

that a long-lived shallow-rooted tree that grows in poor soil would have to have a growth strategy that maximizes growth when soil moisture is above a suitable threshold, but minimizes growth below that threshold. The rainfall pattern, rather than the annual solar cycle, might therefore control the ring structure. Has anyone considered this?

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John Woodmorappe replies:

Based on currently-available evidence, it does not appear possible that the bristlecone pine rings could be governed by cycles of rainfall. To begin with, ring formation, at the high altitudes involved, is a complex interplay of temperature and rainfall, and could not be dominated by rainfall alone. After all, if it is too cold, then no amount of rainfall will cause ring growth. On the other hand, if it is too warm, any rainfall will evaporate rapidly and be unavailable for tree growth.

Secondly, two major bursts of rainfall per summer would not cause two rings in one year. This owes to the fact that, as discussed in my *ICC* paper,² the growing season is too short to support two distinct growth flushes. And were the growing season longer, it is doubtful that the characteristic longevity of bristlecones would have occurred at all.

As discussed in my *ICC* paper, the data does not show any significant cyclic pattern of recurrence. This alone rules out a cyclic rainfall pattern as the primary cause of tree ring widths.

Finally, even if rainfall patterns are what caused the ring growth sequences, they would not, by their very nature, lead to age-staggered ring growth. For this reason, there would be no compression in the '8,000 year' tree ring chronology. Note that my migrating-disturbance model does allow for age-staggered ring patterns with ensuing compression of the early part of the chronology.

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References

1. Woodmorappe, J., Field studies in the ancient bristlecone pine forest, *TJ* 17(3):119–127, 2003.
2. Woodmorappe, J. Collapsing the long bristlecone pine tree ring chronologies: in Ivey, R.L. Jr (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 5th ICC*, Technical Volume, Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, pp. 491–503, 2003.

The extra Cainan

A million thanks to Jonathan Sarfati and *TJ* for presenting a *long-overdue*, well-researched presentation on the 'Cainan' question. I've had a few pretty heated moments in the recent past over the apparent lack of justification for so quickly discarding the Cainan verses from Genesis 11 and Luke 3!

The reason for all the steam was that at one point some in the creationist camp (after discounting the LXX reference in Gen. 11) were flippantly attributing the verse in Luke 3 to a copyist's error—without any mention of the earliest available manuscript of Luke *not containing* that reference. And that last part is what makes all the difference in the world.

Attributing a textual conflict to a 'copyist's error' can be a reasonable explanation *once other manuscript evidence is present to support a different text*, but without that evidence, it becomes a *dangerous precedent* for

anybody who doesn't like, agree with or understand a particular passage of Scripture.

For example, there's a passage in 1 Corinthians concerning tongues that J.B. Phillips (the well-known 20th century Bible scholar) just could not get his arms around—so in his contemporary translation of the New Testament, he simply reversed the order of the words in the text! We're not talking about plausible interpretations of an unclear meaning in the original grammar here—we're talking about outright **changing the text!** And yet I can understand the text perfectly well just as it's been handed down to us—and who am I ... ?!

We must always be on our guard that we don't fall into the trap of minimalizing (or giving the appearance of such) the sanctified nature of Holy Scripture when it becomes uncomfortable to explain—that's our antagonists's job!

Please keep up the great work—*TJ* and *Creation Magazine* are like bricks of gold in my bookcase!!!

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Jonathan Sarfati replies:

Thank you for the generous comments. You are right that inerrantists should be sparing with appeals to copyist error, and informed ones will always back it up. Manuscript evidence for a harmonizing reading is ideal, but it is also reasonable to invoke a copyist error if there are known scribal errors that could explain it.¹ Textually, lists of things and numbers are the most prone to corruption, which applies to the case of the extra Cainan. In addition, many Hebrew numbers were represented by letters, which were very similar.

Another legitimate appeal to a copyist error is to reconcile the following 2 passages which appear to be inconsistent; and the first contradicts the well established history of David killing Goliath:

➤ **2 Sam. 21:19** In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

➤ **1 Chr. 20:5** In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

The second is likely to be the correctly preserved transcription. Inerrantist Hebrew scholar Gleason Archer provides a plausible explanation how the first passage could arise by scribal error:²

1. a copyist mistook the sign of the direct object before *Lahmi*, which was '-t, for a b-t or b-y-t (the Hebrew original only has consonants). This results in *Bêthal-Lahmî* ('the Bethlehemite');
2. the copyist also misread the word for 'brother' (אָח '-h) as the sign of the direct object (אָח '-t) before 'Goliath' (g-l-y-t). This made 'Goliath' the object of 'killed' instead of 'brother' as per the original reading in Chronicles;
3. the word 'weavers' ('-r-g-ym) was after 'a beam' (so 'a beam of weavers'). But it was misplaced to come after 'Elhanan ben Yair' making the patronymic *ben Y-'r-y '-r-giym* 'son of the forests of weavers', a most implausible name for a father!

Certainly, the preservation of Scripture is far higher than any other ancient document. Appeals to copyist error should be sparing and only with objective justification.

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References

1. See discussion in Holding, J.P., Copyist errors and estimations in the text of the Bible, <www.tektonics.org/copyisterrors.html>.
2. Archer, Gleason L., Jr., *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 178, 179, 1982.

Fr Seraphim's Rose's book, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*

In my review of Fr Seraphim's Rose's book, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*¹ I state that Eastern Orthodoxy

'denies the doctrine of original sin, which they wrongly claim was invented by Augustine, although he merely expounded upon the Biblical teaching in passages such as Romans 5:12–19.'

Thanks to criticisms from one reader and after further study, I have seen that this statement is not totally accurate and I wish to correct the wrong impression given. Though rejecting the Augustinian view, EO theologians do believe that Adam's sin affected all his posterity both physically and morally. Man was now subject to disease, pain and death as well as frustration, boredom, depression and inward alienation. The divine image in man was obscured but not obliterated. His free choice has been restricted in its exercise but not destroyed. Original sin means that people are born into an environment where it is easy to do evil and hard to do good, but sinful man is capable of doing some good, although not sufficient to save himself. So, all people automatically inherit Adam's corruption and mortality. But EO rejects the notion of inherited guilt from Adam and insists that every person is guilty by virtue of his own sins, which imitate Adam's.²

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References

1. Mortenson, T., orthodoxy and Genesis: what the fathers really taught, *TJ* 16(3):52, 2002.

2. See Ware, K., *The Orthodox Way*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, pp. 59–62, 1995 and; Ware K., *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, London, pp. 222–224, 1997.

Flood boundary debate

Concerning the current Flood Geology debate, my own school text book will feature both views.

However a number of issues trouble me, regarding the Recolonisation view. Chief among these is exemplified by Robinson's admission that 'Were there no geological or archaeological evidence to bear on the question, the genealogy might be complete and thus provide the basis for an absolute chronology, but it cannot, exegetically, be assumed to be complete.'

For all the detail of Robinson's arguments, I would need more than external scientific theory to move me from a plain reading of what scripture says. Only an acknowledgement that the textual context required an alternative meaning would suffice. But the context makes no such demands. I am bound to say, therefore, that we have been here before, in terms of re-interpreting scripture to fit with the theories of the age.

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Flood models and chronogenealogy

It appears that only an interpretative whisker separates the 'Main Flood' adherents from those who prefer the 'Recolonisation model' in their understanding of Genesis.

Your comments at the end of the correspondence between Carl Froede and Steven Robinson imply that discussion on the attractive option of Recolonisation ends because the