

How has the reburial of
Viking king Harald Bluetooth's father
provided an inerrantist solution
to
Abraham's supposedly "missing" 60 years?

And,
how does Moses' usage of the *waw* consecutive concur
with this inerrantist solution?

COMPARING THE RE-BURIAL OF THE PAGAN KING,
"GORM THE OLD" OF JUTLAND,
by his Christian son, Harald Bluetooth, Viking king of Denmark,
WITH
THE RE-BURIAL OF THE PAGAN IDOLATER,
TERAH, formerly of Ur of the Chaldees,
by his YaHWeH-worshipping son, Abraham,
including
observations of how Moses used *waw* consecutive verbs in Genesis 11-12

by:

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¹ A precursor of this analysis appeared as Appendix "B" of a co-authored paper initially presented at the Southwestern Regional meeting of the *Evangelical Theological Society* meeting (March 1st, AD2002, at Criswell College in Dallas Texas). That paper was Thomas D. Ice & James J. S. Johnson's "Using Scriptural Data to Calculate a Range-Qualified Chronology from Adam to Abraham, with Comments on Why the 'Open'-or-'Closed' Genealogy Question is Chronometrically Irrelevant". The Adam-to-Abraham chronology paper was later summarized as James J. S. Johnson's "How Young Is the Earth? Applying Simple Math to Data Provided in Genesis", *ACTS & FACTS*, October AD 2008, pages 4-5.

The pagan king of Jutland, Gorm the Old, was originally buried, consistent with pagan customs of the Danish Vikings, circa A.D. 958 . Gorm's son, Harald "Bluetooth" Gormsson, who became king of Denmark, became an enthusiastic Christian. Bluetooth later built a noteworthy church building for the promotion of Danish Christianity. Remarkably, Bluetooth also had the physical remains of his pagan father removed from his Viking ship-mound burial, to be re-buried inside the grounds of the Christian church which Bluetooth had constructed.

Could it be that this Viking's reburial is similar to what Abraham, a godly worshiper of YaHWeH, had done with the physical remains of his pagan father, Terah, by retrieving Terah's remains from Haran, and re-burying them in the "promised land" of Canaan?

If so, this reburial explanation solves a chronological conundrum regarding the proper interpretation of Acts 7:4, which has puzzled many Bible scholars when juxtaposed with the Mosaic chronology data provided in Genesis 11:26, 11:32, and 12:4.

Summary of the Problem.

Most English translations of Acts 7:4 give the impression that Abraham was not physically led by God to enter Canaan until Abraham's father, Terah, died:

Then came he [i.e., Abraham] out of the land of the Chaldeans [i.e., out of Ur of the Chaldees], and dwelt in Charan [i.e., Haran]; and from thence [i.e., from Haran], when his father [since the first "he" means Abraham, "his father" here would mean Terah] was dead, he [some think "he" here means "God"] removed him [some think "him" here means "Abraham"] into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

Quoting Acts 7:4 (with editorial bracketing). If this interpretation of Acts 7:4 is followed, Terah dies in Haran before Abraham is led of God to emigrate from Haran into Canaan.

Genesis 11:26 indicates that Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was "begotten" (which means Terah was 70 or 71 when Abraham was physically born). Genesis 12:4 indicates that Abraham was 75 years old when he emigrated from his home in Haran (with Sarah and Lot and others) to enter Canaan, in response to God's leading. Yet, Genesis 11:32 documents that Terah died at age 205, i.e., 135 or 134 years after Abraham was born. Thus, Abraham was 134 or 135 when his father (Terah) died in Haran.

If (and here is the big "if"), as Bible chronology critic Pete Williams assumes,² Abraham

²See, e.g., Pete J. Williams, "Some Remarks Preliminary to a Biblical Chronology", in Volume 12 of Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal (issue #1, 1998), pages 98-106, esp. 104.

did not leave Haran for Canaan until Terah died, which did not occur until Abraham was 134 or 135, how can it be accurately said that Abraham was “75 years old” when he left Haran for Canaan?

This question of the so-called “missing sixty years” has puzzled many, and some serious scholars have been unable to reconcile the Genesis chronology information (of Genesis 11:26; 11:32; 12:4) with the above-noted view of Acts 7:4 (which interprets “he” and “him” as “God” and “Abraham”).

Solution to the Problem.

The solution to the so-called “conflict” of chronology data about Terah and Abraham, as recorded in Genesis (11:26; 11:32; and 12:4), in comparison with information preached by Stephen in Acts (7:4) is resolvable by recognizing two main points:

- 1) Abraham left Haran while his father Terah was still alive, and returned later to retrieve Terah’s body (after Terah was dead, of course!), in order to bury Terah’s body in Canaan, probably in the same basic burial grounds which Abraham had purchased for burying Sarah’s body (i.e., in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite, according to Genesis 23);

and

- 2) Luke’s record of Stephen’s final sermon – before Stephen was stoned to death – includes Stephen’s narrative description of least three persons who were involved in Abraham’s trek from Ur to Haran to Canaan, – i.e., God was involved; Terah was involved; and Abraham was involved; – so the “problem passage” portion of Acts 7:4 is only a problem if the sequentially ambiguous usages of the English pronouns “he” and “him” are taken to mean, respectively, “God” and “Abraham” – however, if the “he” and “him” respectively mean “Abraham” and “Terah”, there is no chronological conflict with Genesis’ data regarding the correlated life-spans of Terah and Abraham (see Genesis 11:26; 11:32; and 12:4).

This kind of ambiguity sometimes occurs in Scripture (e.g., when a narrator is accurately quoting words spoken by someone else), but illogical interpretations of the ambiguity can be eliminated by cross-referencing related information elsewhere communicated by the same speaker. Moreover, if a statement is spoken as God’s Word (and perhaps Stephen’s final sermon was prophetically inspired by God, and thus must be inerrant itself), it must accord with all pre-existing Scriptures’ content.

Therefore, one should interpret ambiguous Scripture texts in light of the informational content of non-ambiguous Scripture texts (i.e., “interpret the unclear in light of the clear”), as well as in light of the theological standard that the Holy Scriptures themselves, which are inerrant (because God made them that way), must be internally consistent.

Therefore, consider the following solution to the ambiguity of Acts 7:4, with brackets

showing both proposed and problematic alternatives for the English pronouns “he” and “him”:

Then came he [i.e., Abraham] *out of the land of the Chaldeans* [i.e., Ur], *and dwelt in Charan* [Haran]; *and from thence* [from Haran], *when his father* [Terah] *was dead, he* [some think “he” here means “God”, but “Abraham” is a better fit] *removed him* [some think “him” here means “Abraham”, but “Abraham’s father”, i.e., Terah, is a better fit] *into this land, wherein ye now dwell.* [editorial bracketing supplied]

Quoting *Acts 7:4*.

Surely the above-proposed solution (which accords with the Jews’ concern for where someone is buried, as is illustrated in *Genesis 50:25* and *Exodus 13:19*), with Abraham returning to Haran to fetch his (dead) father for burial in Canaan, is more likely to be true than some “*let’s-just-add-60-or-more-years-to-‘correct’-the-Bible’s-math*” approach to Biblical chronology.³

Thus, the four Scripture texts (i.e., *Genesis 11:26*; *11:32*; and *12:4*, in conjunction with information preached by Stephen in *Acts 7:4*) inerrantly harmonize, — in aggregate providing an integrated chronology for the begetting of Abraham (when Terah was age 70), the arrival of Terah and Abraham (and others) in Haran when Abraham was age 75, followed by Terah’s death at age 205, and Abraham’s subsequent (re)burial of Terah *at some time after* Abraham had already arrived

³For an example of a critic’s willingness to add 60 (or more) years to Moses’ chronology data, in order to force a (mis)fit with a presupposed (yet unnecessary) interpretation of *Acts 7:4*, i.e., an interpretation of *Acts 7:4* which requires Abraham to remain in Haran until Terah died, see Pete Williams’ inerrancy-inconsistent criticism, *supra*, at page 104, saying:

We are left then with the question of whether to add 60 years to our chronology [or more]. The problem here is that I cannot find any Biblical reason that demands that Abraham left Haran as soon as his father died. **If [Abraham] had stayed in Haran much longer, ... a period of more than 60 years would be added to Biblical chronology. At any rate, we can say that the addition of 60 years is the minimum. ...** [emphasis to Williams’ arrogance added]

It is important to notice that Williams’ only argument for “needing” an “extra” 60 (or more) years to Terah’s life-span is Williams’ assumption that Abraham waited for Terah to die before Abraham left Haran for Canaan, which is an assumption that controverts the Scriptural fact that Abraham obeyed God by forsaking his father’s household to go to Canaan (see *Genesis 12:4*, saying “So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him”). Accordingly, if Abraham left Haran for Canaan while Terah is still living, then Terah died, then Abraham returned to Haran to retrieve Terah for re-burial in Canaan, there is no “need” for redactor-like “correcting” of the Biblical record, e.g., by “adding” 60+ years to Terah’s age (when he relocated from Ur of the Chaldees unto Haran) as given in *Genesis 11:26*.

in Canaan, i.e., after Abraham was 134 or 135 years old.

Since Sarah died at 127 (see **Genesis 23:1**), and Abraham was about 10 years older than Sarah (see **Genesis 17:17 & 21:5**), Abraham was about 137 years when Sarah died.

After Sarah's death, Abraham re-married, to Keturah (**Genesis 25:1**). Through Keturah Abraham then fathered more children, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Obviously, Abraham lived long enough to be 134 or 135 years old, at which time his own father (Terah) died. So, a couple of years or so *before* Sarah's death, Terah died. It was Sarah's death which catalyzed Abraham's purchase of a family burial grounds, and sometime thereafter, i.e., after the death of Terah, and most likely *also* after the death of Sarah:

“when his [Abraham's] father [Terah] was dead, he [Abraham] removed him [Abraham's father”, i.e., Terah] into this land, wherein ye now dwell. [editorial bracketing supplied]

Again quoting from *Acts 7:4*.

Objections to the problem's above-summarized inerrantist solution.

In discussing the above reburial solution to the so-called “missing 60 years” problem, this writer has encountered 4 challenges that deserve supplemental attention. They are:

- 1) Would a believer ever re-bury his unbelieving father?
- 2) Why would Luke be the first to reveal Terah's reburial?
- 3) What if **Genesis 11:26** doesn't mean that Terah was a firstborn son?
- 4) What about the chronology-relevant *waw* consecutive in **Genesis 12:1**, is it a problem?

These four challenges to the above-proposed solution (to the so-called “missing 60 years” problem) will be discussed in turn below.

Objection # 1: Would a believer ever re-bury his unbelieving father?

But one might argue: could it be that a godly man, of ancient times, might *re-bury* the remains of his *pagan* father (*assuming his pagan father was already buried according to pagan burial customs*), — **especially when the re-burial is associated with the believing son's faith** (*and thus contrasts with the pagan unbelief of the buried-then-buried-again father*)?

Answer # 1: Viking history demonstrates such reburial behavior.

Such an objection is historically answered by the Viking archaeology regarding pagan King Gorm's reburial. The pertinent facts that illustrate this puzzling re-burial behavior are quoted from one of the most respected resources⁴ on Viking history, John Haywood's *Encyclopaedia of the Viking Age* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1st American edition, 2000), at page 84, in the entry captioned "**GORM THE OLD**":

According to the 11th – century German historian Adam of Bremen, Gorm was the son of Hardegon (Harthacnut) Sveinsson, a ruler from 'Nortmannia' (northern Jutland, Norway or possibly even Normandy), who overthrew the Swedish Olaf dynasty that ruled in Denmark in the early 10th century [A.D.]. The extent of Gorm's kingdom is unknown, but it probably included all of Jutland at least. Gorm was a pagan and gave Unni, the archbishop of Hamburg – Bremen, a hostile reception when he [Unni] asked permission to renew missionary activities in Denmark and 936. Gorm was succeeded by his son Harald Bluetooth [of *Jomsviking* fame], who had been co-ruler for some years before his father's death. Gorm was interred under an impressive burial mound, which can still be seen at Jelling in Jutland. Dendrochronology has shown that the timber used to build his burial chamber was felled in 958, making this the most likely year of his death. Gorm's body was later removed from the mound, probably by his Christian son Harald [Bluetooth], and reburied in a church he [Bluetooth] had built at Jelling. Surviving parts of his [Gorm's] skeleton show that he was about 1.72 metres tall, suffered from osteoarthritis of the lower back, and probably died in his forties.

Quoting from John Haywood's *Encyclopaedia of the Viking Age*, page 84.

We modern Christians often take our life as creatures for granted, so we focus most of our appreciation to God on His redemptive relationship to us as our personal Savior (e.g., *John 3:16* is perhaps the most popular Bible verse in America, and with good reason!). Accordingly, it is often hard to appreciate the theological importance that the ancients recognized regarding the creation of human life, and thus also of human genealogy lineages, since the ancients had a more vivid awareness of the vitality and importance of human pro-creativity. Thus, one's personal genealogy was appreciated intensely as not just a fact of family history or legal relationships, but more importantly as a theological fact at the core of being created a human being.

⁴John Haywood's other books include: *The Ancient Civilizations of the Near East and Mediterranean*, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings*, and *The Cassell Atlas of World History*. Haywood, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain, also contributes to *History Today* and the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*.

Could it be that both Abraham and Harold Bluetooth, as first generation believers in the God of the Bible, – although they both lamented the unbelief of their respective fathers, – were so reverent in their awe of God as their personal Creator, that they both desired a quasi-sanctified monument-like reburial (of those pagan fathers), in order to emphasize their own theological belief in God as the Creator Who gave them a natural life? For of what benefit is redemption to one who is never created?

Surely Abraham and Bluetooth both appreciated the fact that their Creator-God chose to accomplish the unmerited divine favor *of being created as a human being, capable of being redeemed*, through the genetic channeling of that natural life via paternal ancestries which God ordained for each of them.

Abraham believed in Christ as a promised Messianic “Seed” Who would fulfill various Messianic promises, e.g., the blessings recorded in *Genesis 12:3* (and explained in *Galatians 3:6-8*); Bluetooth, however, was born on the A.D. side of the Lord’s First Advent, so he believed in Christ as the Messiah Who had already come and finished His redemptive Messianic work for Adam’s fallen race.

Objection # 2: Why would Luke be the first to reveal Terah’s reburial?

In other words, if Abraham removed Terah's body from Haran to Canaan, why is it that the only indication of that removal is the grammatically vague statement in *Acts 7:4*?

Answer # 2: New Testament facts often clarify obscure Old Testament events.

Since Terah’s ultimate burial place is not directly focal to any Bible doctrine, is it really a problem that this not-so-critical detail regarding Terah’s burial in Canaan is only mentioned in the New Testament? Why do we learn, for the first time in *Jude 1:14-15*, that Enoch was a prophet of the Lord Who comes to Earth as Judge, without any clue about that information anywhere in the Old Testament?

Likewise, why do we not learn anything about Rachab -- until *Matthew 1:5* -- being Boaz's mother, and thus eventually becoming [though possibly posthumously] the 2nd mother-in-law to Ruth? Yet there it is, revealed in the New Testament, for the first (and only) time!

Also, what about “Jannes and Jambres” who are named in *2nd Timothy 3:5*? How did Paul know that the two magicians of Pharaoh were named “Jannes and Jambres”? Those Egyptian names appear no-where in Exodus (or anywhere else in the Old Testament)!

The Bible provides progressive revelation about human history, and sometimes the Holy Spirit Who provides that progressive revelation inerrantly informs us in the New Testament of a few historic details not explicitly reported in the Old Testament.

Objection # 3: What if Genesis 11:26 doesn't mean Terah was a firstborn son?

Some scholars, e.g., Pete Williams have opined that the fact that Abraham is listed first among the sons of Terah in *Genesis 11:26* doesn't necessarily mean that Abraham was the firstborn, but only the most important with respect to the narrative of Genesis.⁵ This theory further suggests that since Haran died in Ur (*Genesis 11:28*), maybe he was the oldest and Abraham was born 60 years later when Terah was 130 so that Terah died at age 205 very shortly before Abraham turned 75. Arguably, this theory would seem to fit with the fact that Haran's son, Lot, who traveled with Abraham was a grown man. Wouldn't this solve the problem of the so-called "missing" 60 years?

⁵Pete J. Williams, "Some Remarks Preliminary to a Biblical Chronology", in Volume 12 of *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* (issue #1, 1998), pp. 98-106, especially at page 104. Williams illustrates this reluctance to recognize a multiple birth, at page 104, when he says:

We have four indications from the text of Genesis that when one person begets three sons at a certain age, it is not necessarily to be supposed that all three were begotten simultaneously:

- (1) Nahor marries his brother's daughter (Genesis 11:29).
- (2) Ham was the youngest of Noah's sons (Genesis 9:24).
- (3) Japheth is the oldest of Noah's sons (Genesis 10:21).
- (4) Shem was not 102/103 but 100 when he begat Arphaxad (Genesis 5:32, 7:6, 11:10).

Although it would be possible for scholars who believe in a source-critical approach to Genesis (that is, J and P) to divide these up into different sources, the similarity of the material suggests that any division would be a much more expensive [\$?] hypothesis than simply to suppose that Genesis 5:32 and Genesis 11:26 do not have to talk of the begetting of triplets.

In other words, Williams is concerned about JEDP-related speculations moreso than with crucial Hebrew words, when examining chronology data in Genesis. Later, within this paper (while discussing hypothetical Objection #3), Williams' 2nd and 3rd assumptions about "oldest" and "youngest" are debunked. Also, Williams' 4th assumption (about the chronology of Shem's fathering of Arphaxad) has been debunked in the Ice & Johnson paper cited above (in the first footnote), in its analysis of Adam-to-Abraham **sub-timeframes #10 and # 11**.

As to Williams' 1st point, it is biologically quite possible for an uncle who is 30 years old to marry a 14-year-old niece, *e.g.*, when Nahor eventually married Haran's daughter. So what? Moses routinely records, in Genesis, marriages between half-siblings, cousins, and the like.

Answer # 3: When Scripture's meaning is clear, don't invent "missing 60 years".

In a chronology paper recently presented at a regional meeting of the **Evangelical Theological Society**,⁶ Dr. Thomas Ice and this writer provided an appendix analyzing what the Bible actually says about the birth order of Shem, Ham, & Japheth, — showing that this birth order data has been ignored only due to lack of close attention to the Hebrew text, caused by choosing one alternative interpretation from an ambiguous passage that clashes with the text-provided birth-order, despite the availability of an alternative interpretation that does not clash with the birth-order. (*The essential content of that appendix is now reproduced below.*)

In particular, the birth order “problem” regarding Noah’s three sons arises from a less-than-literal translation of **Genesis 10:21**, exacerbated by imposing an unwarranted identification into **Genesis 9:24**.

Specifically, the primary interpretive stumbling-block to recognizing the birth-order of Noah’s three sons as being “Shem, Ham, and Japheth” (which is the only sequence used in Scripture for naming those three brothers), it appears, derives from the ill-advised conclusion that the “youngest son” of Noah, who is mentioned in **Genesis 9:24**, is somehow Ham.

For example, Pete J. Williams baldly infers such a conclusion when he says: “Genesis 9:24 says that Ham was the youngest of Noah’s sons.”⁷ However, **Genesis 9:24** does not say that.

Part of the problem arises from a reluctance to recognize that the simplest and most literal reading of Genesis reflects that Noah’s three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth – were born on the same day, i.e., they were triplets (and not the first or last case of multiple birth recorded in Genesis).

This confusion is further compounded by the theological illogic of concluding that God would somehow curse Canaan for “what [Ham] had done to [Noah]”, which presupposes that the name “Ham” should be inserted as the meaning of the phrase “his [i.e., Noah’s] youngest son”. This

⁶Thomas D. Ice & James J. S. Johnson, “Using Scriptural Data to Calculate a Range-Qualified Chronology from Adam to Abraham, with Comments on Why the “Open-or-Closed” Genealogy Question is Chronometrically Irrelevant”, presented on March 1st, A.D. 2002 at the Southwest Regional Meeting of the **Evangelical Theological Meeting** at The Criswell College in Dallas, Texas (text slightly revised March 20, 2003).

⁷Pete J. Williams, “Some Remarks Preliminary to a Biblical Chronology”, in Volume 12 of Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal (issue #1, 1998), pp. 98-106, at page 104. See the quotation from Williams, and this writer’s rebuttal comments in reply, in **Footnote #5** (*hereinabove*).

interpretive approach can (but does not always) result in a conclusion that Ham committed some kind of sin in concert with his son, Canaan, yet somehow it is Canaan who alone is mentioned by name as a curse recipient.

Moreover, inserting Ham into **Genesis 9:24** has been manipulated as a rationalization for anti-black racism, a historic tragedy that needs no lengthy documentation here.⁸ Further error used to support these conclusions include identifying Japheth as a brother who is “older” than Shem and/or Ham, based upon a quick reading of **Genesis 10:21**, where the English phrase “the elder” is used to translate the Hebrew word *haggadol*.

The solution to this confusion involves carefully reading the Bible’s text (after a more literal translation of **Genesis 10:21**), and interpreting its meaning from what the text itself actually says. Importantly, the three sons of Noah are always named in the same order, and there is no *textual* basis for concluding that “Shem, Ham, and Japheth” is not their birth-order,⁹ as triplets (since they were begotten when Noah was 500).

To Moses, the firstborn was the “oldest”, yet Williams somehow thinks the usage of the word “elder” or “youngest” somehow negates a multiple birth, despite the clear example of Moses calling Esau “the elder” and Jacob “the younger” (**Genesis 25:21-26**, esp. **25:23**). So, how (or why) Pete Williams missed this philological / exegetical issue is anybody’s guess.

More importantly, why accuse Ham?

The only proper names used in Noah’s post-drunkenness “cursing” verses (i.e., in **Genesis 9:25-27**) are, sequentially, Canaan, the LORD God, Shem, Canaan (again), God (again), Japheth, Shem (again), and Canaan (again). The only others mentioned, in a generic sense, are the “brethren” of Canaan (as opposed to the brethren of Ham) who are mentioned in **Genesis 9:25**, and the preceding verse (9:24) explicitly identifies the prophetic speaker as Noah. In fact, what does **Genesis 9:24** literally say? Also, what does **Genesis 9:24** not say?

And Noah awoke from his wine, and [he, i.e., Noah] knew what his younger [youngest]

⁸See, e.g., John J. Davis, Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis (Salem, Wisconsin: Sheffield Publishing, 1998 reprint), pages 128-129.

See also, accord, Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), at page 238, saying: “Unfortunately, there have been some interpreters who have applied the Hamitic [*sic*] curse specifically to the Negro peoples, using it to justify keeping the black man in economic servitude or even slavery.”

⁹See **Genesis 5:32; 6:10; 7:13; 9:18; 10:1; and 1st Chronicles 1:4.**

son had done to him.

It is critical to notice that the verse does not name Ham as the “youngest son” whom Noah was thinking about. The next 3 verses (9:25-27) record Noah’s prophetic cursings and blessings:

- (a) a curse on Canaan, that he will be a servant / slave to Canaan’s brethren;
- (b) a blessing to directly to Shem’s God, as indirectly thereby to Shem, mixed with
- (c) a curse on Canaan, that he will be a servant / slave to Shem;
- (d) a blessing on Japheth, -- to “enlarged” and “dwell in the tents of Shem”, mixed with
- (e) a curse on Canaan, that he will be a servant / slave to Japheth.

Noticeably, the name “Ham” is not only not mentioned in Genesis 9:24, it is also not specifically mentioned anywhere at all within **Genesis 9:24-27!**

But why Canaan? Interestingly, after Noah realizes what his “youngest son” has done, he starts prophetically cursing Canaan, blessing God, blessing Shem, blessing Japheth, and indirectly blessing Canaan’s brothers (i.e., Ham’s other sons, Cush, Mizraim, and Put – see **Genesis 10:6**).

From a theological perspective, it would be quite troublesome if Canaan is only an innocent grandson, who is somehow receiving the penal curse for an unmentionably vile deed performed by his guilty father, — especially since that kind of curse would violate the Biblical principle of personal accountability in **Deuteronomy 24:16** (which contrasts with the pagan practice of punishing children for the sins of their fathers, as is illustrated in **Daniel 6:24**).

Even more interestingly, Canaan is the “youngest” of Ham’s sons, since in the birth-order of Ham’s four sons it is Canaan who is listed last (in **Genesis 10:6**). Historically speaking, therefore, there must have been a time-frame when Canaan was not only the “youngest son” of Ham, but Canaan was then also the “youngest grandson” of Noah. Was Canaan such a “youngest” grandson of Noah when the scandal of **Genesis chapter 9** occurred? If so, how would (or could) Moses have referred to Noah’s “youngest grandson”, if Moses had wanted to mention Canaan in relation to his grandfather?

Since the Hebrew language does not have a separate word for “grandson”, i.e., *ben* can mean an **F1** “son”, or an **F2** “grandson”, or an **F3** “great-grandson”, etc., – he could be called Noah’s “son” or he could be called Noah’s “son’s son” – both are legitimate choices in Biblical Hebrew.

This is the same logic that applies to the Hebrew word for “father”, *ab*, which may mean a **P1** “father”, or a **P2** “grandfather”, or a **P3** “great-grandfather”, etc. (which is similar to the English word “forefather”, which literally means a direct ancestor who is a man). Of course, it is possible to say in Hebrew “father’s father”, to designate a grandfather.

In other words, the Hebrew noun *ben* – routinely translated as “son” – literally means a direct lineal **male descendant**. Likewise, the Hebrew noun *`ab* – routinely translated as “father” – literally means a direct lineal **male ancestor**. Because of this Hebrew language fact, there exists at least the legitimate possibility that the phrase “youngest son”, as used in **Genesis 9:24**, may refer to someone who then was Noah’s youngest grandson. If so, that “someone” could have been Canaan, who was born as the youngest of Ham’s four sons.

However, another (perhaps even simpler) explanation is available: that the “youngest son” referred to in **Genesis 9:24** may have done something heroic, in order to mitigate the vile deed done by Canaan.

Perhaps Noah “awoke from his wine” to realize that his “youngest [F1] son”, i.e., Japheth, was the one primarily responsible for the dual action of Japheth and Shem protectively cloaking Noah (see **Genesis 9:23**), in order to mitigate the shame and indignity of something done to Noah while Noah was drunk. (Also, perhaps Noah’s drunkenness was an unforeseeable predicament, for which Noah should not be blamed, resulting from Noah being unaccustomed to the grape fermentation process, since many geophysical changes resulted from the forces and processes of the global Flood events and its aftermath, — but that creationism topic is not now before us.¹⁰)

One gets the impression that the Holy Spirit chose to inspire Moses to record this sordid tragedy in a way that, in literary effect, “cloaks” the details so as to provide some modesty to what otherwise would be the “naked truth” of what was apparently a very heinous crime committed against Noah.

If so, in pondering the heroic act of protecting Noah’s dignity, Noah may have mentally contrasted the unmentionably shameful deed, which injured Noah’s patriarchal dignity, with Japheth’s heroic conduct (aided by Shem). Thus, the contrast of Japheth’s heroic protectionism and Canaan’s vile prurience may have triggered a righteous indignation in Noah’s mind, with the immediate consequence being a God-inspired prophetic pronouncement of certain ethnological trends in geo-political world history.

Other Scriptures (e.g., **Leviticus 18:6-23** and **20:11-21**), however, support the inference that the kind of “nakedness” that was exposed in Noah’s tent was something worse than the mere uncovering of Noah’s body when he somehow became unclad.

In the example of Lot’s daughters (see **Genesis 19:32-38**), their father was twice made drunk by them, in order that they might incestuously know him sexually, with the pro-creative

¹⁰This issue is alluded to in Dr. Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), at page 234.

consequences thereof being two daughters pregnant by their own father, and two babies born therefrom, Moab and Ben-Ammi. Moreover, taking advantage of another's drunkenness as a manipulative ploy for abusing someone else's "nakedness" also occurs in *Habakkuk 2:15*.

In fact, the theme of protectively cloaking Noah's shamefully exposed nakedness may be intentionally associated, by Noah (in *Genesis 9:27*) with some vile sin that apparently occurred *in the tent* (i.e., a sin that involved exposing Noah's "nakedness" in an ominously shameful manner) may be related to Noah's choice of words that Japheth's blessing is related to Shem's tents, so there is a possible hint that Japheth's blessing is associated with his good deed inside a tent, in contrast to Canaan's.

In any case, the birth-order passages (listed in Footnotes # 5 and #9 above) suggest that Ham was not the "youngest son" who had done something right or wrong to Noah, for which Canaan and the Canaanites would be punished (but not the Hamites who descended from Ham through his older 3 sons Cush, Mizraim, and Put).

As noted above, some have concluded that the oft-repeated Scriptural birth-order information is unreliable, due to mention of Japheth as an "elder" brother to Shem, based upon a quick reading of *Genesis 10:21*, where the English phrase "the elder" is used to translate the Hebrew word *haggadol*, which literally means "the greater". Thus, Japheth appears to have been the "bigger brother" (due to size, not birth-order).

In order to appreciate how the root idea of *gadol* means "great" in size or height, consider that the noun used to denote the Tower of Babel (in *Genesis 11:4*) is *migdal*, meaning a thing that is characterized by "greatness" in size or height, and is not characterized by old age or longevity.

Objection # 4: What about the *waw* consecutive in *Genesis 12:1*?

Since *Genesis 12:1* begins with the *waw* consecutive verb (i.e., with a verb modified by a *waw* consecutive prefix), doesn't that strongly suggest a continuation of the narrative, in which case Terah died before God told Abraham to leave Haran? In other words, doesn't the *waw* consecutive in *Genesis 12:1* mean that Abraham's action of leaving Haran followed the action of Terah dying in *Genesis 11:32*? If so, wouldn't this mean that the NASB¹¹ rendering of the last half of *Acts 7:4*, which suggests that "he" removed "him" means God removed Abraham, is a correct paraphrase?

Answer # 4: *Genesis 12:1*'s *waw* consecutive is just like those in *Genesis 11*.

¹¹NASB == New American Standard Bible version.

The reader is hereby warned that the answer to Objection #4 requires repeated observation of many usages of the *waw* consecutive in Genesis genealogy passages (which is provided hereinbelow), but such observations of the Genesis text are necessarily worthwhile. Why? — because a careful review of *how* the Mosaic *waw* consecutives are actually employed in the Genesis genealogy passages will inexorably support (and not clash with) this paper's reburial explanation to the so-called "missing 60 years".

The key to answering the *waw* consecutive question is to recognize the author's (and, ultimately, the divine Author's) primary purposes and major goals for the narrative, *i.e.*, why was the body of information being narrated? *In other words, why did Moses write what he wrote in Genesis?*¹² This question is related to a similar question: why is each component of the narrative's provided information included (and integrated) as part of the over-all narrative?

All information that does not aid the narrator, to communicate the narrative in a way that achieves the purpose for the narrative, from the narrator's perspective, is irrelevant. Of course, omitting some not-so-relevant information might cause confusion or a distraction, so some not-so-relevant information may be included in a parenthetical (or footnote-like) way, which might have taken the literary form of footnotes, if Moses had been using WordPerfect 9.0 word-processing technology (which he was not).

The most critical question regarding the *waw* consecutive's grammatical usage in Genesis is not authoritatively solved by considering how 21st century grammarians prefer *waw* consecutive phrases to be used. Rather, regarding the usage of the *waw* consecutive by Moses, we should avoid the Aristotelian flaw of demanding that the 10-pound weight fall from the Leaning Tower of Pisa 10 times faster than the simultaneously dropped 1-pound weight.

The proper solution requires empirically OBSERVING HOW GOD USES THE *WAW* CONSECUTIVE IN THE GENEALOGICAL TEXTS OF GENESIS, and AFTERWARDS looking at interpretive ideas that may explain those observations. **Restated, the critical exegetical-theological question is: is it really true that the Mosaic usage of the *waw* consecutive in Genesis chapters 11 and 12 suggests, as a matter of chronology, that the death of Terah preceded Abram's history-making journey to Canaan?** After a detailed and logical observation-based study of the Genesis text itself, which is analyzed item-by-item hereinbelow, it will be clear the answer is **NO**.

In other words, the solution to the *waw* consecutive usage by Moses is resolved, textually and contextually, by looking at how Moses himself (and thus, ultimately, God Himself also, penning

¹² *Why* Moses wrote what he wrote in Genesis, ultimately, is determined by answering the bigger question: *why did God cause Moses to write what Moses wrote?* (see 2nd Peter 1:21).

through Moses) used the *waw* consecutive in the genealogical texts of Genesis, especially the river-like flowing text of GENESIS 11-12.

*Why? Because it is God's historical usage of the *waw* consecutive that governs, not how a modern-day Hebrew grammarian wishes that God had historically used the Hebrew language.*

Let me quickly digress at this point for a quick illustration, from **Genesis 1:1**, where the subject-noun ELOHIM is matched with the action-verb *bara'* ("created") -- but how can this be? how could God lead Moses to write in such a grammatically awkward (if not "incorrect") way?

Elohim is a regular (as opposed to a "dual") plural, denoting that the persons signified by the name ELOHIM are three or more persons, obviously PLURAL -- yet what about the action-verb, *bara'* -- which is a *qal* perfect third person singular masculine, not a plural!?! How grammatically awkward! Yet one can't say that the name ELOHIM is the "wrong" noun to match the verb, because the other two nouns in the sentences (*'et hashamayim* and *'et-ha'arets*) are both immediately preceded by a *nota accusativi* preposition, emphasizing that those other two nouns ("heavens" and "earth") are direct object-nouns, *not* a subject-noun.

Thus, **Genesis 1:1** stands as a Biblical example illustrating how the sequence-emphasis that a usage of *waw* consecutive denotes is focused on the literary development of Moses' narrative's primary sequence, namely, the Messianic lineage -- because the Messianic lineage is the Holy Spirit's dominating doctrine revealed in and through the Genesis genealogy texts.

Thus, the usage of the *waw* consecutive must fit the "train-of-thought" of the Holy Spirit and Moses, and *not* the train-of-thought that modern-day readers may want to impose upon the text. Accordingly, the sequence-emphasis is focused on the sequenced *links* in the Messianic "chain", with other details being provided -- like parenthetical or footnoted information -- for minor purposes.

The point, here, is that a Hebrew grammarian with a humanistic view of Hebrew grammar would try to legislate to God mandatory grammar rules that God Himself must supposedly "obey", because humanists by definition standardize man (not God) as the epistemologically ultimate reference point for truth, value, literary norms, etc., and even for Hebrew grammar.

Thus, a humanistic Hebrew grammarian would say that God must use the Old Testament Hebrew language the way that the Hebrew grammarians nowadays pontificate is "acceptable". But what happens if a grammarian says it's improper to end a sentence with a proposition, and the Bible does so, anyway? Whereas, a theocentric Hebrew grammarian would approach a Hebrew translation task with this attitude: "*how has God chosen to communicate, using the Hebrew language?*" This approach does not lead to a chaos of deconstructionistic subjectivism, because God is orderly, and logical, and rational (after all, the LOGOS is our Creator, and He Himself is the ultimate source and norm of logic), -- yet He is not artificially limited by simplistic formulas invented by human

grammarians, especially when such man-made grammar "traditions" are used to effectively nullify the "original intent"(meaning) of the message God provided through His perfectly inspired Word.

Upon further reflection, this problem of *who-governs-the-grammar-rules* should not shock anyone familiar with the dynamic realm of human-to-human communication. *Sometimes a communicator can emphasize a point by "bending" a grammar rule*, such as by using excess hyphens to describe a skeptic's attitude as a "*The-Creator-is-not-allowed-to-creatively-communicate-unless-I-arrogantly-elect-to-give-Him-permission*" attitude. That last sentence would horrify my high school English teacher! — YET it does communicate, and it does so almost picturesquely.

Enough of that *who-governs-the-grammar-rules* introduction, -- now for the good stuff ! Look at the actual data of the genealogical (i.e., post-Babel narrative) part of **Genesis 11**, which begins at **Genesis 11:10**. How does God (through His penman, Moses) use *waw* consecutives?

Notice the following instances of the *waw* consecutive by Moses, following the last verb used in **Genesis 11:9** ("He [the LORD] scattered them"):

- 11:10 ("and [Shem] he begat");
- 11:11a ("and he [Shem] lived");
- 11:11b ("and he [Shem] begat");
- 11:12 ("and he [Arphaxad] fathered"), following the usage of *chay* earlier within 11:12;
- 11:13a ("and he [Arphaxad] lived");
- 11:13b ("and he [Arphaxad] begat");
- 11:14a ("and he [Shelah] begat"), following the usage of *chay* earlier within 11:14;
- 11:15a ("and he [Shelah] lived");
- 11:15b ("and he [Shelah] begat");
- 11:16a ("and he [Eber] lived");
- 11:16b ("and he [Eber] begat");
- 11:17a ("and he [Eber] lived");
- 11:17b ("and he [Eber] begat");
- 11:18a ("and he [Peleg] lived");
- 11:18b ("and he [Peleg] begat");
- 11:19a ("and he [Peleg] lived");
- 11:19b ("and he [Peleg] begat");
- 11:20a ("and he [Reu] lived");
- 11:20b ("and he [Reu] begat");
- 11:21a ("and he [Reu] lived");
- 11:21b ("and he [Reu] begat");
- 11:22a ("and he [Serug] lived");
- 11:22b ("and he [Serug] begat");
- 11:23a ("and he [Serug] lived");

11:23b ("and he [Serug] lived");
11:24a ("and he [Nahor] begat");
11:24b ("and he [Nahor] lived");
11:25a ("and he [Nahor] lived");
11:25b ("and he [Nahor] begat");
11:26a ("and he [Terah] lived"); and
11:26b ("and he [Terah] begat").

Notice that **Genesis 11:27** is a transitional milestone in the Messianic lineage; ---- **there are no *waw* consecutives in Genesis 11:27**, because the usual "flow" of the *Genesis 11* Messianic lineage genealogy has been suspended long enough to emphasize the Terah milestone, then the Messianic lineage's genealogical "flow" resumes. (Interestingly, there is no Biblical suggestion that Terah fathered any sons other than those three mentioned in *Genesis 11:16*, Abram, Nahor, and Haran.)

The *waw* consecutives used by Moses continue, following the last verb used in *Genesis 11:27* ("he begat" -- referring to Haran begetting his son Lot), as follows:

11:28 ("and he [Haran] died");
11:29 ("and he [Abram] took");
11:30 ("and she [Sarai] was");
11:31a ("and he [Terah] took");
11:31b ("and they [Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai] issued/set out");
11:31c ("and they [Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai] came/went");
11:31d ("and they [Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai] settled");
11:32 a ("and they [Terah's days] were");
11:32b ("and he [Terah] died");
12:1 ("and He [YaHWeH] said"); --

Notice that there are no *waw* consecutives employed in **Genesis 12:2-3**. However, the *waw* consecutives used by Moses do resume thereafter, as follows:

12:4a ("and he [Abram] walked/went");
12:4b ("and he [Lot] walked/went");
12:5a ("and he [Abram] took");
12:5b ("and they [Abram, Sarai, Lot, and people ("souls") whom they had acquired in Haran] issued/set out");
12:5c ("and they [Abram, Sarai, Lot, and people ("souls") whom they had acquired in Haran] arrived");
12:6 ("and he [Abram] traveled").

Notice that the sequencing primarily communicates consecutive "links" in the "chain" of

Messianic lineage, which is the focal theme of the Genesis genealogy. The sequencing of **Genesis 11:18-21** events, -- suggested simplistically by the *waw* consecutives alone (as opposed to being analyzed by a person-after-person-in-the-Messianic-line-by-person approach), -- indicate a verb-after-verb-after-verb chronological action sequence that is chronologically incorrect.

Whereas, recognizing a Messianic lineage chain-linkage person-by-person sequence makes chronological sense: **11:18a** ("and he [Peleg] lived" -- fact # 1: Peleg lived 30 years after Peleg was born):

- 11:18b ("and he [Peleg] begat" -- fact # 2: Peleg procreated Reu, via Mrs. Peleg);
- 11:19a ("and he [Peleg] lived" -- fact # 3: Peleg lived another 209 years, *after* he procreated Reu);
- 11:19b ("and he [Peleg] begat" -- fact # 4: Peleg procreated Reu's younger siblings);
- 11:20a ("and he [Reu] lived" -- fact # 5: Reu lived 32 years after Reu was born);
- 11:20b ("and he [Reu] begat" -- fact # 6: Reu procreated Serug, via Mrs. Reu);
- 11:21a ("and he [Reu] lived" -- fact # 7: Reu lived another 207 years);
- 11:21b ("and he [Reu] begat" -- fact # 8: Reu procreated Serug's younger siblings)...

QUESTION: Must the entire time-frame of fact # 3 (that Peleg lived another 209 years) be completed before any of the time-frame of fact # 5 (that Reu lived 32 years after Reu was born) had been completed? In other words, must we conclude -- simply because *waw* consecutives were used -- that Peleg had reached age 239 *before* Reu reached age 32 (and, at age 32, begat Serug)?

In fact, the opposite is true! We know that Peleg was 30 years old when he "begat" Reu, so Peleg would have been no older than 31 by the time Peleg's wife finally gave birth to baby Reu. Thus, Peleg is 30-to-31 years older than Reu. Thus, when Reu is 32, Peleg is 32 + 30-to-31, i.e., 62-to-63 years old.

In other words, at the time that fact # 5 and fact # 6 are occurring on Earth, Peleg is only 62 or 63 years old, -- not 209 or older ! **Accordingly, fact # 5 and fact # 6 are already history more than 140 years before the occurrence of the historical fact denoted in fact # 3.**

In sum, fact # 3 is NOT a completed fact of history UNTIL more than 140 years AFTER fact # 5 and fact # 6 are already *completed* facts of history.

Why? Because these inerrantly recounted genealogy-related facts involve action-verbs which describe *biological processes*, -- such as growing biologically older (and thus measuring one's age by one's age at death), -- which are *not* aorist-like pinpoints in time, yet these genealogy-related facts are defined with words that use pinpoints in time to describe those time-frames.

Distraction is minimized when one remembers that the major theme is the MESSIANIC LINEAGE, which is like a chain composed of consecutive links -- those links are ALWAYS in the

correct chronological order, with the other non-Messianic-lineage-critical information provided by Moses constituting minor "footnote"-or-"parenthetical"-like information, which Moses provides us as "FYI" information, no doubt, but not information that absolutely constitutes an essential "link" in the critical-path sequence of the Messianic lineage "chain".

The Peleg-to-Reu genealogical narrative information is not literarily un-representative of other parts of the God-inspired Genesis 11 genealogy. In particular, there is some parenthetical "wrap-up" information tagged onto the personage of each "link" in the Messianic lineage "chain", -- often in the nature of telling about the age at death of the last link-in-the-chain just before moving onto the key events in the life of the next-link-in-the-chain.

CONCLUSION

In God's providential time, both Abraham and Bluetooth came to personally know that same Creator-God, not only as their Maker, but also as their personal Redeemer, -- by faith, -- just as the apostle Paul observed, that Abraham "believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness"¹³. Accordingly, the reburial behaviors of Abraham and Bluetooth are thus theologically comparable, because: (1) both reburials serve as role-model-worthy reminders of a child's duty to honor one's God-selected parents; and (2) both reburials also serve as reminders of our need to thank God for providing such procreativity channels our own human life, -- even if one is a first-generation believer.

Also, carefully reading the data in Genesis chapters 11 and 12, together with carefully examining the actual Hebrew words which God led Moses to pen (in **Genesis 11-12**), proves that there is no real chronological "missing 60 years" regarding Genesis' inerrant record of Abraham's (or Terah's) life-span. Likewise, other "family history" errors (such as mis-readings of Noah's prophetic curses, and perpetuating that error to theologically justify a form of geo-political racism) can be avoided -- by carefully studying God's Word, followed by simply believing what God has said in His Word is true (because it is).¹⁴

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¹³*Romans 4:3* (quoting from *Genesis 15:6*).

¹⁴See Paul's reminder, in *Hebrews 11:6* (and *11:4*), that we please God by believing Him.