EVANGELICALISM'S SEARCH FOR CHRONOLOGICAL GAPS IN GENESIS 5 AND 11: A HISTORICAL, HERMENEUTICAL, AND LINGUISTIC CRITIQUE

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Abstract: This article sheds historical light on William Henry Green's influential article "Primeval Chronology" (1890), establishes the meaning of the hiphil *of* ילד *(translated "begat" in the AV) throughout Genesis 5 and 11, and analyzes Andrew Steinmann's recent case for chronological gaps. Interpreters did not challenge the chronological intent of the Genesis genealogies until the ascendancy of Darwinism in the 1860s. Green's article became the most famous attempt to disrupt the timeline. As a young scholar, Green had ardently defended the chronology, but prevailing scientific claims finally compelled him to abandon this conviction. Recent scholarship (as well as a censored article from the mid-1890s) has demonstrated that Green only showed the possibility of genealogical gaps, which do not entail chronological gaps. Steinmann bases his unprecedented argument for chronological gaps on an idiosyncratic semantics of causation (which he applies to the* hiphil *of* ילד*) that contradicts the consensus among Hebraists and other linguists.*

Key words: Genesis 5, Genesis 11, genealogies, chronology, historical Adam, age of humanity, William H. Green, Old Princeton, science and Scripture, hermeneutics, Hebrew grammar, hiphil *of* ילד*, semantics of causation*

Biblical interpreters did not challenge the chronological intent of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 until the nineteenth century.[1] The unanimous and oft-

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[1] Historian Ronald L. Numbers ("'The Most Important Biblical Discovery of Our Time': William Henry Green and the Demise of Ussher's Chronology," *CH* 69 [June 2000]: 257–76) says that evangelicals did not begin to abandon the chronological interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11 until "the 1860s" (p. 257) and that William Henry Green "initiated the evangelical assault" against the chronology in his 1863 response to Bishop Colenso (p. 261).

Mathematician and natural philosopher John Playfair's 1802 defense of pioneering old-earth scientist James Hutton (1726–1797) confirms that a non-chronological interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11 was still unimagined at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Hutton instigated old-earth thought (see Jack Repcheck, *The Man Who Found Time: James Hutton and the Discovery of the Earth's Antiquity* [Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2003]) and "put forward his geological ideas … in *Theory of the Earth* published in 1795" (Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearley, *The Bible, Rocks and Time: Geological Evidence for the Age of the Earth* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008], 84). The main objection to Hutton's theory was that it contradicted the timeline in Genesis 5 and 11. Professor Playfair, in his widely-read defense of Hutton, addressed this objection by arguing "that the chronology of Moses relates only to the human race" (John Playfair, *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth* [Edinburgh: William Creech, 1802], 127). He wrote, "This objection would no doubt be of weight, if the high antiquity in question were not restricted merely to the globe of the earth, but were also extended to the human race. That the origin of mankind does not go back beyond six or seven thousand years, is a position so involved in the narrative of the Mosaic

expressed consensus for millennia was that the following recurring formula establishes a calculable chronology from Adam to Abraham:

When A had lived X years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] B.[2]

This construction is unique, appearing nowhere else in Scripture or in extant ancient Near Eastern literature.[3] It occurs 19 times throughout Genesis 5 and 11 MT (see 5:3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28, 32; 11:10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26).[4] Consider Gen 5:6 and 5:9 as two examples:

When Seth had lived 105 years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] Enosh (Gen 5:6).

When Enosh had lived 90 years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] Kenan (Gen 5:9).[5]

The chronogenealogical formula specifies the year ("when A had lived X years") in which the named descendant ("B") was born ("brought forth") to the named ancestor ("A"). The spine of the Bible's primeval timeline is thus formed.

The key verb וַיּוֹלֶד (a *hiphil* of יָלַד) means "he brought forth [B]" or "he caused [B] to be born" or "he brought [B] to birth."[6] It refers to the birth of the direct object, B, whether he was an immediate son of A or not. The text indicates the age of ancestor A at the birth of descendant B. Thus, the chronology is gapless, even if some generations between A and B were omitted from the genealogy.[7] These 19 formulaic links create two unbroken chronological chains, one from Adam to Noah (Gen 5:3–32) and another from Shem to Terah (11:10–26).[8] The MT

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books, that any thing inconsistent with it, would no doubt stand in opposition to the testimony of those ancient records" (p. 125). Until well into the nineteenth century, old-earth and young-earth proponents alike held that Scripture "no doubt" dates the creation of Adam to c. 4000 BC (MT) or c. 5500 BC (LXX).

  [2] For a small sample of interpreters (extending back to the pre-Christian era) who dated the creation of Adam on the basis of Genesis 5 and 11, see Jeremy Sexton, "Who Was Born When Enosh Was 90? A Semantic Reevaluation of William Henry Green's Chronological Gaps," *WTJ* 77 (2015): 193–94. The list of 21 chronographers and chronographies there does not include Jerome (*Chronicon*, c. 380), Syncellus (*Chronography*, c. 810), and many others who built on the works of Josephus (*Antiquities*, c. 93), Theophilus of Antioch (*Apologia ad Autolycum*, c. 181), Julius Africanus (*Chronographiae*, c. 221), and Eusebius (*Chronicon*, c. 325), who took their timelines back to Adam (e.g. Eusebius begins "with the forefather of our race, called Adam" [*Chronicon*, Book 1, trans. Andrew Smith (2008), http://tertullian.org /fathers/eusebius_chronicon_01_text.htm]). The church's keen interest in the chronology of early Genesis did not start waning until the nineteenth century.

  [3] Richard S. Hess ("The Genealogies of Genesis 1–11 and Comparative Literature," *Bib* 70 [1989]: 242) concluded, "None of the comparative Ancient Near Eastern examples proposed by scholars actually have a precise parallel with any of the genealogical forms found in Genesis 1–11."

  [4] In Gen 5:32 and 11:10, the formula replaces "had lived X years" with the synonymous "was X years old." In Gen 5:32 and 11:26, the formula includes three sons as such: "When A was X years old / had lived X years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] B₁ and B₂ and B₃" (see n. 8).

  [5] All translations of Scripture throughout this paper are mine unless otherwise noted.

  [6] Sexton, "Who Was Born," 195–96 (the verb יָלַד means "to bear, give birth to, bring forth, bring to birth").

  [7] Ibid., 197–207.

  [8] The genealogies by themselves do not indicate when Shem and Abram were born to Noah and Terah. Genesis 5:32 and 11:26 are unique in that each verse names three sons (see n. 4), listing first the

dates the creation of Adam to c. 4000 BC and the flood to c. 2400 BC. The LXX dates Adam to c. 5500 BC and the flood to c. 3200 BC.[9]

I. ATTEMPTS TO DISRUPT THE CHRONOLOGY

During the second half of the nineteenth century, evangelical scholars increasingly felt pressure to reconcile the history imbedded in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 with the new results of scientific inquiry. Two theories emerged. One prevailed.

1. *Gardiner's attempt.* In 1873, Frederic Gardiner published his now mostly forgotten defense of chronological gaps.[10] He suggested that the chronogenealogical formula means "When A had lived X years, he brought forth [his firstborn, and later in life brought forth] B." He wrote, "Thus Seth, e.g., might have begun to be a father at 105, but might have actually begotten Enos[h] at any reasonable time during the 807 years which he afterwards lived."[11] This theory would add at most around 8,000 years to the Adam-to-Abraham chronology. It does not allow for unlimited time gaps, because it requires that B was born during A's lifetime.

The foremost problem with Gardiner's proposal is that the text states two times that B himself (not his older sibling) was born when A was X years old. For example, we are told twice that Enosh himself was born when Seth was 105. Genesis 5:6 says it first: "When Seth had lived 105 years, *he brought forth Enosh* [וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־אֱנוֹשׁ]." Genesis 5:7 then confirms it: "Seth lived 807 years *after he brought forth Enosh* [אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־אֱנוֹשׁ], and brought forth other sons and daughters." Scripture thus bears a twofold witness to the year of each *named* son's birth. Gardiner tried to make Enosh one of the "other sons and daughters" that Seth brought forth during his remaining 807 years. But Seth's remaining 807 years occurred "after he brought forth Enosh." Enosh could not have been born during the 807 years that

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son in the line of promise (cf. Gen 3:15), even though he is not the oldest and not the one born at the specified begetting age. This literary move serves the theme in Genesis of younger brothers (i.e. Seth, Shem, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Joseph, Perez, and Ephraim) replacing older ones. Notably, Genesis fully accounts for the missing time that 5:32 and 11:26 create, providing the data necessary to deduce the ages of Noah (502) and Terah (130) at the births of Shem and Abram (see Gen 7:6; 11:10, 32; 12:4; cf. Acts 7:4). The Bible thus painstakingly keeps its comprehensive timeline intact while advancing one of its theological motifs. For further discussion on how Gen 5:32 and 11:26 are used illegitimately to discredit the chronological interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11, see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 207–9.

[9] For a text-critical defense of the anteriority and superiority of the chronological data in the LXX of Genesis 5 and 11, see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 210–18; Jeremy Sexton and Henry B. Smith Jr., "Primeval Chronology Restored: Revisiting the Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11," *Bible and Spade* 29 (2016): 45–49; Henry B. Smith Jr., "Methuselah's Begetting Age in Genesis 5:25 and the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Closer Look at the Textual and Historical Evidence," *Answers Research Journal* 10 (2017): 169–79.

[10] Frederic Gardiner, "The Chronological Value of the Genealogy in Genesis V," *BSac* 30 (1873): 323–33.

[11] Ibid., 325.

followed his own birth. Gardiner showed no awareness of this glaring contradiction.[12] His thesis never gained much traction.

2. *Green's attempt.* In 1890, William Henry Green of Princeton Theological Seminary published his seminal article "Primeval Chronology," which superseded Gardiner's failed endeavor and eventually became the dominant view among evangelical scholars.[13] Green argued for the possibility of omitted generations in Genesis 5 and 11, assuming that genealogical gaps would entail chronological ones.

a. *Green's journey to chronological gaps.* As a young pastor and professor, Green adamantly upheld the existence of a gapless, computable chronology in Genesis 5 and 11. He believed that God's written "revelation" (in contradistinction to "Science") "dates for us exactly" the creation of Adam, and that any ostensible evidence to the contrary must be categorically dismissed, since the inspired text's chronological intent is undeniable. Quoting from Green's sermon and lecture notes from 1849 and 1851, Numbers writes,

> [Green] insisted that the world's "present inhabitants … were formed by the immediate creative power of God at a period not very remote—a period which revelation dates for us exactly, but which Science can only venture to approximate." Still wedded to Ussher's chronology for human history, he was not yet willing to entertain evidence of human antiquity. "If we found authentic records or monuments any where reaching back for millions of years *or even for ten thousand years*," he said in 1849, "that wd. be of course in flat contradiction to the Mosaic record." By the time he delivered his inaugural discourse at the seminary, in the fall of 1851, he was warning of a "grand battle" over the integrity of the Bible in which "enthusiasm for science" and "foreign researches" (that is, German biblical scholarship) were on the antibiblical side.[14]

By 1863, however, Green had redrawn his battle lines. He no longer viewed Genesis 5 and 11 as unambiguous, and he had cultivated considerable confidence in science's ability to date mankind's beginning. In his response to Bishop Colenso's attack on the historical reliability of the Pentateuch, Green created exegetical wriggle room in case "scientific research should ever demonstrate … that the race of man has existed upon the earth for a longer period than the ordinary Hebrew Chronology will allow."[15] Green wanted his readers to be assured, should science ever preclude the straightforward reading ("the *prima facie* impression") of Genesis 5 and 11,

> that there is an element of uncertainty in a computation of time which rests upon genealogies, as the sacred chronology so largely does. Who is to certify us that the ante-diluvian and ante-Abrahamic genealogies have not been condensed

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[12] For extended critical analysis of Gardiner's article, see Smith B. Goodenow, *Bible Chronology Carefully Unfolded* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1896), 319–21; Sexton, "Who Was Born," 207–9.

[13] William Henry Green, "Primeval Chronology," *BSac* 47 (1890): 285–303.

[14] Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 264–65 (emphasis added).

[15] William Henry Green, *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso* (New York: John Wiley, 1863), 128.

in the same manner as the post-Abrahamic? If Matthew omitted names from the ancestry of our Lord in order to equalize the three great periods over which he passes, may not Moses have done the same in order to bring out seven generations from Adam to Enoch, and ten from Adam to Noah? Our current chronology is based upon the *prima facie* impression of these genealogies. This we shall adhere to, until we see good reason for giving it up. But if these recently discovered indications of the antiquity of man, over which scientific circles are now so excited, shall, when carefully inspected and thoroughly weighed, demonstrate all that any have imagined they might demonstrate, what then? They will simply show that the popular chronology is based upon a wrong interpretation, and that a select and partial register of ante-Abrahamic names has been mistaken for a complete one.[16]

Although Green had begun to hedge on "the sacred chronology," it was still his position by default: "This we shall adhere to, until we see good reason for giving it up."

The block quote above, a mere side note in Green's counter to Colenso, "initiated the evangelical assault on Ussher's chronology" and "alter[ed] the course of Christian apologetics."[17] This one paragraph provided great comfort to many evangelical scholars who had accepted a view of mankind's antiquity that was at odds with the ancient interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11. For example, Princeton colleague Charles Hodge

> welcomed Green's insight as an exegetical lifesaver. The famous theologian's son Alexander Hodge recalled his father's reaction to Green's suggestion: "I can well remember my father walking up and down in his study when he heard (about it) and saying, 'What a relief it is to me that he should have said that.'"[18]

G. F. Wright, editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra* and one of the leading advocates of an old earth and an old humanity, discovered Green's hypothesis in the late 1880s.[19] Wright initially approached Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield for help in resolving the tension between recent scientific conclusions and the long-held interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11. Warfield pointed Wright to Green.[20] After his meeting with Green, Wright felt "reassured that the biblical genealogies did indeed provide the wriggling room he needed to harmonize his findings about human antiquity with his belief in the accuracy of the Genesis record."[21] The relieved Wright invited Green to expand the argument he first tested against Bishop Colenso into a pub-

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 261.

[18] Ibid., 266. Princetonian George Macloskie, in a letter to G. F. Wright in 1904, appraised Green's thesis as "the most important biblical discovery of our time" (p. 257).

[19] See Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 20–36.

[20] Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 269. B. B. Warfield ("On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race," *The Princeton Theological Review* 9 [1911]: 3) later lauded Green's "illuminating article."

[21] Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 269–70.

lishable article for *Bibliotheca Sacra*. So "in 1890 the journal featured a nineteen-page fleshed-out version simply titled 'Primeval Chronology,' in which Green offered evangelical scholars 'the needed relief' from the uncomfortable … constrictions imposed on them by Ussher's chronology."[22]

The mounting pressure from the scientific community had caused Green to become increasingly concerned about the discrepancy between "the Scripture chronology" and "the results of scientific inquiry respecting the antiquity of man and the age of the world," and about finding "the solution of the whole matter."[23] In his early days as an OT scholar, on the principle that one should not question the meaning of any biblical text that is as clear as Gen 5:3–32 and 11:10–26, Green trusted that the solution lay in a reassessment of the conclusions of science. But in his later years, he sought the solution in a reassessment of the meaning of the biblical text. In his article, Green fully forsook the chronological interpretation. The view he once held resolutely and outspokenly, he now considered "well-nigh incredible," concluding confidently that "Genesis 5 and 11 were not intended to be used, and cannot properly be used, for the construction of a chronology."[24] He had moved a long way from his former convictions about the clarity of the Genesis genealogies and the inability of science to cast doubt on their chronological intent.

On the first two pages of his 1890 article, Green inserted an excerpt from his 1863 response to Colenso. This excerpt includes most of the block quote above from that earlier work but leaves out the following sentence: "This [chronology] we shall adhere to, until we see good reason for giving it up." Green left no trace of his earlier commitment to the chronological interpretation.

b. *Green's case for chronological gaps.* In his article, Green argued ably for the possibility of *genealogical* gaps in Genesis 5 and 11 by appealing to other biblical genealogies that skip names (e.g. Ezra 7:3; Matt 1:8; cf. 1 Chr 3:11–12; 6:7–11). He contended that it is impossible to know, for example, "whether Kenan was an immediate or a remote descendant of Enosh."[25] He also showed that the *hiphil* verb וַיּוֹלֶד in the chronogenealogical formula can take a remote descendant as its object (cf. Deut 4:25 and 2 Kgs 20:18). All of this is true, and yet none of it implies the possibility of *chronological* gaps in Genesis 5 and 11, a logical leap that Green made but failed to defend or even acknowledge.

Missing time does not follow from missing generations.[26] In fact, chronological gaps are semantically impossible, because the text specifies the year in which A "brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד]" B. Whether B was an immediate son of A or a grandson or a more distant descendant makes no difference to the chronology. Genesis 5:9 says, "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] Kenan." This means that

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[22] Ibid., 270.

[23] Green, "Primeval Chronology," 285.

[24] Ibid., 286, 303.

[25] Ibid., 297.

[26] This paragraph and the next one summarize the arguments in Sexton, "Who Was Born," 197–201.

Kenan (the object of וַיּוֹלֶד) was born when Enosh was 90. The chronogenealogies indicate the age (X) of each patriarch (A) when the successive patriarch (B) was born, even if some names were skipped between A and B. Therefore, the text accounts for every year (though perhaps not every generation) between the creation of Adam and the birth of Abraham.

Green circumvented this exegetical reality by positing in one place in his article that the chronogenealogical formula can mean "When A had lived X years, he brought forth [the son from whom sprang] B." For example, he supposed that Gen 5:9 can mean, "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he brought forth [the son from whom sprang] Kenan." This assumption is the linchpin of Green's case. It inserts B's anonymous ancestor into the formula, creating a gap of unknown length between the birth of this unnamed ancestor and the birth of B himself. Green only mentioned this crucial premise once, almost in passing, in a comment on Gen 5:9. He claimed that if Kenan was "a remote descendant of Enosh" (which is possible), then "when Enosh was ninety years of age … one was born from whom Kenan sprang."[27] This assertion—that "he brought forth B" can mean "he brought forth [the son from whom sprang] B"—is the extent of Green's semantic argument for chronological gaps. It is the bridge from missing generations to missing time. And it is as unwarranted as it is essential. There are no grounds for thinking that anyone other than Kenan, the verb's direct object, was born when Enosh was 90. A universal linguistic principle, which Waltke and O'Connor apply specifically to Hebrew, is that "the *direct-object accusative* is the recipient of a transitive verb's action."[28] This means that B, the direct-object accusative, is the recipient of the action of the transitive verb וַיּוֹלֶד ("he brought forth"). There is no justification for inserting B's anonymous ancestor into the text and making him the recipient of וַיּוֹלֶד instead of B.

c. *Goodenow's (censored) response to Green.* Nineteenth-century scholar Smith Bartlett Goodenow was the first to expose the deficiencies in Green's case. Soon after Green published his paper, Goodenow wrote an incisive rebuttal in which he demonstrated that וַיּוֹלֶד in the chronogenealogical formula "indicates *the birth of the person named* after it; and the date of that birth being given, it matters not how many un-named generations intervene. The *chronology* is fixed and unchanged. No such anomaly is known in Scripture, or in reason, as a dating given to an *un-named ancestor's* birth."[29]

Goodenow submitted his refutation of Green's gaps, along with a second manuscript on the question of pre-Adamic hominids, to *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which had published other articles by Goodenow. Editor G. F. Wright sent Goodenow an acceptance letter in which he issued high praise for both manuscripts. This letter, the body of which follows, was dated June 29, 1893:

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[27] Green, "Primeval Chronology," 297–98.
[28] *IBHS*, 164 (emphasis original).
[29] Goodenow, *Bible Chronology*, 322 (emphasis original).

I have taken pains to read over, in connection with your table of contents, the two Mss. which you sent me, and which I see are two chapters of your great work [*Bible Chronology Carefully Unfolded*]. Permit me to say, that I have the highest admiration of your faithfulness in pursuing through so many years the intricate lines of investigation which you have been following, and an equal admiration for the clearness of your style, and the logical character of your arrangement of material. The two Mss. which I have in hand ought to be published in the Bibliotheca, and I can say to you positively, that if you will let them remain in my hands, I will work them into the January and April numbers.[30]

Despite Wright's adulation and assurance, Goodenow's response to Green did not make it into *Bibliotheca Sacra*. The journal only published Goodenow's manuscript on pre-Adamic hominids.[31] Wright then went on to promulgate Green's theory without ever mentioning or trying to account for its shortcomings that Goodenow had articulated in his inexplicably spiked article. During the next two decades "no one contributed more to popularizing Green's discovery than Wright, who effusively praised his new mentor for showing that 'the forms of speech in Genesis permit us to place Adam as far back as the earliest date for which we shall find satisfactory and specific evidence.'"[32] Indeed, "Wright devoted eight pages of his *Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* (1906) to summarizing Green's argument against Ussher, reprinted Green's 'Primeval Chronology' in its entirety in his *Origin and Antiquity of Man* (1912), and frequently alluded to Green in other publications."[33] What shape might the subsequent discussion of Genesis 5 and 11 have taken if Wright had published Goodenow's reply to Green?

d. *Conclusion.* Green needed to demonstrate rather than assume that וַיּוֹלֶד can refer to the birth of someone other than its explicit direct object. Advocates of Green's gaps still need to show that the statement "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] Kenan" does not mean that Kenan, the verb's object, was born when Enosh was 90. Green did not even attempt to establish the linguistic legitimacy of making Enosh's unnamed son "from whom Kenan sprang" the recipient of וַיּוֹלֶד instead of Kenan himself. The chronological gaps that have given cognitive rest to evangelical academics over the last century and a half are lexically and grammatically untenable.

3. *Steinmann's attempt to uphold Green's gaps.* Andrew E. Steinmann has put forth a new semantic idea in an effort to maintain missing time in the chronogenealogies.[34] He seeks to defend the chronological gaps that Green fabricated by supply-

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31 Smith B. Goodenow, "Primeval Man," *BSac* 51 (1894): 158–64.

32 Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 270.

33 Ibid.

34 Andrew E. Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?" *BSac* 174 (2017): 145–48. Here he responds to Sexton, "Who Was Born," which Steinmann misconstrues elsewhere, claiming twice ("Gaps," 141 nn. 1, 154) that it argues against genealogical gaps. "Who Was Born" explicitly *concedes* genealogical gaps and only argues against chronological gaps. When I emailed Steinmann about his error, before his article was published, he insisted that "Who Was Born" does "not really concede"

ing the linguistic support that they lack.[35] On the one hand, Steinmann's proposal (examined at length below) is unprecedented; I am not aware of any Hebraist or other linguist who advocates the semantics of causation on which Steinmann builds his case. On the other hand, there is nothing unique about the hermeneutics driving his search for chronological gaps; the interpretive commitments that he adopts have become commonplace in evangelical scholarship's approach to Genesis 1–11.

a. *Steinmann's methodological aims and assumptions.* Steinmann's starting point is that the chronogenealogies "must contain gaps." In the opening sentence of his recent paper, Steinmann aligns himself with the "fairly widespread consensus among evangelical scholars that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 *must contain gaps.*"[36] He points to "extrabiblical historical records" and concludes that an intact scriptural timeline would contradict "evidence from ancient Near Eastern chronology."[37] This resonates with fellow evangelical scholar K. A. Kitchen's statement that Bible readers no longer have the option of simply "counting the Genesis figures continuously as did the worthy Archbishop Ussher in the carefree days when no evidence from outside the Bible was even imagined," for "in the context of that external data, any such literalism fails."[38] The extrabiblical evidence, insist Kitchen and Steinmann, renders a gapless chronology from Adam to Abraham unfeasible. The approach to Scripture's primeval history that prevailed until the nineteenth century is a nonstarter in light of modern knowledge, they determine.

Steinmann says that to make a credible case for an unbroken chronology, first "one must offer a convincing alternate interpretation of the Egyptian and Sumerian evidence. As far as I know, none is forthcoming. The evidence suggests none will be."[39] According to Steinmann, evangelical students of Genesis 5 and 11 must either find chronological gaps or provide a convincing alternative interpretation of ancient Near Eastern history. Since the latter option is not viable in his estimation, we are left with the former: we *must* find gaps in Scripture's primeval timeline.

A problem for proponents of chronological gaps is that biblical interpreters have been reading these genealogies as intact *chrono*genealogies since before Christ. The view of the evangelical consensus that Steinmann mentions (i.e. Green's theory) did not arise until the second half of the nineteenth century. And the consensus did not form around this view until the second half of the twentieth century.[40] During the previous millennia, the unanimous consensus in both the Jewish community and the church was that Genesis intended to communicate an unbroken chronolo-

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missing generations, since it ends up (so he claimed) "taking the concession off the table." He misunderstands "Who Was Born."

[35] Steinmann does not mention Green but arrives at his gaps nonetheless (see esp. sections I.3.d, III.1, and IV below).

[36] Steinmann, "Gaps," 141 (emphasis added).

[37] Ibid., 153.

[38] K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 441. For a critique of Kitchen's argument and tendentious use of "literalism," see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 205.

[39] Steinmann, "Gaps," 154.

[40] Numbers, "Most Important Biblical Discovery," 257, 272.

gy of humanity from Adam onward. Exponents of missing time have not found anyone before the 1800s who thought that these genealogical tables are amenable to chronological gaps (see n. 1). Interpreters must appreciate this neglected fact, which is especially remarkable in light of how much attention Genesis 5 and 11 have received over the ages (see n. 2). The people of God before and after Christ have paid close attention to these chronogenealogies, writing prolifically on them and viewing them as foundational to humankind's history. If the exegetical possibility of chronological gaps has existed in the text since the time of Moses, it is difficult to explain how it got overlooked until recently.

In response to this difficulty, Steinmann suggests that "perhaps many or all" premodern interpreters "would … have reconsidered their approach to the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies had they been aware of the evidence for ancient Egyptian and Sumerian chronology as we are."[41] This wishful speculation shows awareness of the problem but stops short of a satisfying response.

b. *Steinmann's case for chronological gaps: a new semantics of causation.* Linguists, including Hebraists, agree that a causative verb *describes* or *refers to* the caused event and merely *implies* a prior causing action.[42] With an active causative, the subject performs an implied causing action and the object participates in the caused event described by the verb. For example, in the sentence *Joe broke the window* or the synonymous *Joe caused the window to break*, the causative *broke* or *caused to break* refers to the caused event, the window's breaking. The causative also implies, but does not refer to, a causing action performed by Joe—perhaps he threw a ball at the window.[43] Steinmann defies this conventional semantics of causation in his case for chronological gaps. He posits that a causative actually describes the causing action (what he calls "the triggering action") rather than the caused event ("the resulting situation").[44] From this idiosyncratic premise, he reasons that the causative וַיּוֹלֶד does not refer to the caused event, descendant B's birth. He holds that this verb refers instead to ancestor A's causing or triggering action that initiated the process leading to B's birth. Accordingly, when A was X years old, he performed the reproductive act that initiated the process leading to the birth of B. The date of B's birth is therefore unknown; we only know the year in which A triggered the process that culminated in B's birth. The gap between the causing action of A (at X years old) and the birth of B (date unknown) could easily span "a dozen generations," says Steinmann, so that centuries or even millennia "could be unmentioned."[45]

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[41] Steinmann, "Gaps," 157.

[42] Linguist Leonard Talmy uses the terms "final resulting event" (caused event) and "causing event" (causing action) in the quote in section II.1 below.

[43] In section II below, I discuss in greater depth the syntax and semantics of causative constructions.

[44] Steinmann, "Gaps," 147.

[45] Ibid., 154. Steinmann concludes that "one gap of a dozen generations in the post-flood genealogies … might have 654 years unmentioned" on the basis of the following faulty reasoning: "the average age of a father at the birth of his son in the post-flood genealogy … is 54 years old (54 x 12 = 654)." First, 54 x 12 = 648. Second, the correct average is 43 years old, as Steinmann states on p. 149.

Steinmann appeals to Mal 2:8 as support for his unique semantics of causation. This verse contains the following rebuke to Israel's corrupt priests: "*You have caused* many people *to stumble* [הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם] by your instruction." Steinmann says that the *hiphil* verb הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם "you have caused [many people] to stumble" does not refer to the caused event, the stumbling of the many people. He believes it refers instead to the causing action that triggered this stumbling, namely, the instruction "that the priests gave the people."[46] In other words, Steinmann thinks that the event described by הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם occurred when the priests instructed rather than when the people stumbled. Thus, הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם strikingly does not refer to the event expressed by its root. The root of הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם (כשל) expresses *stumbling*, but Steinmann has determined that this verb refers to *instructing* in Mal 2:8. On his view, stumbling is the one event that the *hiphil* of כשל could never describe, because this verb will always refer to a prior causing action that led to the stumbling. Ironically, then, the *hiphil* of כשל can refer to a broad spectrum of actions outside the semantic range of its root but cannot refer to the event expressed by its root.

This is not how causatives work. The causative הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם (as well as וַיּוֹלֶד) refers to the event expressed by its root, the caused event. A verb, whether a causative or not, always expresses an event that corresponds to the meaning of its root. So הִכְשַׁלְתֶּם refers to the *stumbling* of its object (the many people) and וַיּוֹלֶד to the *birth* of its object (B). Neither verb contains in its semantic content any reference to the causing action. Only the caused event is described. Therefore, *a time indicator associated with a causative verb* (as in the chronogenealogical formula) *specifies the time of the caused event, not the time of the causing action*. Steinmann offers no reasons to reject conventional linguistics on this point. In fact, he appears to be unaware that he puts forth a semantics of causation that deviates so thoroughly from standard accounts.

Hebrew has other ways to express the causing action that leads to the birth of descendants. For example, Genesis uses ידע "to know" in 4:1, 17, 25 (a genealogical context) and שכב "to lie with" in 30:16 to describe the father's triggering act that culminates in the birth of a descendant. No Hebrew writer would ever need to use any form of ילד, a verb that describes birth, to refer to the causing reproductive action of a father. If the author of Gen 5:9 had wanted to indicate when Enosh lay with his wife (thereby triggering the process that led to Kenan's birth), he could have used the diction in Gen 4:1 and 4:17 as such: "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Kenan's father" (the Hebrew word for *father*—אָב—can denote a remote ancestor). Or he could have modeled the less verbose phraseology in Gen 4:25 as such: "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he knew his wife, and she bore Kenan's father."

Everyone agrees that the chronogenealogical formula dates some event; something significant happened when A was X years old. If we conclude that the formula intends to date A's act of inseminating his wife or the subsequent concep-

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[46] Ibid., 146.

tion of B's ancestor or the birth of B's ancestor nine months later, we must ask why the author did not express this with the readily available words and syntax that would have communicated it clearly (cf. Gen 4:1, 17, 25) but instead used a unique construction whose meaning eluded the people of God until the nineteenth century.

An equally important question is why the author would date A's causing action in the first place. Why would God specify the age of Enosh when he performed the triggering act that eventually culminated in Kenan's birth? Steinmann proffers unpersuasive reasons. For example, he says that the intent of the recurring dates (the 19 begetting ages) might be to show "that the persons in the genealogies were actual historical persons, not fictions or fictionalized historical persons."[47] But surely anyone willing to relegate the *persons* in Genesis 5 and 11 to fiction would be equally ready to fictionalize any accompanying *ages*, especially such extraordinarily high ones. Steinmann admits that his main conjecture (that the author is dating the "onset of virility" or perhaps simply when men "came to marry and have children") "may have nothing to do with it."[48] Actually, dating the onset of virility or the beginning of paternity cannot have anything to do with it, because some of the patriarchs fathered children before the specified dates (Seth was not Adam's firstborn, and Gen 10:22 intimates that Arpachshad was not Shem's; conceivably, none of the sons in the line of promise in Genesis 5 and 11 is a firstborn—see n. 8). Unable to produce a compelling non-chronological purpose for the meticulously placed begetting ages, Steinmann concludes that the reason for including these dates possibly "has been irretrievably lost over time."[49] He thus confirms Goodenow's point that imposing a non-chronological interpretation on Genesis 5 and 11 "*takes away all purpose* on the part of the sacred writer in giving the birth-dates he has so carefully arranged."[50]

Finally, we should ask what the chronogenealogical formula would look like if the author had wanted to date the birth of descendant B in relation to ancestor A.

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[47] Ibid., 148.

[48] Ibid., 148–49.

[49] Ibid., 149.

[50] Goodenow, *Bible Chronology*, 322 (emphasis original). Steinmann cites this quote but attributes it to the wrong work ("Gaps," 148 n. 21). He responds, "The contention that the information would be superfluous does not square with other Old Testament genealogies. For instance, the ultimate ages of both Kohath (133 years) and Amram (137 years) are given in the genealogy of Moses and Aaron (Exod. 6:18–20). Are we to assume that this is superfluous information, since we cannot use it to construct a chronology of Moses's ancestry?" (p. 149). Steinmann misses the point, which is that *begetting* ages (not ages at death) in a genealogy are superfluous unless we can use them to construct a chronology. The begetting ages in Genesis 5 and 11 can be used to construct a timeline, and the argument is that chronology is their raison d'être. In response, Steinmann points to ages that cannot be used to construct a timeline (ages at death) and thus makes no connection with the argument. The genealogy of Moses and Aaron in Exod 6:16–20 contains no begetting ages. It is therefore not a *chrono*genealogy but only a genealogy that supplies ages at death. As such, it is a perfect example of what the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 might have looked like if the author had wanted to give the patriarchs' ages at death without providing a chronology. On the multifarious problems that the begetting ages pose to any non-chronological interpretation, see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 201–4, which includes a discussion of Exod 6:16–20.

How could God have communicated clearly to us how old ancestor Enosh was when his descendant Kenan was born? In fact, *no better wording for this purpose was available to the author than what appears in the text*: "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he brought forth Kenan." Hence Goodenow concluded that "no mode of speech could be contrived to give successive dates to Bible generations if those tables in Genesis be denied as such."[51]

The evidence from usage alone prevents Steinmann's conception of causation from applying to the *hiphil* (active causative) and *hophal* (passive causative) of ילד, which occur at least 28 times in the Hebrew Bible outside of genealogies (Gen 17:20; 40:20; 48:6; Lev 25:45; Deut 4:25; 28:41; Judg 11:1; 2 Kgs 20:18; Isa 39:7; 45:10; 55:10; 59:4; 66:9 [2x]; Jer 16:3; 29:6 [36:6 LXX]; Ezek 16:4, 5; 18:10, 14; 47:22; Job 38:28; Eccl 5:13 [14 ET]; 6:3; 1 Chr 14:3; 2 Chr 11:21; 13:21; 24:3). In each instance, ילד describes the caused event, birth (whether literal, metaphorical, or hypothetical).[52] No verse is clarified by postulating that ילד refers to *a causing action that led to* the birth event. Several of these verses (i.e. Gen 40:20; Deut 4:25; 2 Kgs 20:18; Isa 39:7; 45:10; 66:9; Ezek 16:4, 5) directly disprove such a postulate.[53] So even if we were to grant Steinmann's problematic contention that causatives refer to causing actions, the lexical data would still indicate that this supposed general principle of causation at the very least does not apply to the *hiphil* and *hophal* of ילד.

c. *Steinmann's different semantics in 2014.* Steinmann has not always believed that וַיּוֹלֶד in the chronogenealogical formula refers to A's causing action. In 2014, he stated that this verb describes the birth of descendant B, the caused event, at the specified age of ancestor A. He wrote, "These genealogies list the age of each ancestor [A] at the birth of his descendant [B]."[54] By making A and B an *ancestor* and a *descendant* instead of a *father* and a *son*, Steinmann thought he had created chronological gaps.[55] However, he had only created genealogical gaps. His (correct) statement above does not allow for missing time; it explicitly affirms that descendant B was born at the specified age of ancestor A, thus keeping the timeline intact. Steinmann made the common mistake of assuming that genealogical gaps imply chronological ones.[56]

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[51] Goodenow, *Bible Chronology*, 323.

[52] In the LXX, Judg 11:1; 1 Chr 14:3; Job 38:28; Isa 55:10; 59:4; Ezek 16:4, 5 translate ילד with τίκτω/ἐκτίκτω, "to bear, give birth to, bring forth"; Jer 36:6 uses the synonym τεκνοποιέω; Gen 17:20; 48:6; Deut 28:41; 4:25; 2 Kgs 20:18; 2 Chr 11:21; 13:21; 24:3; Eccl 5:13; 6:3; Isa 39:7; 45:10; 66:9; Jer 16:3; Ezek 18:10, 14; 47:22 use the synonym γεννάω; Lev 25:45 uses γίνομαι, "to become, be born"; Gen 40:20 uses the noun γένεσις, "birth."

[53] For further discussion on the Hebrew of Gen 40:20; Deut 4:25; 2 Kgs 20:18; Isa 39:7; 45:10, see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 195–96, 199–201.

[54] R. Reed Lessing and Andrew E. Steinmann, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 56. Steinmann wrote the section on chronological gaps.

[55] Ibid. Steinmann's first argument against an intact chronology is that "the Hebrew words for *father* (אב) and *son* (בן) can at times denote *ancestor* and *descendant*."

[56] C. John Collins made the same oversight in his 1994 article, where he said that the chronogenealogical formula can mean "When A had lived X years, he became the ancestor of [וַיּוֹלֶד] B" ("How Old

Since 2014, Steinmann has abandoned the view that וַיּוֹלֶד describes the birth of descendant B. He now contends that this verb describes ancestor A's causing action, making descendant B's year of birth unknowable. He does not discuss why he changed his mind on this important semantic point. He apparently altered his interpretation after becoming aware recently that his earlier formulation created missing generations but not the desired missing time.[57]

d. *Steinmann's ambiguity on the identity of A's causing action.* The fundamental problem with Steinmann's proposal, as we have seen, is the assumption that וַיּוֹלֶד in the chronogenealogical formula refers to ancestor A's causing action rather than descendant B's birth (the caused event). But even within this misguided framework, Steinmann equivocates on the identity of ancestor A's causing action, and it is important to consider why.

Initially, Steinmann rightly recognizes that the causing action is "an act of" the ancestor himself, "since he is the subject of the verb"; it is "his action," so it naturally must take place "during his lifetime."[58] This is an accurate understanding of the nature of the causing action: it is an act performed directly by A, the verb's subject, and so it clearly must occur while he is alive. The proper inference from this is that A's causing action is insemination (cf. Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 30:16). The causing action of patriarch A is his insemination of B's mother or (in the case of a genealogical gap) one of B's remote female ancestors. Insemination is "his action" (indeed, his *only* action) in the process that leads to B's birth. It is also the only event in the process leading to B that requires A to be alive when it happens.

Ultimately, however, Steinmann does not commit himself to this reasoning but instead identifies A's causing action as the birth of a son. Accordingly, in the case of a genealogical gap, A's causing action is the birth of the son whose line culminates in B. That is, when A was X years old, "he had a son that established a line that led to" B.[59] But A's causing action cannot be the birth of a son, because A

Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1–2:3," *Presb* 20 [1994]: 115–16). This creates missing generations but does not allow for missing time, since a man "becomes an ancestor of" a descendant at the birth of that descendant, not before. Like Steinmann, Collins adjusted his formulation in a subsequent publication to add chronological gaps to his genealogical ones (for further discussion on the evolution of Collins's argument, see Sexton, "Who Was Born," 206). Green himself made a misstep in his 1890 article, where in one place he unwittingly—though correctly—affirmed that וַיּוֹלֶד throughout Genesis 5 and 11 refers to "the birth of the son named" ("Primeval Chronology," 300). These unguarded comments betray the natural reading of the chronogenealogical formula and illustrate how counterintuitive the case for chronological gaps is. It is difficult to deny consistently that וַיּוֹלֶד describes the birth of its object, the descendant named in the text.

[57] He set forth his current view in response to Sexton, "Who Was Born," published in 2015, which showed that chronological gaps are not a corollary of genealogical ones.

[58] Steinmann, "Gaps," 145. He says that Hezekiah's causing reproductive action (which Steinmann believes is described by the *hiphil* of ילד) in 2 Kgs 20:18 must be "an act of Hezekiah during his lifetime (since he is the subject of the verb)." The triggering act of Hezekiah is "his action," says Steinmann.

[59] Ibid., 147. Steinmann's assumption here, like Green's, is that וַיּוֹלֶד always refers to the birth of an immediate son (see also p. 154 n. 36 and n. 37). That is, where B is an immediate son, the verb refers to the birth of B, and where B is a remote descendant, the verb refers to the birth of an immediate son who "established a line that led to" B. Either way, וַיּוֹלֶד always describes the fathering of a direct son.

(being a man) does not give birth. He does not participate in the act of bearing his son. Giving birth is not "his action." Nor would he need to be alive for his son's birth to occur. If Steinmann wants to maintain that וַיּוֹלֶד describes the causing action of A, he must accept that it refers to A's act of insemination, which is truly "his action."

What leads Steinmann to identify A's causing action as the bearing of a son, an act that A himself does not do? Steinmann's thesis creates a predicament. It needs וַיּוֹלֶד to describe not only A's causing action but also someone's birth, for this verb incontestably refers to a birth event. To accommodate these necessities, Steinmann surmises (1) that וַיּוֹלֶד refers to ancestor A's causing action and (2) that ancestor A's causing action can be considered the birth of "a son that established a line that led to" descendant B. These assumptions are linguistically baseless, each one a son of necessity.

Steinmann must decide whether וַיּוֹלֶד refers to A's causing action or a birth event. He cannot have it both ways. If he goes with A's causing action, he needs to embrace its true identity, A's act of insemination that culminated in B's birth. If he goes with a birth event, as he ought, why not the birth of the descendant named in the text as the object of וַיּוֹלֶד?

II. TOWARD A PROPER SEMANTICS OF CAUSATION

1. *A word from linguists.* Leonard Talmy confirms that a causative refers to the caused event (what he calls the "final resulting event") and only implies a causing action ("causing event"). He writes,

> The sentence
>
> (53) I broke the window.
>
> has the specifications within its single (main) clause of a final resulting event, and insofar as any additional event is implied or can be specified, it will be a causing event appearing in a subordinate clause.
>
> (54) I broke the window by throwing a ball at it.[60]

In this causative situation, as in the chronogenealogical formula, the causing action (throwing a ball at the window) is temporally distinct from the caused event (the window's breaking). According to Talmy, the causative *broke* only refers to the "final resulting event"; a prior "causing event" is merely "implied" in this verb. So, sentence (53) does not refer to the causing action performed by the subject. Only sentence (54) does so "in a subordinate clause" (not in the verb *broke*). To the ques-

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But in 2014 Steinmann stated (correctly) that וַיּוֹלֶד "does not always denote direct fatherhood" and so can refer to "the birth of [A's] descendant" (Lessing and Steinmann, *Prepare the Way*, 56).

[60] Leonard Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*, vol. 1: *Concept Structuring Systems* (Language, Speech, and Communication; Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000), 484.

tion, "When did I break the window?" or "When did I cause the window to break?" the answer is, "When the window broke." The answer is not, "When I threw the ball at the window." An active causative describes the caused event (which involves the object directly) and implies a causing action (which the subject performs directly).

R. M. W. Dixon corroborates the consensus on causation. He writes, "One can say *John caused Bill to die on Sunday by stabbing him on Saturday* … because *cause* has a rather special meaning, referring to indirect causation which can involve a time lapse [between the causing action and the caused event]."[61] Note the placement of the temporal qualifiers. John did not cause Bill to die on Saturday, the day of the stabbing (the causing action). He caused Bill to die on Sunday, the day of Bill's death (the caused event). In other words, the causative construction *caused to die* describes not the stabbing of Bill on Saturday but the death of Bill on Sunday.

2. *A typology of causative constructions.* Linguists classify causatives into three broad types: the morphological, the lexical, and the periphrastic.[62]

(1) The morphological causative is formed by adding a prefix, suffix, or infix to the verbal root. Morphological causatives occur in Hebrew, Lithuanian, Gulf Arabic, and several other languages.[63] Hebrew adds the morpheme ה to verbal roots to form *hiphil* and *hophal* verbs. In Gen 5:9 MT, the *hiphil* verb וַיּוֹלֶד "he caused [Kenan] to be born" is a morphological causative.[64]

(2) The lexical causative does not signal causation morphologically. Its causal aspect is "coded" into the verb's root meaning, as in the Hebrew verb הרג "to kill."[65] In the sentence "I broke the window," the verb "broke" is a lexical causative.

(3) The periphrastic causative uses two verbs to describe the caused event, as in the sentence "I caused the window to break." The first verb of a periphrastic causative is a generic "verb of causation" (such as "make" or "cause") and the second one is "the verb describing the event."[66] The periphrastic causative "he caused [Kenan] to be born" is synonymous with the morphological causative וַיּוֹלֶד in Gen 5:9 MT.

3. *The periphrastic causative as a window into* hiphil *and* hophal *verbs.* Before we consider the functional correspondence between English's periphrastic causative and Hebrew's *hiphil* and *hophal* verbs, let us first deepen our understanding of periphrastic constructions. Linguist Jae Jung Song calls the first verb of a periphrastic

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[61] R. M. W. Dixon, "A Typology of Causatives: Form, Syntax and Meaning," in *Changing Valency: Case Studies in Transivity* (ed. R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 40 (emphasis original).

[62] E.g. Maria Rita Castaldi, "Causative Verb: Biblical Hebrew," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (ed. Geoffrey Kahn; 4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1:413.

[63] Dixon, "Typology of Causatives," 34.

[64] The ה has dropped out of וַיּוֹלֶד (see Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar* [Invitation to Theological Studies Series; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006], 37 n. 4, 134 n. 3).

[65] Castaldi, "Causative Verb," 1:413.

[66] Ibid.

construction ("make" or "cause") "the predicate of cause," which "lacks specific meaning; all that is expressed by the predicate of cause … is the pure notion of causation."[67] He calls the second verb "the predicate of effect."[68] In the clause "John caused Bill to die," the verb "to die" is the predicate of effect. Only the predicate of effect expresses specific meaning. It is "the verb describing the event."[69]

The predicate of cause does not describe an event. It simply adds the notion of causation to the predicate of effect. The non-causal clause "Bill died on Sunday," with the addition of a causer and a predicate of cause, becomes the causal clause "John caused Bill to die on Sunday." The addition of the causal elements does not alter the event being described (Bill's death) or its temporal location (Sunday). The referent (Bill's death on Sunday) is the same in each clause.

Dixon notes that the two verbs of a periphrastic construction "have most or all of the properties of a single predicate; for example, they take a single specification for TAM [tense-aspect-mood]. … French has a causative verb *faire*, which appears to make up a single predicate with a following verb."[70] In the sentence "I shall make Jean eat the cakes," Dixon says that the verbs "make" and "eat" are "compounded … to create a causative."[71] Periphrastic causatives compound two verbs to describe one event, the caused event.

Now consider the clause "he caused Kenan to be born." The two verbs in this sentence are compounded to create a causative that describes the caused event, the birth of Kenan. It follows that the sentence "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he caused Kenan to be born" refers to the birth of Kenan when Enosh was 90.

The morpheme ה in *hiphil* and *hophal* verbs functions analogously to "cause/make" in periphrastic causatives. Both ה and "cause/make" lack specific meaning. Each one simply adds the notion of causation to the verb or verbal root with which it is "compounded." Neither ה nor "cause/make" describes an event. Neither one shifts the verb's referent to a prior causing action. English's periphrastic causative ("cause/make" + the verb describing the event) and Hebrew's *hiphil* and *hophal* verbs (ה + the verbal root describing the event) refer to caused events.

III. SEMANTIC PRINCIPLES OF THE *HIPHIL* STEM

1. *The direct object's direct participation in the event expressed by the verb.* A *hiphil* verb describes an event in which its object directly participates. Waltke and O'Connor say that "with the *Hiphil* … the object participates in the event expressed by the verbal root," that is, the object "experiences this action" directly "as an actor in the

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[67] Jae Jung Song, "Periphrastic Causative Constructions," in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online* (ed. Matthew S. Dryer and Martin Haspelmath; Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013), http://wals.info/chapter/110.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Castaldi, "Causative Verb," 1:413.

[70] Dixon, "Typology of Causatives," 34–35.

[71] Ibid., 35.

event."[72] Let us apply this principle to the chronogenealogical formula. The event expressed by the root of the *hiphil* verb וַיּוֹלֶד (ילד) is birth. The object of this verb is B. Therefore, B participated in the event of birth—he experienced the action of being born as an actor in the event—when A was X years old. This point alone conclusively refutes the view of Green and Steinmann, who say that וַיּוֹלֶד can refer to the birth of B's ancestor, an event in which B did not participate at all, an event in fact that took place before B even existed.

2. *First Samuel 10:20 with a comparison to Genesis 5:9.* The verb וַיַּקְרֵב "he caused [all of Israel's tribes] to draw near" in 1 Sam 10:20 illustrates that *hiphil* verbs refer to caused events. Here is the verse in full: וַיַּקְרֵב שְׁמוּאֵל אֵת כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלָּכֵד שֵׁבֶט בִּנְיָמִן "When Samuel had caused all of Israel's tribes to draw near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken." The two *wayyiqtol* clauses ("Samuel *had caused* all of Israel's tribes *to draw near* [וַיַּקְרֵב]" and "the tribe of Benjamin *was taken* [וַיִּלָּכֵד]") describe two essentially contemporaneous events: the tribe of Benjamin was taken *when* Samuel had caused all the tribes to draw near.[73] Therefore, the causative וַיַּקְרֵב refers not to an earlier causing action, say, Samuel's command to draw near, but to what Talmy calls the "final resulting event." The event expressed by וַיַּקְרֵב was accomplished when all the tribes had finally drawn near, not before. To the question, "When had Samuel caused all the tribes to draw near?" the answer is, "When all the tribes had drawn near." The answer is not, "When Samuel had performed the causing action(s) that led to the drawing near of all the tribes."

Note the grammatical and syntactical similarities between 1 Sam 10:20 and Gen 5:9. First, in each verse the causing action is temporally distinct from the caused event. Samuel's act of ordering the tribes to draw near (causing action) occurred before the tribes had drawn near (caused event). Likewise, Enosh's act of inseminating Kenan's female ancestor (causing action) occurred before Kenan was born (caused event). Second, and related, in each verse the causation is mediated. Samuel did not immediately cause the object, Israel's tribes, to draw near. Likewise, Enosh did not immediately cause the object, Kenan, to be born. Third, each verse is composed of two *wayyiqtol* clauses that describe two contemporaneous events, thus temporally locating the event expressed by its *hiphil* verb. The tribe of Benjamin was chosen *when* Samuel had caused all the tribes to draw near. Likewise, Enosh caused Kenan to be born *when* Enosh had lived 90 years.[74]

3. *The non-uniqueness of the* hiphil *of* ילד. Steinmann builds his case for chronological gaps on a misunderstanding of "the grammatical relationship of causative verbs and their direct objects" in general and "the causative function of the Hiphil

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[72] *IBHS*, 434–35. This contradicts Steinmann's statement that "the temporal nexus between [the event described by the] verb and [the event involving the] direct object—especially for causative verbs—need not be immediate" ("Gaps," 147).

[73] The translations of 1 Sam 10:20 in the KJV, NKJV, and NIV connect the two clauses temporally with the word "when" (NIV: "When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot").

[74] The translations of Gen 5:9 in the ESV, NIV, HCSB, and NLT connect the two clauses temporally with the word "when" (ESV: "When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan").

stem with ילד" in particular.[75] As we saw above, he thinks that a *hiphil* verb can describe an event that does not directly involve its direct object, even an event that occurred long before the object existed. In addition to the aforementioned problems with this view, it is worth noting that ילד (like אטם "to shut" and other Hebrew verbs) does not even function uniquely in the *hiphil*: its *qal* stem performs all the lexicosemantic functions that its *hiphil* stem does. For example, Genesis 5 and 11 use the *hiphil* of ילד to describe the births of descendants to fathers while Genesis 4 and 10 use the *qal* of this verb to do the same (see 4:18; 10:8, 13, 15, 24, 26; cf. 22:23; 25:3; Prov 23:22). Genesis 10:24 and 11:14 both say that Shelah "brought forth Eber," the former verse using the *qal* and the latter the *hiphil* of ילד. Furthermore, both the *qal* and the *hiphil* of ילד can be used of a father's non-immediate descendant. Deuteronomy 4:25 and 2 Kgs 20:18//Isa 39:7 use the *hiphil* of ילד to describe the births of remote sons while Gen 10:8 uses the *qal* of this verb to describe the birth of Cush's remote son Nimrod.[76]

The *hophal* of ילד also does not function uniquely. Genesis 40:20; Ezek 16:4, 5 use the *hophal* of ילד to describe days of birth while Job 3:3 (cf. Gen 4:18; 10:1; 21:5) uses the *niphal* of this verb similarly to describe a birthday. This cautions against semantic reasoning that, like Steinmann's new proposal, is heavily stem-based.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The formula "When A had lived X years, he brought forth [וַיּוֹלֶד] B" appears nowhere in extant ancient literature except Genesis 5 and 11. It indicates the year in which A "brought forth" (ילד) B, that is, the year in which B became a "son" (יֶלֶד) of A. Whether B was an immediate son or a remote descendant of A is irrelevant to the chronology. Even if the genealogies omit some names, the text still dates the birth of descendant B in relation to ancestor A. Steinmann stated it well in 2014: "These genealogies list the age of each ancestor at the birth of his descendant."

Green believed ardently as a young pastor and scholar that Scripture "dates for us exactly" the creation of the first man and that any records or monuments reaching back even 10,000 years would be "in flat contradiction to the Mosaic record." Green, an erudite Hebraist, held this view with exegetical conviction. He detected the "grand battle" taking place over the authority of the Bible. He recognized the problems with the escalating "enthusiasm for science." By the end of his career, however, he had become the champion of those scientific enthusiasts (especially G. F. Wright, editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra*) who longed for reconciliation between the Mosaic record and the prevailing scientific views.

In his 1890 article, Green sought to evade the force of the chronogenealogical formula by asserting that it can mean "When A had lived X years, he brought forth [the son from whom sprang] B." This assumption—this insertion of B's unnamed

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[75] Steinmann, "Gaps," 146.

[76] Douglas Petrovich, "Identifying Nimrod of Genesis 10 with Sargon of Akkad by Exegetical and Archaeological Means," *JETS* 56 (2013): 276.

ancestor into the text—took Green from gaps in the generations to the desired gaps in time. But he did not substantiate this vital premise, which lacks lexico-semantic viability. His whole case rested on the unsupported claim that וַיּוֹלֶד can describe the birth of a son *not mentioned in the text* instead of the descendant named as the direct object.

Steinmann has attempted to lay the long-needed linguistic foundation for Green's chronological gaps by suggesting that וַיּוֹלֶד (in the case of a genealogical gap) describes the causing action that triggered the process culminating in the birth of B. Steinmann identifies this causing action as the birth of "a son that established a line that led to [B]" (in Green's words: the birth of "one from whom [B] sprang"). Thus, Steinmann seeks to legitimize the extra time that Green inserted between A's begetting year (when the unnamed son that led to B was purportedly born) and B's birth. But Steinmann demonstrates neither that the birth of B's ancestor can legiti-mately be considered the causing action of A nor (more fundamentally) that וַיּוֹלֶד describes the causing action of A to begin with. He is trying to uphold Green's unsupported semantic claim with ones of his own. He is inclined to find gaps in the timeline, because he believes that external evidence makes them necessary: the pri-meval genealogies "must contain gaps." Yet he has provided no grounds for jetti-soning the conventional view among linguists that causatives refer to caused events. That B was born when A was X years old is inescapable.

Another problem is that Steinmann applies his semantics of causation to the chronogenealogical formula inconsistently. He only applies it in the case of a genea-logical gap. That is, he believes that וַיּוֹלֶד describes A's prior causing action only where B is a remote descendant of A. Where B is an immediate son of A, Stein-mann recognizes that וַיּוֹלֶד describes B's birth, the caused event.[77] To be internally consistent, Steinmann would need to maintain either (1) that וַיּוֹלֶד describes A's prior causing action, even where B is an immediate son, or (2) that וַיּוֹלֶד describes B's birth, the caused event, even where B is a remote descendant. The second op-tion is correct.

Steinmann insists that one must "offer a convincing alternate interpretation of the Egyptian and Sumerian evidence" before espousing an intact timeline in early Genesis. Imposing such a prerequisite on the traditional interpretation, from which there is no record of dissent among the people of God between the time of Moses and the nineteenth century, is methodologically troubling. The defender of an unbroken chronology does not bear the burden of proof in this debate. The onus lies with the one seeking to disrupt the timeline. Before espousing a broken chronology, he must offer a convincing alternative to the long-established reading of Genesis 5 and 11, and then explain why his interpretation was indiscernible to millennia of Hebrew-speaking Jews and Christian Hebraists. The history of the interpretation of these chronogenealogies compels conservative scholars to demand a forceful exegetical argument before they dismiss the view that God provided his

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[77] See n. 59 above.

people with a calculable chronology of mankind going back to the first pair of humans on the sixth day of creation.

Allowing scientific and historical inquiry to inform our understanding of the Bible is good and necessary. But ultimately we must allow Scripture to reform our scientific and historical conclusions. There is nothing wrong in principle with rethinking a time-honored interpretation of God's word on the basis of new data. The problem is letting inferences from the data drive us to tenuous arguments. Implausible ad hoc exegesis designed to reconcile the Bible with the claims of modern research does more methodological damage than apologetic good in the long run. It generates harmful hermeneutical habits and instincts whereby the longstanding interpretations of God's people are questioned more readily than the ephemeral results of the scientific establishment. In his response to Green's article, Goodenow penned presciently, "A straining of interpretation, so far-fetched and forced, against the obvious meaning, would open the door to an *explaining away* of almost anything in Scripture."[78] After Green's gaps gained ascendancy among conservative scholars during the second half of the twentieth century, evangelicalism inevitably opened the door to an explaining away of the historical Adam.[79] And many who affirm the historical Adam deny that he and Eve are the biological progenitors of all humankind.[80] These later aberrations are more deleterious than Green's theory, to be sure, but they are not more strained, farfetched, or forced against the obvious meaning. They are different branches of the same hermeneutical vine. And Goodenow, for one, saw them coming.

Biblical chronologist John Jackson wrote in 1752, "Chronology has been justly called the *Soul of History*."[81] In evangelical scholarship, primeval history is losing its soul. And a soulless history eventually loses its historicity. Chronology has also been called the backbone of history. Evangelical scholars and pastors endeavoring to engender confidence in the historicity of Genesis 1–11 must be willing to avow the chronological spine that supports it. This is not a call to disengage from historical or scientific difficulties. It is a call to read honestly the ancient and inspired biblical text, to consider judiciously the millennia-long conversation among the people of God on Scripture's primeval chronology, to examine critically the claims of the scientific majority, and to affirm courageously all the historical claims of the Bible.

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[78] Goodenow, *Bible Chronology*, 323 (emphasis original).

[79] E.g. Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012); Denis O. Lamoureux, "No Historical Adam: Evolutionary Creation View," in *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 37–65. On this view, at what point in the genealogies do the names and years begin referring to historical realities? Or working backward from Abraham, at what point do the names and years in the chronogenealogical formula stop describing actual history?

[80] E.g. John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015).

[81] John Jackson, *Chronological Antiquities* (3 vols.; London: J. Noon, 1752), 1:xxv (emphasis original).