

Genesis 11 - Tower of Babel; Toldot of Shem; Toldot of Terah

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- (1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)
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Chronology of Gen 10-11

In chronological order, Gen 11 comes before Gen 10. Gen 11:1-9 follows the Law of Recurrence, as it explains how the dispersion of Gen 10 took place. In Gen 10, the nations are already dispersed. How did they get that way? The answer is in Gen 11. It also helps explain why Nimrod later left Babylon and went to Assyria. It also explains exactly what happened in the days of Peleg.

Genesis 11

- (b) Tower of Babel (11:1-9)

Genesis 10 left a number of questions unanswered:

- What was the origin of the nations?
- How did the nations get dispersed?
- How were the nations corrupted?
- Why can't God use any of the existing nations at that time to mediate His blessings to the earth?
- Why does He have to create a new nation entirely to mediate His blessings to the world?
- What happened in the days of "Peleg" (Gen 10:25)?
- What was Nimrod doing in Shinar (Gen 10:10)?
- How did Nimrod get to Assyria (Gen 10:11-12)?

Genesis 10 answered the "what" question but we're left now with the "why" questions. Genesis 11 will answer the "why" for what happened in Genesis 10. Genesis 11 is the cause, Genesis 10 is the result. These chapters are not in chronological order.

(i) Building of the tower (11:1-4)

- 1 Now all the earth used the **same language** and the **same words**.
 - 1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.
 - 1 There was a time when the entire earth spoke a common language with an identical vocabulary.
 - 1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
 - "...same language" - the entire earth, every single person, spoke the same language. What language did they speak? That is a difficult question to answer, but it's likely that they all spoke Hebrew.
 - The reason to believe the original language was Hebrew is that of the ten names given in the genealogy of Gen 5 are all Hebrew names, although Jewish history had not yet begun
 - It's also likely that the single language that will be spoken during the millennial reign of Christ on the earth will be Hebrew (Zeph 3:9)
 - "...the same words" - the same vocabulary
 - Today there are between 6000-7000 languages spoken around the world. It's difficult for some people to believe that at one point in time, there was only one single language and vocabulary.
 - 2 And it came about, **as they journeyed east**, that they found a **plain** in the land of **Shinar** and settled there.
 - 2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.
 - 2 As people migrated westward, they came across a plain in the region of Shinar and settled there.
 - 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
 - "...east" - this eastern part of the world will later be called Shinar (the Greeks called it Mesopotamia, meaning "between the rivers")
 - Typically when the Bible mentions "east" it is referring to this territory, in and around modern day Babylon (Cf. 2:8; 11:2; Matt 2:2)
 - "...Shinar" - the Hebrew word for the area referred to as the "east"
 - "...Shinar" - Mesopotamia, literally "between the rivers"; the "county" where Babylon resides. This is where life originated, and now the descendants of the survivors of the Flood and their families came back to it.

3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and **fire them thoroughly.**" And they used brick for stone, and they used **tar** for mortar.

3 They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn *them* thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.

3 They told each other, "Come on! Let's burn bricks thoroughly." They used bricks for stone and tar for mortar.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.

- The rebellion against God begins...the first step was the making of building materials (brick).

- "...fire *them* thoroughly" - to make them durable, to last a long time

— The area of Shinar was mainly desert, but rich in alluvial deposits due to the nearby rivers. For this reason, it was very short in stone. Thus, these people had to fashion bricks from the alluvial deposits, and "fire *them* thoroughly" to make them hard.

- "...tar" - they used bitumen because they had no clay or asphalt to use as mortar

4 And they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a **city**, and a **tower** whose **top will reach into heaven**, and let's **make a name for ourselves**; otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of all the earth."

4 They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

4 Then they said, "Come on! Let's build ourselves a city and a tower, with its summit in the heavens, and let's make a name for ourselves so we won't be scattered over the surface of the whole earth."

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

- "...a city" - the political leg of this "new world order" that is being created

— The desire for a city existed even before the Flood (4:17), but here their desire comes to full fruition. In this case, the city was Babylon, which gives the explanation of the circumstances of v10.

- "...a tower" - the religious leg of this "new world order"; see note: Mother-Child Cult below

— Nimrod's idea to build this tower to heaven was due to the flood. He reasoned that if God wanted to flood the world again, He wouldn't flood it as high as this tower, so Nimrod could defeat God.

- "...top *will* reach into heaven" - the name "Babylon" in Hebrew, "Babel," means "the gate of God." The point is that they wanted to reach out to the heavens.
- The purpose of this tower was for astrology, or signs of the zodiac, and marks the beginnings of false religion and idolatry
- This also the beginning of works righteousness...the belief that man has to do something in order to gain God's approval/favor
- "...make a name for ourselves" - they wanted a name and they got a name, but not the name they wanted. The root of all of this was pride. They had a desire for a city, then a tower, and now they had a desire for a name and reputation. This desire also existed before the Flood (4:17).
- Just like Cain, Nimrod didn't care about God's name or reputation...he only cared about his own
- In addition to idolatry beginning at the Tower of Babel, Humanism also began here. The core tenets of Humanism are:
 - The non-existence or irrelevancy of God
 - Man as the center of all things
 - The reality of evolution
 - Man as an evolved animal rather than a special creature made in the image of his Creator
 - The absence of any absolute morals or values; "situational" ethics rather than core beliefs
 - Confidence in the scientific method to solve the world's problems

The Mother-Child Cult

Gen 11 is important and necessary background to what God was doing in Gen 12 with the Abrahamic Covenant, and answer the question of why God worked with Abraham to create a new nation instead of using an existing nation. What happened at the Tower of Babel affected every culture on earth. All people-groups can trace their origin back to the Tower of Babel. This is why it was necessary for God to raise up a new nation...a nation free from the effects of the Tower of Babel.

Alexander Hislop wrote a classic book called *Two Babylons*. In this book, he chronicled a complete history, from extra-biblical materials, that dealt with Babylon. He wrote what was happening at the Tower of Babel.

The building of the Tower was coming together under a man named Nimrod (Gen 10:8-11). Nimrod means "revolt"; he is the first prefiguration of the Antichrist. Nimrod was married to Semiramis; they had a child named Tammuz, who was killed by a wild animal, but was then miraculously resurrected to life (the same way Satan will bring the Antichrist back to life during the Tribulation). According to Hislop, people were worshiping the mother and

child (Semiramis and Tammuz) as part of this one-world religious system. This was the religious system in place in Gen 11.

God did not like this one-world government structure, new world order. It was a system of politics, economics and religion that excluded God and controlled every facet of a person. Because God understands that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely... He gets involved and miraculously confuses their languages and scatters the people to disparate regions of the earth. From this dispersion, the mother-child religious system in place at the Tower of Babel was exported to every nation and language around the world. You can look at all types of cultures to identify this religious system, although in some cultures the names have been changed (see chart below):

- Ishtar - where we get the word "Easter"
- Roman Catholicism (Hislop is a harsh critic of Roman Catholicism) - he states that the Mary and Jesus of Roman Catholicism is not the same Mary and Jesus of the Bible
- In Roman Catholicism, Mary is a "co-redemptress"...someone you pray to. They believe she remained a virgin her entire life, even though Jesus had numerous half-siblings (brothers and sisters).
- Roman Catholics today call the Virgin Mary the "Queen of Heaven"

Spread of the Mother-Child Cult		
	Mother	Child
Assyria	Ishtar	Tammuz
Phoenicia	Astarte	Baal
Egypt	Isis	Osirus/Horus
Greece	Aphrodite	Eros
Rome	Venus	Cupid
Asia	Cybele	Desius
India	Isi	Aswara
Roman Catholicism	Mary	Jesus
Israel	Queen of Heaven (Jer 7:18; 44:17)	Tammuz (Ezek 8:14-15)
Alexander Hislop, <i>Two Babylons</i>		

This is why God had to raise up a brand new nation, which wasn't corrupted by the Mother-Child Cult. And through this new nation, He would fulfill His kingdom promises that begin as early as Gen 3:15. Israel had a very special place in God's program because the nation

was created by Him, and they were not corrupted by the Mother-Child Cult that began at the Tower of Babel and spread to all of the nations of the earth.

According to Alexander Hislop, the Mary and Jesus of Roman Catholicism is not the same Mary/Jesus of the Bible. In Catholicism, Mary is someone you pray to, a co-redemptrix.

This is tough to believe because Mary said that Jesus was "my Savior" (Luke 1:47).

Catholics also believe Mary stayed a virgin her entire life, which is hard to believe because Jesus had at least four brothers (Mark 6:3) and at least two sisters (not sure exactly how many, but "sisters" (plural) implies at least two). And Catholicism believes in a "works-oriented" salvation, not salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. According to Alexander Hislop, the origin of these ideas was the "mother-child cult."

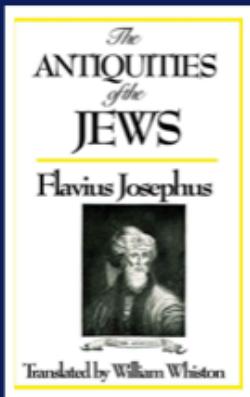
This is why God, when He decides to bring His own Son into the world, and we know that Son is coming (Gen 3:15), He could not use the Assyrians, or the Phoenicians, or the Egyptians, etc. because they were already contaminated by this "mother-child cult." This is why He had to start a new nation, one not contaminated by the "mother-child cult." This would be the only nation started completely independently of this mother-child cult.

God is beside Himself when Israel later wanted to be just like all the other nations. When all the surrounding nations had a king, Israel asked for a king as well. And what ended up happening, much later in biblical history, is that the "mother-child cult" began to infiltrate Israel (Cf. Jer 7:18; 44:17; Ezek 8:14-15). This is one of the reasons why God had to send the Jews (Judah) outside of Israel into captivity in Babylon for 70 years. He had to get this "mother-child cult" out of their system. Israel was living outside of her purpose. Israel's purpose was to reach the nations, not become just like them.

The religious pillar of this ancient "new world order" was the "mother-child cult." The purpose of this new world order was a one-world system of economics, politics and religion that completely excludes a true knowledge of God.

Josephus

Antiquities, 1.4.2



"He [Nimrod] persuaded them to attribute their prosperity not to God but to their own valour, and little by little transformed the state of affairs into tyranny, holding that the only way to detach men from the fear of God was by making them continuously dependent upon his power. He threatened to have his revenge on God if He wished to inundate the earth again; for he would build a tower higher than the water could reach and avenge the destruction of their forefathers."

Some interesting observations by Josephus:

- "...little by little transformed the state of affairs into tyranny" - sounds like what has happened in our world, and our nation, over the past 50-75 years
- ..."the only way to detach men from the fear of God was by making them continuously dependent upon his (Nimrod's) power" - this sounds eerily similar to how the future Antichrist will consolidate power

(ii) Dispersion of the nations (11:5-9)

5 Now the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the **men** had built.
5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.
5 However, the LORD descended to look over the city and the tower that the humans were building.
5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

- Here the writer uses satire to describe what man is trying to do. No matter how high man built the tower, God would still have to "come down" to see it.
- The satire is that God is so high, compared to man, that no matter how high the tower was, God would still have to come down to get a better look, to see what man was doing
- "...men" - *adam*, mankind; humanity
- Based on the verb tense in this verse, the city and tower were already completed

*Here the author (Moses) uses anthropomorphic satire, to satirize what puny man is trying to do. No matter how high man towered, God still has to come down to see it and to get a better look. This shows that God is interested in the affairs of men, but God is so high and man is so puny that God had to come down to get a better look. [Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 223-24]*

Many of our founding fathers were accused of being Deists (someone who acknowledges the existence of a Creator God, but rejects divine intervention or revelation). Here's a quote from Benjamin Franklin (who doesn't sound like a Deist to me):

*"I firmly believe this; and I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.... I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of heaven and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service." [June 28, 1787; quoted by Albert Henry Smith, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905-7), IX:600-1]*

6 And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And **this is what they have started to do**, and **now nothing which they plan to do will be impossible for them**.

6 The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

6 The LORD said, "Look! They are one people with the same language for all of them, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. Nothing that they have a mind to do will be impossible for them!

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

- When God comes down/condescends to see what these people are doing, he makes three observations about this project that was in rebellion against Him:

1. "...they are one people"
2. "...they all have the same language"
3. "...nothing...will be impossible for them"

- "...this is what they have started to do" - "this is only the beginning"; this was only the first act of rebellion in this one place. The implication here is that if left to themselves, many more such acts of rebellion and evil would follow.

- "...now nothing which they plan to do will be impossible for them" - they will purpose to sin in many other ways as well
- While no one can thwart the purpose of God, nothing will be able to thwart the purpose of man unless this initial project, which is an act of rebellion against divine rule, is stopped
- If only one government exists on planet earth, and that government falls into the wrong hands, man's potential for wickedness will be unprecedented. God makes this observation because He understands human nature. He understands what man is capable of if there is no restraint on their human/sin nature (Cf. 8:21; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:20-23).
- The Hebrew roots of "restrained" and "imagined" are used elsewhere only in Job 42:2. The rabbis interpret that verse as meaning: "With such unity, they will enthroned idolatry for all time so that no man will be able to turn to the worship of the true God."
- The only reason why humanity wants to unite itself is in order to more effectively rebel against God
- This is why current history is moving toward globalism as we move further from God, and why the goal of Antichrist will be to forge together a one-world government set against the plan and purposes of God.
- The Tribulation will end with God's direct intervention and judgment, as at the Flood. In the mean time, God slows down man's collective rebellion through civil government and tribal diversity.
- What God observes here leads Him to decentralize the governance of humanity, from a one-world government to individual nation-states.
- From this point in history, we can follow God's Doctrine of Nations throughout the rest of history:
 - Since Babel: Deut 32:8; Acts 17:26
 - Millennial Kingdom: Is 2:4; 66:18; Zech 14:16-18; Rev 12:5; 20:3
 - Eternal State: Rev 21:24,26

The United States of America was founded on the idea of delegated powers:

Federalist #45: *"The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."*

The structure of the United States government was not just divided horizontally (Executive, Legislative, Judicial), but it was also divided vertically (federal and state governments).

The 10th Amendment to the Constitution says: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

In Genesis, we see God setting up human institutions that are meant to preserve humanity in its fallen state:

- Created in God's image (Gen 1:26-28)
- Marriage/family (Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-25)
- Human government (Gen 9:6)
- Conscience (Gen 3:22; Rom 2:14-15)
- Labor - supporting yourself by the work of your hands (Gen 2:15; 3:19)
- Nationalism/borders (Gen 11:1-9)

In order to have a nation, you must have four things:

- Common currency
- Common language
- Common culture
- Enforceable borders

The Humanist Manifesto (1973) deplores the idea of nation-states and borders:

"We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community...a system of world law and world order based upon transnational federal government."

7 Come, **let Us go down** and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

7 Come on! Let's go down there and confuse their language, so that they won't understand each other's speech."

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

- "...let Us" - an OT reference to the plurality of the Godhead (the Trinity) (1:26; 3:22; Is 6:8; Deut 6:4)

— You have to go to the NT to completely flesh out the tri-unity of the Godhead:

- The Father is called God (Eph 4:6)
- Jesus is called God (John 8:58)
- The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4)

- "...go down" - God again condescends, but this time He's not observing, He's intervening. The purpose of God coming down was to confuse their language, so they could not communicate with each other.

- This shows us something about the nature of God...the Tower of Babel was likely the greatest achievement of man in their self-sufficiency and pride up to that point in history, but yet God still had to descend in order to see it
- It emphasizes the greatness of God and the puniness of man by comparison. Although man vainly tried to build this immensely high tower, God is described as needing to "come down" to see this comparatively tiny venture.
- No matter how powerful man becomes, or how powerful he thinks he is, God still has to get out His microscope to see what man has done
- "...confuse their language" - a literal translation from Hebrew reads: "so they will not hear a man in the language of his friend"
- God's condescension was followed by disruption...God thwarted cooperation through lack of communication, because He knew that if He allowed this to continue, there would be no limit to the evil they would conjure up.
- It's interesting that on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-8), God somewhat reversed, on a limited basis, what He did hear. Through the gift of tongues (languages), God gave the apostles the ability to speak in various languages in order to spread the gospel.
- It's also interesting that during the millennial kingdom, God will completely reverse what He did hear, as the common language spoken throughout the world will be Hebrew (Cf. Zeph 3:9)
- So what got broken here because of man's penchant for sin, and got "fixed" in a very limited way in Acts 2, will be completely restored during the millennial reign of Christ on the earth

8 So the LORD **scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth**; and they **stopped building the city**.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the surface of the whole earth, so that they had to stop building the city.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

- This verse, along with v1, explains what we see in Gen 10 (Cf. 10:20,31)

— It also explains how and why Nimrod went from Shinar to Assyria. In 10:10-12 it says Nimrod began his kingdom in Babel, then he went to Assyria and built Nineveh. The confusion of tongues (11:7) and God's scattering of people (11:8) are the "why" and "how" Nimrod went from Babel/Shinar to Assyria/Nineveh.

- "...scattered them abroad" - after the Flood, God told Noah and his sons to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (9:1,7), which was a renewal of the command given to Adam

(1:29).

- The command to populate the earth implies spreading out and scattering. So because of mankind's failure to heed these two commands from God, God does it for them
 - "...from there" - from Babylon
 - "...over the face of all the earth" - what God did at the Tower of Babel had a reverberating effect over the entire earth (Cf. v9)
- This action by God did not just affect a single people-group or nation, it affected every person living on the earth
 - "...stopped building the city" - God's judgment on Babel stopped Nimrod's one-world government idea in its tracks
- However, Satan's ambition has always been to bring man back to Babylon under his rule. This will finally happen (Cf. Rev 17-18) when both the city of Babylon and the false religious system of Babylon will be resurrected in the end times.

9 Therefore it was **namedBabel**, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

9 Therefore it was called Babylon, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth, and from there the LORD scattered them over the surface of the entire earth.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

- "...named" - God names things based on their destiny; God doesn't assign names to people based on who they are, but rather what they will become

- Abram > Abraham, meaning "father of many nations"
- Jacob > Israel
- Simon > Peter, meaning "(little) rock"

- "...Babel" - in Hebrew, literally "the gateway of the gods" (*bab*, "gate"; *el*, "gods"), which refers to the religious system that they were seeking to build

— The contrast is from "the gate of God" to "the gate of confusion." While the people called it Babel, the gate of God, God made a babble out of it.

II. Epilogue: patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

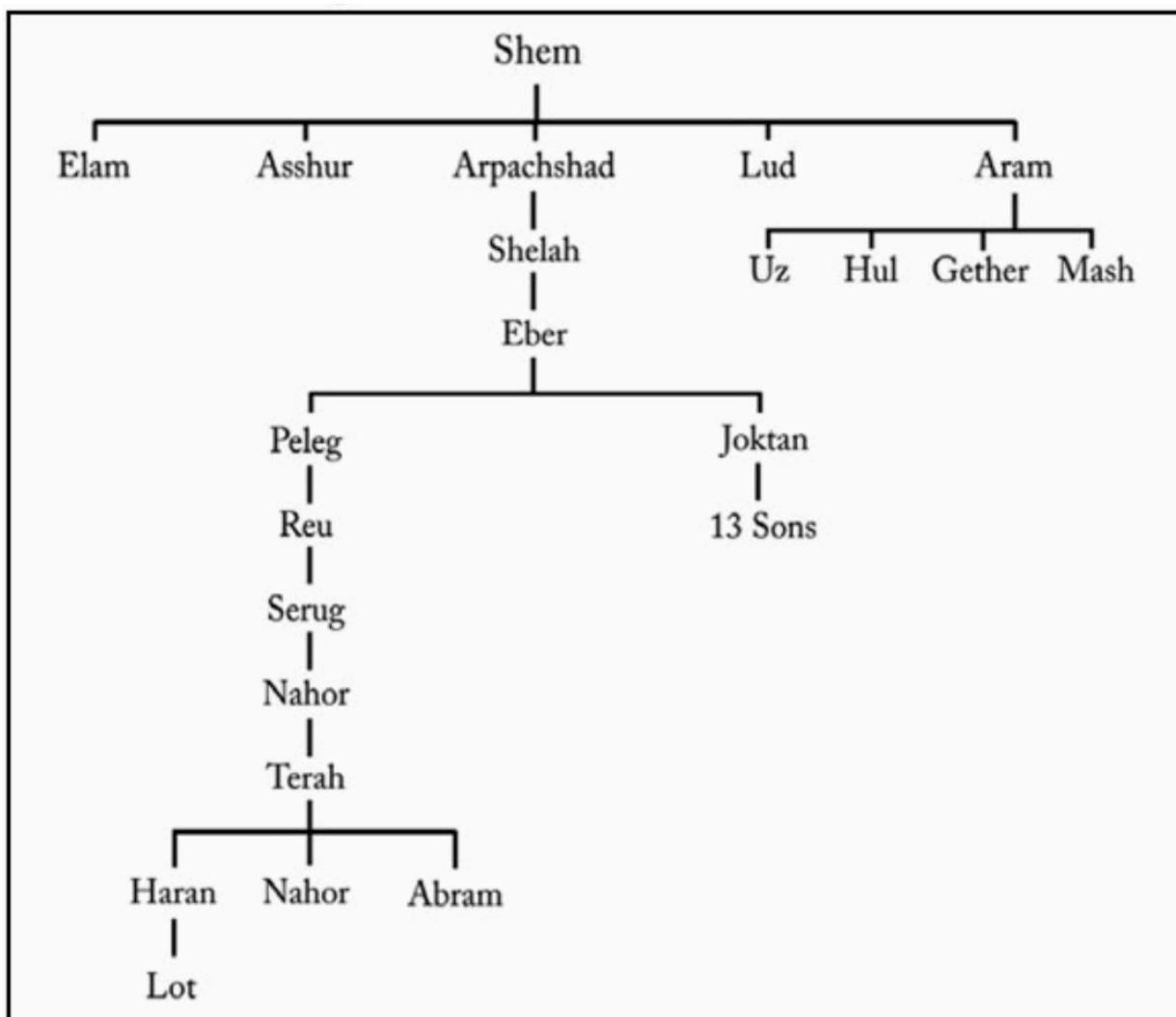
(1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)

(A) Intro to Abram (11:10-32)

(a) Lineage from Shem (11:10-26)

Gen 5 lists the line from Adam to Noah, 10 generations, which concludes with Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth, and mentions the nephew of the seed-son, Canaan. This toldot traces the line from Shem to Abraham, also 10 generations, and concludes with Terah's three sons: Abram, Nahor and Haran, and mentions the nephew of the seed-son, Lot.

This toldot is the prelude to the story of Abraham and is the preface to the history of Israel. By now, man has been tested and failed three times: in Eden, by the Flood, and at Babel. Therefore, man was ready for a new start. Genesis now moves from a universal history to a national history with a transition from many families and lands (10:5,20,31-32), to one family (11:10-32), and to one land (12:1-3). Elsewhere in the OT, the line of Shem is given in 1 Chr 1:24-27.



10 These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old when he fathered Arpachshad, two years after the flood;

10 These are *the records of* the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood;

10 These are the family records of Shem. When Shem had lived 100 years, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.

10 These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:

- "These are *the records of*" - *toledoth*, see note: *Toledoths* in Genesis below

1. Name: Shem
2. Meaning: "name"; where we get the term "semitic"
3. Name of seed son: Arpachshad
4. Age at birth of seed son: 100 years
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 500 years
6. Total years patriarch lived: 600 years
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

- "...he fathered Arpachshad, two years after the flood" - the fact that Shem begat Arpachshad two years after the flood re-emphasizes the fact that Noah's sons did not have children before the Flood

Genealogy of Genesis 5 vs. Genesis 11		
	GENESIS 5	GENESIS 11
Number of generations	10	9
Conclusion	Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth	Terah's three sons: Abram, Nahor, Haran
"And he died"	Yes	No
Man's lifespan	Long	Curtailed
Historical perspective	Universal history	National history
Historical perspective	Pre-Israel history	Israel's history
Families	Many	One

***Toledoths* in Genesis**

1. Introduction to the generations (1:1—2:3)
2. Generations of the heaven and earth (2:4—4:26)

3. Generations of Adam (5:1–6:8)
4. Generations of Noah (6:9–9:29)
5. Generations of the sons of Noah (10:1–11:9)
- 6. Generations of Shem (11:10-26)**
7. Generations of Terah (11:27-25:11)
8. Generations of Ishmael (25:12-18)
9. Generations of Isaac (25:19–35:29)
10. Generations of Esau (36:1–37:1)
11. Generations of Jacob (37:2–50:26)

11 and Shem lived five hundred years after he fathered Arpachshad, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

11 and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

11 Shem lived 500 years after he fathered Arpachshad and had other sons and daughters.

11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

12 Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and fathered Shelah;

12 Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah;

12 When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Cainan.

12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:

- Notice the sharp drop in lifespan occurs between Shem and Arphaxad; it was during this time that the Flood occurred. This reduction on lifespan was part of God's judgment on humanity.

13 and Arpachshad lived 403 years after he fathered Shelah, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

13 and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

13 After he fathered Cainan, Arpachshad lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then died. Cainan lived 130 years and fathered Shelah. After he fathered Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then died.

13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Arpachshad
2. Meaning: not known
3. Name of seed son: Shelah

- 4. Age at birth of seed son: 35
- 5. Additional years patriarch lived: 403
- 6. Total years patriarch lived: 438
- 7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

- This sounds very straight-forward, except when you look at Luke's genealogy (Luke 3), Luke adds a name here that is not found in Genesis

- Genesis says the genealogy is from Shem > Arpachshad > Shelah, but Luke 3:35-37 says the genealogy is from Shem > Arpachshad > **Cainan** > Shelah
- Interestingly, Cainan is not mentioned here, nor has he ever appeared in any copy of the Hebrew OT, or the Samaritan version, the Targum. He is not mentioned by Josephus, nor in 1 Chr 1:24 where this genealogy is repeated. He is found in the present copies of the LXX, but he wasn't in the original.
- John Gill says that the Genesis and 1 Chronicles accounts are correct, and that it was a scribal mistake in the LXX, which Luke used for his genealogy in Luke 3
- Dr. Henry Morris says that it would not be too difficult to see how a scribe could've taken Cainan from the end of Luke 3:37 and mistakenly inserted him when he was copying Luke 3:36, thus getting two Cainans on the list. He says, "It is known that the NT copyists were often much less careful in this work than had been the OT scribes...Cainan's name should not be included, and its insertion in Luke 3:36 is most likely a copyist's mistake." [Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 281-82]

14 Shelah lived thirty years, and fathered **Eber**;

14 Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber;

14 When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber.

14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

- "...Shelah" - means "the sent one"
- "Eber" - in Hebrew means "ever" and is the source of the Hebrew word for "Hebrew" [/vrit]. To be the father of the Hebrews is the main significance of the line of Shem.

15 and Shelah lived 403 years after he fathered Eber, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

15 and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

15 After he fathered Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Shelah
2. Meaning: "sent one"

3. Name of seed son: Eber
4. Age at birth of seed son: 30
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 403
6. Total years patriarch lived: 433
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

16 Eber lived thirty-four years, and fathered Peleg;

16 Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg;

16 When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg.

16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:

17 and Eber lived 430 years after he fathered Peleg, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

17 and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

17 After he fathered Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Eber
2. Meaning: "cross over"
3. Name of seed son: Peleg
4. Age at birth of seed son: 34
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 430
6. Total years patriarch lived: 464
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

18 Peleg lived thirty years, and fathered Reu;

18 Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu;

18 When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:

– "Peleg" – in his days the earth was divided (Cf. 10:25)

— There are dozens of interesting conjectures about what the "earth was divided" means. Many think it means that the continents were "divided" or split apart and moved to their current locations.

— However, this doesn't really fit the context...the context of Gen 10-11 is the division of the earth due to God's confounding of the languages, not the splitting of the continents

— So it's likely that the earth being divided is referring to the division of languages and the inability to communicate with each other, not the movement of the continental plates

19 and Peleg lived 209 years after he fathered Reu, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

19 and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

19 After he fathered Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Peleg
2. Meaning: "division"
3. Name of seed son: Reu
4. Age at birth of seed son: 30
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 209
6. Total years patriarch lived: 239
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

- Notice another sharp drop in lifespans between Eber and Peleg (4th and 5th generations). It was at this time that the Tower of Babel event occurred.

— If the canopy theory is correct, this might account for the diminishing life spans.

However, without the canopy theory, divine judgment will easily account for this decrease because it is after these divine judgments that the sharp drop occurs.

20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and fathered Serug;

20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug;

20 When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:

21 and Reu lived 207 years after he fathered Serug, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

21 and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

21 After he fathered Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Reu
2. Meaning: "friend" or "neighbor"
3. Name of seed son: Serug
4. Age at birth of seed son: 32
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 207

6. Total years patriarch lived: 239
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

22 Serug lived thirty years, and fathered Nahor;
22 Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor;
22 When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor.
22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:

23 and Serug lived two hundred years after he fathered Nahor, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

23 and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

23 After he fathered Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Serug
2. Meaning: not clear
3. Name of seed son: Nahor
4. Age at birth of seed son: 30
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 200
6. Total years patriarch lived: 230
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and fathered Terah;
24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah;
24 When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah.
24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:

25 and Nahor lived 119 years after he fathered Terah, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters.

25 and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had *other* sons and daughters.

25 After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

1. Name: Nahor
2. Meaning: "river"
3. Name of seed son: Terah

4. Age at birth of seed son: 29
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 119
6. Total years patriarch lived: 148
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

26 Terah lived seventy years, and fathered **Abram**, **Nahor**, and **Haran**.

26 Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

26 When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

1. Name: Terah
2. Meaning: "moon"
3. Name of seed son: Abram, Nahor, Haran
4. Age at birth of seed son: 70
5. Additional years patriarch lived: 135 (v32)
6. Total years patriarch lived: 205
7. Begat other sons & daughters: Yes

- "...Abram" - means "exalted father"
- "...Nahor" - means "river"
- "...Haram" - means "a mountaineer"

Genealogies are generally skipped and considered boring by most Christians...and they are. However it doesn't mean we can't make some intelligent observations and learn a few things from them. Here are three concluding observations from the genealogy in Gen 11:

1. This is the only genealogy we have connecting the promises given to Shem to Abram
 - a. If we didn't have this genealogy we would not understand why God called Abram and formed a new nation from him.
 - b. God called Abram and formed a new nation from him because he is the beneficiary of the promises given to Shem that the Messiah is going to come from Shem's line
 - c. We know from Gen 3:15 that a Messiah is coming; from 9:26 we learn He is coming through the line of Shem
2. The age of the patriarchs at the birth of their seed son demonstrate no genealogical gaps
 - a. There are also no genealogical gaps in the genealogy of Gen 5 because:
 - i. Seth is a descendant of Adam and Eve replacing Abel (4:25)
 - ii. Seth named Enosh (4:26)
 - iii. Lamech named Noah (5:29)

iv. Jude 14: *It was also about these people that Enoch, in the **seventh generation** from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord has come with many thousands of His holy ones,*



Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

The Book of Genesis, 141



"A third observation is that there are no gaps in the genealogy. Some try to put gaps into the genealogy in order to accommodate the scientific long age of man, but the wording does not allow for that. If the text only said begat, then that would be permissible since the word 'begat' does not always require direct father/son relationship. It could mean grandfather, great grandfather, or ancestors and so on. Nevertheless, the wording in this section does not allow for that interpretation. The text does not say simply begat. **It gives the years before and after the birth of the seed-son. So this type of language simply does not allow gaps to occur.**"



Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

The Book of Genesis, 231



"...In Shem's genealogy, as in the previous genealogy of Adam (Gen 5), the language does not allow for gaps in the genealogy, since the text does not merely say begat, but it is more specific, giving the age of the father when the seed-son is born and how many years the father lived thereafter."

Now many current day evangelicals, desperate to prove that the earth is old so that they can get the Bible to line up with modern-day "science" jump to the genealogy in Matt 1 and say, Look, there are gaps in this genealogy. Here's what Norm Geisler says:



Norman Geisler

Systematic Theology, vol. 2 (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 2003), 648.

"If there is one gap, there may be more—indeed, we know there are more. For example, **Matt 1:8** says: 'Jehoram the father of Uzziah,' but the parallel listing in 1 Chr 3:11–14 illustrates missing generations between Jehoram and Uzziah (Azariah), namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Just how many gaps there are in biblical genealogies and how much time they represent is not known. **Even so, gaps there are and, hence, complete chronologies cannot be made;** only accurate genealogies (lines of descent) are given."

But what people don't realize, or pay attention to (even brilliant scholars like Geisler), is that the Matt 1 genealogy is different from the Gen 11 genealogy. In fact, it's different than the genealogies in Gen 5; 11; and 1 Chr 1-9. These OT genealogies are specific and detailed; Matthew's genealogy is a summary of a large portion of history. If Matthew's genealogy was as detailed as those in the OT, his Gospel would be much longer. Matthew instead gives us three groups of 14 (because the *gematria* for David's name = 14).

The logical fallacy that Geisler and others make here is, We know that there are gaps in Matt 1 (and there are, purposefully), so there are likely also gaps in Gen 5; 11 (and there aren't). The genealogies in Gen 5; 11 give the age of the father when the seed son is born, as well as the age the father died. Matthew's genealogy doesn't give that information, so you can't do what Norm Geisler and others try to do, which is imply gaps in Gen 5;11 because we are told the age of the father when the seed son is born.

What is the Age of the Earth?

By piecing together the various genealogies in Genesis with 1 Kings 6:1 (the lynchpin), we can conclusively determine the age of the earth.

1 Kings 6:1: Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, that is, the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

Most Christians in their Read the Bible in a Year program will read this verse and just keep going, not realizing that this verse is the lynchpin that gives us the information needed to

determine the age of the earth.

- 971-931 BC - Solomonic reign; this has been confirmed through archaeology
- 966 - Solomon builds temple - "in the fourth year of Solomon's reign" (1 Kings 6:1)
- - 480 years "four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt" (the Exodus)
- = 1446 BC - date of the Exodus
- - 430 years for Jacob's migration to Egypt (Ex 12:40-41)

Ex 12:40-41:

40 Now the time that the sons of Israel had lived in Egypt was **430 years**.

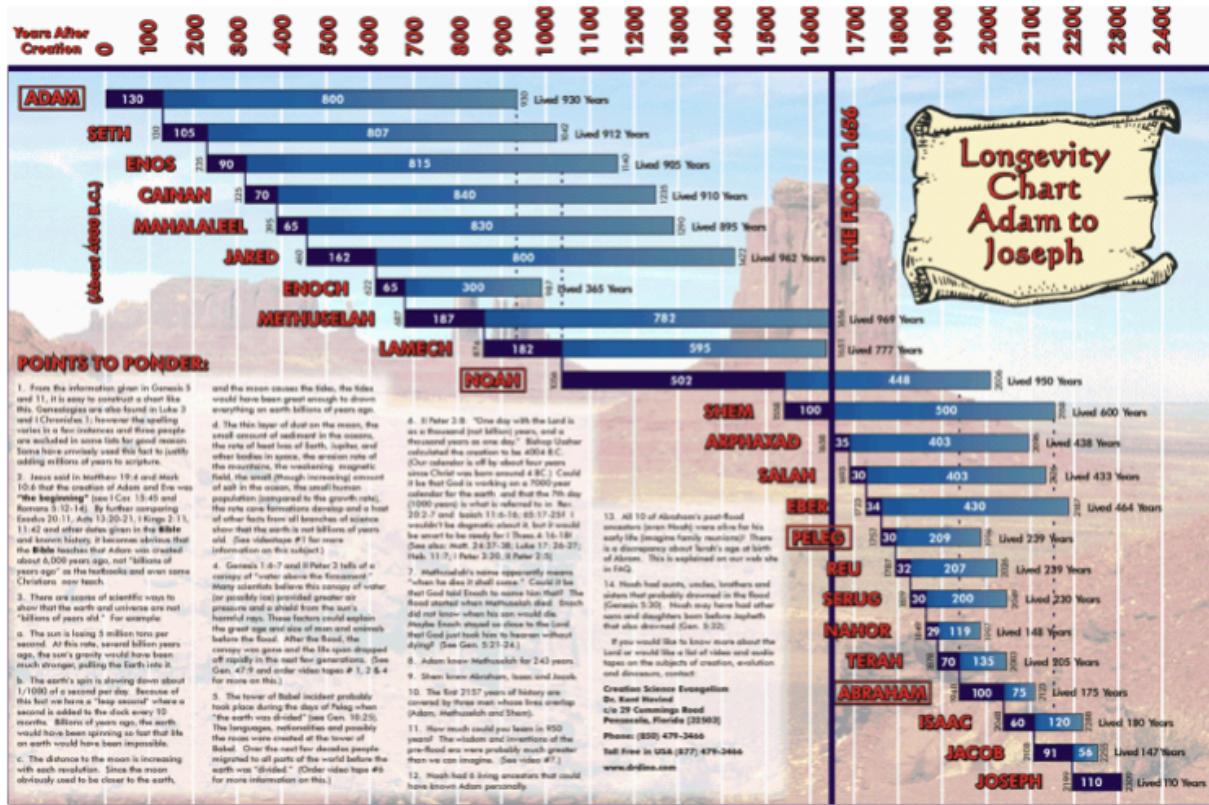
41 And at the end of 430 years, on this very day, all the multitudes of the LORD departed from the land of Egypt.

- = 1876 BC for Jacob's migration to Egypt (Gen 46)
- From there, incorporate the genealogies from Gen 5; 11, which span 2315 years and you get a date for creation of

YEARS AFTER CREATION

	0	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100	2200	2300	2400		
ADAM	0																										
SETH	130																										
ENOSH	235																										
CAINAN	325																										
MAHALALEL	395																										
JARED	460																										
ENOCH	622																										
METHUSELAH	687																										
LAMECH	874																										
NOAH	1056																										
SHEM																1558										2158	
ARPHAXAD																	1658									2096	
SALAH																		1693								2126	
EBER																		1723								2187	
PELEG																		1757	1996								
REU																		1787	2026								
SERUG																		1819	2049								
NAHOR																		1849	1997								
TERAH																		1878	2083								
ABRAHAM																			2008	2183							
ISAAC																			2108	2288							
ISRAEL																			2168	2315							

FLOOD 1656



Two NT passages tell us that Adam & Eve were created "from the beginning" of creation, so there can't be any huge "gaps" of time between the creation of the earth and the creation of mankind:

Matt 19:4: And He answered and said, **"Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,**

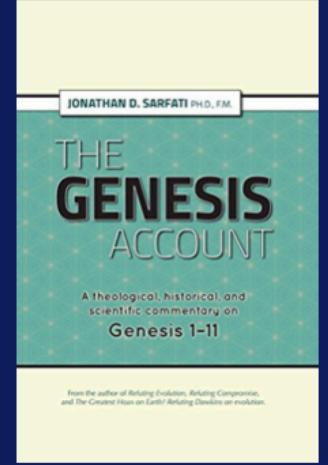
Mark 10:6: **But from the beginning of creation, God CREATED THEM MALE AND FEMALE.**



Dr. Jonathan D. Sarfati

Jonathan D. Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11* (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 338.

"This makes sense only if Jesus affirmed that Genesis was intended to be interpreted straightforwardly. I.e. where the earth was created about 4,000 years before He spoke those words, and Adam and Eve were created on Day 6, which, on the scale of 4,000 years, is almost indistinguishable from the beginning (0.0004% away on that number line). This contrasts with the usual evolutionary view...So either Jesus is right or the idea of long ages is right—they can't both be right."



So why is this important...I mean, isn't it all ancient history anyway? Well, not so fast. Theology is a seamless tapestry, so your interpretation of Gen 1-11 will affect your interpretation of other passages of Scripture, including Jesus' words in the Gospels. If you don't believe that God created the world in six literal days, and there were great ages of time (either between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2 or that each of the six days were really "eras of time"), it will affect your interpretation of what Jesus or Paul or Peter or James or the other NT writers said in the NT. Theology is like a row of dominoes...whatever you do in one area of Scripture is going to affect how you interpret another area of Scripture, in the same way knocking over a domino on one end will eventually knock over the dominoes at the other end.

Most of the problems in the church today relate to authority of Scripture issues. Once you reduce the authority of Scripture in one area (i.e. Gen 1-11), then you tend to reduce the authority of Scripture in other areas as well.

Ps 11:3 says, "If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"

Scientists today, and many evangelicals also, look at past history as being uniform. It's called uniformitarianism, and it's the idea that since Creation, all things have continued uniformly. However, biblical history tells us differently. There have been three catastrophic alterations to our world since creation: the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel.

UNIFORMITARIANISM IS NOT BIBLICISM

	ERA	SCRIPTURE	DISTINCTIVES
1.	CREATION	Gen 1-2	No death
2.	FALL	Gen 3-6	Death, painful pregnancy & toil, long life spans, no human government
3.	FLOOD	Gen 7-10	Shorter life spans, human government, one language, no nations
4.	BABEL	Gen 11-present	No global government, multiple languages, nations, ethnicities
5.	ANTICHRIST	Rapture to 2 nd Advent	Global government, restrainer removed
6.	KINGDOM	Rev 20:1-10	Long life spans, kingdom conditions, reality of death, renovated earth
7.	ETERNAL STATE	Rev 21-22	No death, new earth

The Fall of man did not just alienate us from God...it had a physical affect on the world. The Flood altered the world (geologically) and the environment/atmosphere. The third alteration, the Tower of Babel, the confounding of language and creation of the nations, ethnicities, and borders.

3. Antediluvian and Patriarchal overlap

Many people do not realize that Genesis, although it spans almost 2000 years of human history, only spans four life spans. The time from Adam (Gen 1-2) to Jacob (Gen 49-50) includes only three links:

- From Adam to Lamech - Adam was still alive when Lamech was born
- From Lamech to Shem - Lamech was still alive when Shem was born
- From Shem to Isaac & Jacob - Shem was still alive when both Isaac and Jacob were born

Therefore, there are no gaps between Adam and Jacob. In addition, when you see the early genealogies in this way, it is easy to understand and believe how the tradition of truth get passed down accurately to Moses, who wrote Genesis. Lifespans during this period were so long that one can see how tradition and history were passed down.

Some other interesting notes on these genealogies:

- Noah lived until Terah,, the father of Abraham, was 128 years old
- Shem and Eber outlived Terah
- Eber outlived Abraham

- Based upon when Terah died, Shem died when Isaac or Jacob was 48 years old
See how the older generations, who lived longer, overlapped the younger generations?

4. Shorter patriarchal ages indicate changed world/environmental conditions

Chronology of Shem's Genealogy

Only four life spans link together the continuity of tradition from Adam to Jacob, and these make three links. The four life spans are Adam, Lamech, Shem and Jacob. The three links are from Adam to Lamech, since Adam was living when Lamech was born; from Lamech to Shem, since Lamech was living when Shem was born; and from Shem to Isaac and Jacob, since Shem was still living when both Isaac and Jacob were born. Therefore, there are not many gaps in the tradition to retain the history.

Along this line, the following points should be made: Noah lived until Terah, the father of Abraham, was 77 years old; Shem and Eber outlived Terah; Eber outlived Abraham; and, based upon when Terah died, Shem died when Isaac or Jacob was 50 years old (see table below). So as to the question of how history was maintained and how the tradition was kept, there is really no problem here because quite a bit of overlapping occurs within these genealogies.

Person	Age at Birth of	A. [47] H. Yr.	Yrs. After	Total Age	A.H. [48] Yr.	Age at Birth of Son (Sam.)	Age Birth at of
	Son	of Birth	Birth of Son		of Death	[49])	Son (LXX)
Shem	100	1558	500	600	2158		
Arpachshad	35	1658	403	438	2096	135	135
Shelah[50]	30	1693	403	433	2126	130	130
Eber	34	1723	430	464	2187	134	134
Peleg	30	1757	209	239	1996	130	130
Reu	32	1787	207	239	2026	132	132
Serug	30	1819	200	230	2049	130	130
Nahor	29	1849	119	148	1997	79	179
Terah	70 (130)	1878	135	205	2083		130
Abraham	100	1948 (2008)	75	175	2123 (2183)		
Isaac	60	2048 (2108)	120	180	2228 (2288)		
Jacob		2108 (2168)		147	2255 (2315)		

Numbers in parentheses were calculated based on the date of Abraham's birth, which allows for two interpretations.

(b) His father Terah (11:27-32)

27 Now these are *the records of* the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.

27 Now these are *the records of* the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.

27 Now these are the family records of Terah: Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.

27 Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat **Lot**.

- "Now these are *the records of*" - *toledoth*, these are the records of the generations that lead to God's founding of the nation of Israel
- For this *toledoth*, we're given family information, not just direct descendants, because this is the family from whom the Messiah will come
- "...Lot" - Lot was the nephew of Abram

Toledoths in Genesis

1. Introduction to the Generations (1:1–2:3)
2. Generations of the heaven and earth (2:4–4:26)
3. Generations of Adam (5:1–6:8)
4. Generations of Noah (6:9–9:29)
5. Generations of the sons of Noah (10:1–11:9)
6. Generations of Shem (11:10–26)
7. **Generations of Terah (11:27–25:11)**
8. Generations of Ishmael (25:12–18)
9. Generations of Isaac (25:19–35:29)
10. Generations of Esau (36:1–37:1)
11. Generations of Jacob (37:2–50:26)

28 Haran died during the lifetime of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in **Ur of the Chaldeans**.

28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

28 Haran died during his father's lifetime in the land of his birth, that is, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

- We don't know the circumstances surrounding Haran's death, but his death meant that Lot fell under the authority of his uncle, Abram

- "...Ur of the Chaldeans" - a wealthy, populous, and sophisticated pagan center of southern Mesopotamia, 220 miles SE of Baghdad. Its most prosperous and literate era was during the time of Abraham.

— This is the area that God will call Abraham out of (Cf. 12:1). While living there, before God's calling, Abraham was an idolater (Cf. Joshua 24:2).

29 Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

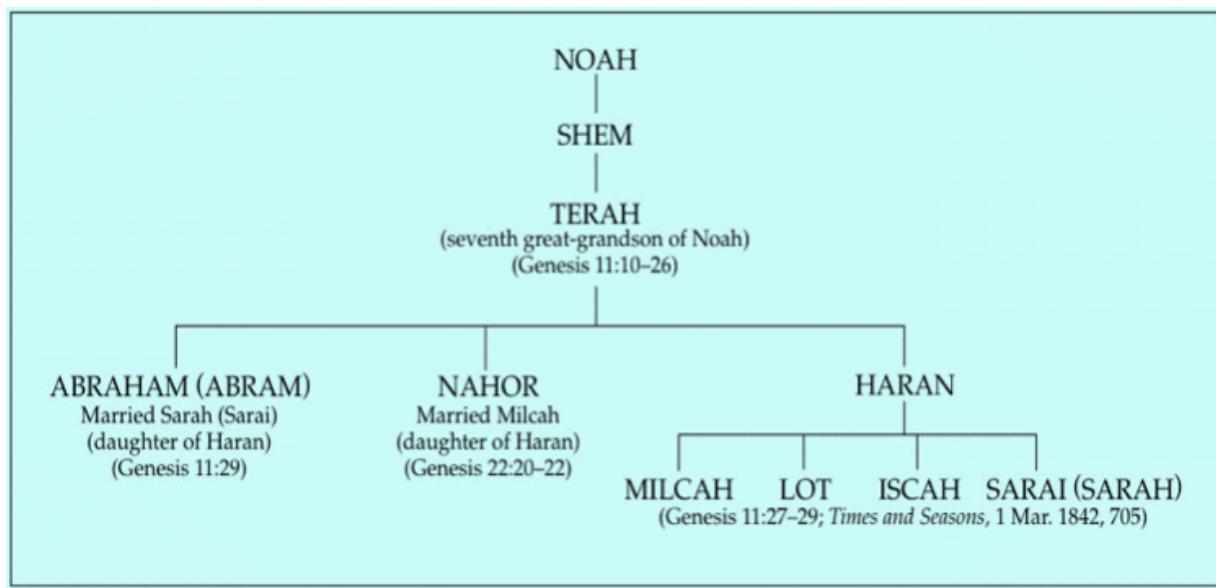
29 Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

29 Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran, who was the father of Milcah and Iscah.

29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

- Additional information is provided regarding this budding family because this is the family that not only will bring the Messiah, but that will also birth the nation of Israel

— So, Abram and Nahor (brothers) married their nieces (their brother Haran's daughters). Some people will ask...isn't this incest? Yes, technically it is, but this is 600 years before the Mosaic Law outlawed incest (Cf. Lev 18; 20).



30 Sarai was unable to conceive; she did not have a child.

30 Sarai was barren; she had no child.

30 Sarai was barren, so she had not borne children.

30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

- This was a problem...how was the Messiah supposed to come through a family where the wife was infertile? How was a nation to be born through a woman who could not have children? This is a problem so big that only God can fix it.

— The entire book of Genesis just goes from one crisis to another...

- The Messiah was supposed to come through Abel, but he was later murdered by Cain. So God brought Seth into the world.
- In Gen 6, Satan attempted to corrupt the human gene pool with fallen angels (demons), but God kept Noah's family tree clean, then spared him and his family and wiped out every other living thing.
- In Gen 10-11, all the nations of the world were corrupted by the Mother-Child Cult. So how is God going to get around every nation of the world being corrupted? He will create a new nation.

31 Now Terah took his son Abram, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and his **daughter-in-law** Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they departed together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to **the land of Canaan**; and they went as far as **Haran** and settled there.

31 Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they journeyed together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they had gone as far as Haran, they settled there,

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

- The call of Abraham (12:1) precedes this verse; this verse is Abraham's and his family's reaction to God's call

- "...daughter-in-law" - here, Sarai is identified as Terah's daughter-in-law, meaning she had already married Abram at the time they left Ur and headed toward Canaan; she was also Terah's daughter.

- "...the land of Canaan" - their final destination; however, Terah did not know that the final destination was Canaan. This phrase was stated from the perspective of the writer because he knew the whole story by this time.

— Who dwelt in the land of Canaan? The Canaanites, the cursed 4th son of Ham (Cf. 9:25). This is yet another crisis. God is saying, look, you've seen three other major crises so far, and I've had the answer and brought you through all of them. Now trust Me with this one as well, based on what I've done in the past.

— The text implies that Abram persuaded his father to take the family out of Ur of the Chaldees, at God's command, and head toward the land that God was going to show Abram (Canaan)

- However, there is an interruption in the journey in Haran, where they stayed until Terah died (a period of 25 years). Haran was the family's original home. When Terah got back there, he did not want to leave it again and chose to go no further.
- "...Haran" - the original birthplace of Terah
- There were essentially two routes Terah and his group could've taken to get from Ur to the land of Canaan: either directly west through the Arabian desert, which would've been much shorter (but would be impossible for transporting large herds), or up the Mesopotamian valley through Babylon, Nineveh, and over to Haran, where they stayed for a time.



32 The days of Terah were 205 years; and **Terah died in Haran**.

32 The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

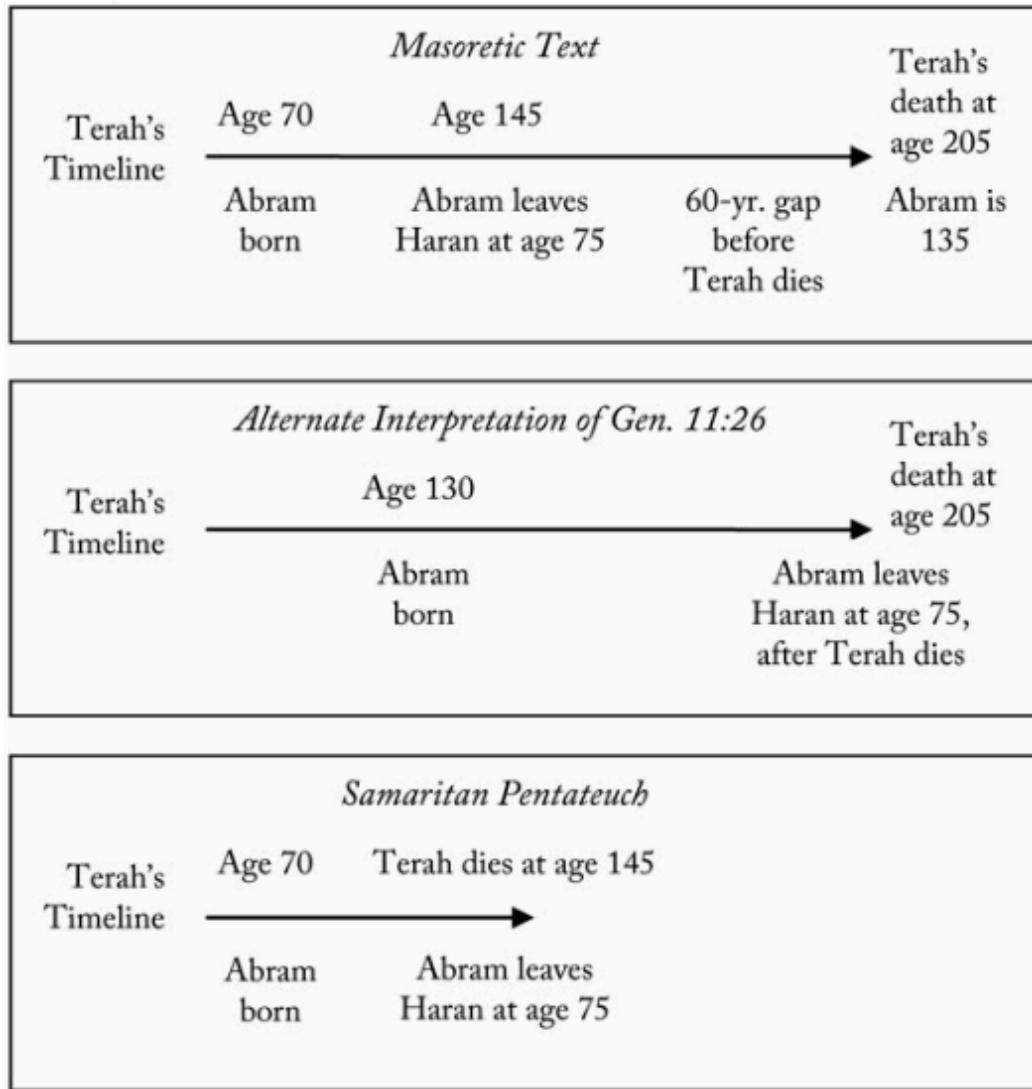
32 where Terah died at the age of 205 years.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

- "...Terah died in Haran" - once Terah and his group reached Haran, at some point during their stay there, Terah died

What is not stated in v27-32 is exactly when Abram left Haran for Canaan. Was it before or after his father's death? The key pieces of information are Terah's age at Abram's birth, Abram's age upon leaving Haran for Canaan, and Terah's age at his death. Also relevant is Acts 7:4, which makes a reference to this timeline. However, there appears to be a conflict between the dating in the Genesis and Acts accounts:

Timeline for Abram's Departure from Haran (see also note on 12:1)



Acts 7:4:

[ISV] So he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. Then after the death of his father, God had him move to this country where you now live.

[KJV] Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

The first interpretation option is the Masoretic Text. Gen 11:26 states that Terah, Abram's father, began to generate sons at age 70 (11:26). Assuming that Abram was his firstborn, Terah would have been 145 when Abram left Haran for Canaan, based on Abram's age at that time being 75 (12:4). Since 11:32 states Terah's age at death as 205, that would mean that Abram left Haran 60 years before his father died.

The best option for explaining the differences in the accounts in 11:27-32 and Acts 7:4 is to say that the author of Genesis applied a literary technique used elsewhere in the Bible; namely, to dispense with one person who is no longer relevant before moving ahead with the story of the main character. Therefore it was necessary to speak of Terah's death before Abram could move forward in response to God's call on his life (12:1-3). In this scenario, Abram is not viewed as the firstborn, but rather as having been born when his father Terah was 130 years old. Therefore, Terah's death at age 205 and Abram's departure at age 75 would coincide.

Abram continued on from Haran to Canaan, either waiting until after his father had died (if the Samaritan Text is correct) or leaving 60 years before his father died (if the Masoretic Text is correct). In Genesis, Moses tends to terminate the account of one individual who is no longer germane to the main history before continuing with the main storyline.