

in its days of independence, and certainly would not have forgotten the names of any of these kings. Yet in Matthew 1 we find that three of these kings were skipped. This is not obvious in our English translation, because it simply gives the names in the form in which they appear in the Hebrew Old Testament. If one carefully examines Matthew 1:8-9, he will note that Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are omitted between Jehoram and Uzziah. (Cf. 2 Kings 8:16-29; 11-12; 14; and the parallels in 2 Chronicles.) Thus, in this case, it is plain that the word "begat" meant to become an ancestor of a man's great-great-grandson. There are other instances in both Old and New Testaments where it is clear that "son" in the Bible means what we mean by "descendant," and that "to beget" means "to become an ancestor."

Since this is the case, it is entirely possible that the genealogies in the book of Genesis were never intended to give us an idea of complete chronology, but simply to name certain of the more important individuals and to give an idea how long people lived in those days. Thus we read in Genesis 11:14-15: "And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber; And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters." This means that Salah was thirty years old when he became a father. The son who was then born to him was either Eber or an ancestor of Eber. After Salah became an ancestor of Eber he lived four hundred and three additional years.

I have heard it said that Shem was still living when Abraham was married. Such an idea is reached by simply adding together the figures in Genesis 11, and assuming that the genealogy is complete. But it does not seem to me to fit at all with the impression we receive when we read of Abraham being called out of a land of idolatry to go into a distant country where he should keep alive the knowledge of the true God. It would hardly seem possible that most of the world would have turned away from God while those who had actually been in the ark were still living.

Moreover, we have found records in Mesopotamia that give evidence of continuous civilization there from about 3000 B.C. on, with no evidence of a universal flood at about 2500 B.C. It is my own opinion that probably the great flood occurred long before 3000 B.C., and that the genealogy in Genesis 11 only gives us sample steps in the descent of Abraham.

I would think that the same conclusion could be drawn about the genealogies before the flood. God created Adam perfect, placed him in a perfect environment, and gave him every opportunity. Yet Adam fell. Then man was driven out of the garden of Eden and the results of sin began to work in man's body. Longevity gradually decreased, as wickedness spread. It became so bad that God decided to wipe out all of humanity by a flood. It hardly seems likely that all of this took place in a period of only fifteen hundred years. More likely the genealogy from Seth to Noah gives only sample steps, showing something of the life during this period, and naming some of the more important individuals in the line of descent. In many of the cases the statement that X was Y years old when he begat Z probably