MT, SP, or LXX? Deciphering a Chronological and Textual Conundrum in Genesis 5

ENDNOTES


3 Lita Cosner and Robert Carter, “Textual Traditions and Biblical Chronology,” Journal of Creation 29, no. 2 (2015), pp. 99–105; Benjamin Shaw, “The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and Their Significance for Chronology” (PhD Dissertation, Bob Jones University, 2004), pp. 60, 75, 216. Shaw proposes that the LXX/SP begetting ages are original in Gen 11, but the MT/SP begetting ages are original in Gen 5.


5 Anderson and Giles, p. 18. Modern scholars generally claim that the final and irrevocable schism between the Jews and Samaritans likely took place when John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim in 111–110 BC (cf. Jn. 4:9). It is not my goal in this article to advocate or critique views on the history of the Samaritans.

6 Despite its many updates and changes, “The Samaritan Pentateuch is thus a strong witness to the antiquity and purity of the tradition in the MT, since the proto-MT had to be modernized and popularized in the second century BC so that it could be understood.” Peter J. Gentry, “The Text of the Old Testament,” JETS 52, (March 2009), p. 24.


11 Ronald S. Hendel, The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 119–148. The 3 letters have been either transposed or misread (Gn 10:4; 11:30, 31). For Genesis 5 and 11, Hendel (p. 130) ascribes originality to only two numbers for singular readings from the SP, 62 for Jared’s begetting age, and 67 for Methuselah’s. His ascriptions are incorrect.


16 Tov, Textual Criticism, p. 81.

17 Hendel, p. 87.

18 Hendel, p. 73; Shaw, p. 63, n. 1. This is a harmonization, but not a “plus”, since no text has been added.


21 Most modern scholars argue that the length of the jubilee is 50 years and not 49, claiming that the author of Jubilees changed the length of the biblical jubilee (Lev. 25) from 50 to 49 years. For example: Roger T. Beckwith, Calendar and Chronology. Jewish and Christian (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 238; Robert H. Charles, The Book of Jubilees, Or, The Little Genesis (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), p. lxviii. This position has been refuted by careful historical and exegetical arguments by Rodger C. Young, “The Talmud’s Two Jubilees and Their Relevance to the Date of the Exodus,” WTJ 68 (2006), pp. 71–83, who states: “There is rather weighty evidence from ancient records that the Jubilee cycle was forty-nine years in length, not fifty years as assumed by most modern commentators.”


28 Scott, *On Earth As In Heaven*, p. 101, n. 67. While Jubilees only covers the period from Adam to the Conquest, the author would have been familiar with I Kings 6:1.

29 Charles, p. 115.


32 The only exceptions to this are the begetting ages for Noah (500, 502) and Terah (70), which are attested in the SP, MT and LXX, and other external witnesses such as Josephus. But even with Noah, the author of *Jubilees* ascribes the wrong son to each begetting age (Table 3).

33 Scott, *On Earth As In Heaven*, p. 46.


36 Bowman’s discussion of the *Tulidah* is particularly helpful. Like *Jubilees*, it also contains numerous chronological errors, pp. 39–61.

37 Hendel, pp. 69–71; Charles, p. lxxvii.


41 For a full analysis of the Methuselah question in the LXX, see: Smith Jr., “Methuselah’s Begetting Age.”
Jubilees does not record the remaining years and lifespans for the antediluvian patriarchs, except for the lifespans of Adam (Jub. 4:29) and Noah (Jub. 10:15). These are expressed by the author in actual years, not with the usual formula of jubilees, weeks and years.

Jerome does not mention Jared’s numbers, but it is clear they were reduced by the SP to reflect Jubilees’ Gen 5 chronology as well.

Goodenow, p. 314. Note that jubilees cycles were initiated with the Law of Moses. The author of Jubilees has retroactively imposed them on the entirety of biblical history prior to that time.

Scott, On Earth As In Heaven, p. 101.


Deliberately deflated chronological works such as the rabbinic Seder Olam, Jubilees, and the Testament of Moses are all ideology interrelated in various ways. For more, see: Beckwith, Calendar and Chronology, 1996.

Hales, p. 281. Technically speaking, if Jared’s begetting age was reduced to 62, and Methuselah and Lamech’s numbers were left alone, Jared would have died before the year of the Flood. It is possible that the rabbis saw the three patriarchs as a “chronological package,” and decided to leave Jared’s numbers alone. Perhaps they felt Jared’s death would have been too close to the deaths of Methuselah and Lamech. Or, after evaluating their chronological deflation scheme in its totality, they did not need the extra 100 years for their chronology, and decided to leave Jared’s figures alone. Jared’s 162 is preserved in the Seder Olam, the “official” rabbinic world history (ca. AD 140–160) written by the very same rabbis who I propose deflated the MT’s chronology. Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, ed., Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 3. Interestingly, Sexton has documented references to a lost Hebrew text whose antediluvian chronology was 1556 years instead of the MT’s 1656. This lost text may have contained a begetting age of 62 for Jared. “Who Was Born,” p. 215, n. 125.

The rabbinic creation date in the Seder Olam is 3761 BC. Had they adopted Jubilees’ post-Flood chronology instead of creating their own, it would have made the date of Creation 275 years earlier, 4036 BC. This would have placed Jesus’ life and ministry shortly after 4000 AM, allowing him to remain a Messianic candidate. For more on the 4000 AM date, see: Sexton (2015); Sexton and Smith Jr. (2016); Smith Jr., “Methuselah’s Begetting Age.”

The survival of Jerome’s SP manuscripts with the correct numbers shows how difficult it was for ancient scribes to significantly change the sacred text and prevent the changes from being discovered. This further illustrates the unique position the post-70 AD rabbis found themselves in: they had complete authority and control over the Hebrew texts that had survived the destruction of the Temple. They were able to change the texts, and control the future dissemination of new manuscripts in Israel. Their unique historical circumstances allowed them to cover up the evidence for their chronological deflations in the MT’s primeval chronology. Sexton and Smith Jr., pp. 47–48.

Smith Jr., “Methuselah’s Begetting Age,” p. 171, nn. 8–12; Hendel, p. 146.


See n. 13.


Tov writes: “Although the LXX has been transmitted into Greek, these details [the numbers in Gen 5/11] should not be ascribed to the translator, but the Hebrew Vorlage... they did not go as far as to recalculate the logic or system of genealogical lists. The LXX translation of Genesis is relatively literal, although some freedom in small details is recognizable, but no large scale translational pluses, minuses or changes are found in this version... Accordingly, any recalculation of chronological lists by