological record from the end of the Carboniferous to present is equivalent to over a kilometre of sediments and more than 100 m of volcanics over the entire earth surface. 1 km of sediment in 10,000 years is equivalent to over 400 years of erosive work of the Ganges packed into 1 year, as the average erosion/depositional rate for the entire earth. The volume of volcanics is equivalent to 300 eruptions the size of Krakatoa (1883) going off every year.⁵ Much of the volcanics may not have been as explosive and a majority would be submarine, however the ash from even a small percentage of these eruptions would be significantly detrimental in terms of climatic effects and blocking of sunlight. At the same time, mountain ranges are being rapidly uplifted and rock strata are being folded and faulted with accompanying earthquakes and

tsunamis at an alarming rate. This is certainly more than an interpretative whisker!

It is unfortunate that Mr Bush brings up the tired old Galileo canard, which we have so often addressed.^{6,7,8} The mistake the Church made with Galileo was to interpret poetic passages such as Ecclesiastes 1:5 to fit in with the current science of the day—the Ptolemaic astronomy taught by the Aristotelians at the universities. Of course, as long pointed out, there is nothing improper about the Bible's language in these instances, any more than there is about a modern astronomer using the term 'sunset'. It is using the Earth as a *reference frame*.

Using fallible science to overturn the clear propositional teaching of Scripture is the same error that long-agers make. The issue is not the age of the earth or the timing of the Flood per se, but whether the Bible or 'science' is the ultimate authority. The age of the earth or when the Flood ended is a *corollary*, not an end in itself.

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References

1. Sarfati, J., Biblical chronogenealogies, *TJ* 17(3):14–18, 2003.
2. Sarfati, J., The numbering pattern of Genesis: does it mean the days are non-literal? *TJ* 17(2):60–61, 2003.
3. This has always been AiG's position—see our Statement of Faith <www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/about/faith.asp>. It is also the widely accepted view in Evangelical circles—see the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy <www.kulikovskyonline.net/hermeneutics/csbe.htm>.
4. The generally accepted landing place for the ark is in the region of Armenia. Holt, R., Late Cainozoic Flood/post-Flood Boundary, *TJ* 10(1): 128–167, indicates the mountains in this region (including the Mt Ararat in modern Turkey) were uplifted in the late Cenozoic. Thus there really appears to be no time (at least in this region, for any significant post-Flood geology). The next reference to a known geological location is the location of the tower of Babel on the plain of Shinar, which was built in the days of Peleg, which according to the Masoretic text is at most 309 years after the Flood.

5. Calculations based on Holt, ref. 4.
7. Grigg, R., The Galileo Twist, *Creation* 19(4): 30–32, September–November 1997; <www.answersingenesis.org/gal-twist>.
8. Schirmacher, T., The Galileo Affair: history or heroic hagiography, *TJ* 14(1):91–100, 2000; <www.answersingenesis.org/gal-affair>.
9. Sarfati, J. and Kulikovskiy, A., The crimes of Galileo (continued), *TJ* 16(3):73–74, 2002.

The religion of atheism

Ernst Mayr speaking in an interview with *The Scientist*.

'All of the atheists I know are highly religious; it just doesn't mean believing in the Bible or God. Religion is the basic belief system of the person.'

Ernst Mayr, Darwin's Disciple
The Scientist 17(22),
Nov. 17, 2003
<www.the-scientist.com/yr2003/nov/feature1_031117.html>,
February 26, 2004