

## The Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: An Overview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykrWTdUI4AQ>

One of the questions that came out of the presentation I think is a good one. You know we got into some details particularly with chronology and we got down to very new details. And the question was well why does God really care about this?

There's a couple of ways to answer the question. One is you can infer very logically that God cares about it because all of these details are deposited in His revelation. And so if they're there, then they are important. So that's one inference that you can draw sort of from the bottom up, if you want to say it that way, in the details.

If you go to a period like the divided kingdom period, for example, which covers many centuries, there's probably over 400 chronological data points given for that period of time—some figure like that.

If you ever read through Chronicles or First or Second Kings and you see the reigns of the kings and how precise they are, that's been worked out by scholars in great minute detail.

So God is interested in that because we can infer that from the text, because there's so many details in the text. And this is another reason why I think the analogy of Scripture says that there's a chronology here in Genesis 5 and 11. You have to justify it from the text, but also the analogy of Scripture God has all this other chronological information from the time of Abraham going forward. It would make sense that He would be concerned about it from this era as well.

And then the big picture is ultimately, you know, Galatians—in the fullness of time God sent His Son. God is intimately involved in every aspect of His creation in terms of time and when He's going to act in history and with phrases like “to this very day,” He uses “in various places” and there's a lot of details that are found in the text.

So I think that's two ways you can go about answering the big picture. And then in the nitty-gritty details of the hundreds and hundreds of chronological indicators that are there. I think we can infer that God wants us to pay attention to that.

Now there's another element of it too that I think is important in terms of the external history. When we have all this internal chronology, we can look at external history and draw comparisons. For these later periods that's been worked out very well in many in many cases.

In Genesis 5 and 11 we have quite a different scenario because we have major worldview conflicts. We have the issue of the Flood and the Fall and those paradigms clash with all of the modern paradigms that are out there.

The issues are a little bit different. So we drew the conclusion, or I drew the conclusion, that maybe you are persuaded, perhaps not. But if you are, then the question is very important about if we have a chronology from Adam to Abraham, what is the correct chronology?

Before I start today, the last thing I'll say before we start getting into the details is on our website we have the articles that I've written to try to make the best case that I've been able to make so far. I have more to do behind the things I'm going to say today. So it's impossible to be exhaustive in this kind of forum and I wouldn't want to be because it would just sort of plunge us into a lot of esoteric details. I want to try to keep it at a higher level.

You might hear me say something that I don't back up with evidence immediately. I've tried to produce that in the articles in the research project. And I'm slowly working on a book that's been coming along a lot slower than I had hoped. So the point is if you have follow-up questions or it seems like I'm being arbitrary, I hope that I'm not. I'm trying to justify the claims that I make, but I won't be able to do that thoroughly today with you.

The first thing is I sent a handout and the reason for that is because we have to talk about numbers. And when you start talking about numbers in the abstract, people's eyes glaze over. In Genesis 5 and 11 we have three texts, three textual traditions that have preserved numbers. And you'll see that on your black and white handout, it's on the second page by the way.

We're not going to obviously walk through all of this today. I'm just going to give you some highlights. But we have three traditions. We have the Hebrew Masoretic Text, which is primarily the text that underlies your modern English Bible for the most part, Old Testament. We have the Greek translation from antiquity, the Septuagint, which is very ancient. It's the most ancient witness to a very ancient Hebrew text that was circulating in Egypt at least in the third century BC, if not earlier.

Then we have the five Books of Moses that were preserved by the Samaritans. Now they only follow the five Books of Moses and one of the books, of course, is the Book of Genesis, which contains numbers.

So we have these three traditions that have been preserved in history and we have divergences amongst the traditions. We have different numbers and those numbers give us different calculations. So we're going to talk about that a little bit here.

Let me give you a sketch from Genesis 5. For example, you just start with Adam. You read across here. You see that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic Texts match, but the Septuagint does not. The beginning age is 100 years higher and the remaining years are 100 years lower, but the lifespans are all the same. So all three traditions have the same lifespan, which points us back to one original source.

But there's a difference in beginning ages and obviously that would affect the timeline. I'll give you a rundown on the timeline in a few minutes, what the effect of these differences are.

So the text has clearly been changed here by a hundred years one way or the other. That's really what the debate has been for over 2,000 years—is why did this happen? who did it? what circumstances did they do it? what were their motivations? what points to the original text? and so on. Those are the kind of questions that need to be asked about it.

So that's an example where you see the same thing with Seth. Now things start to get thornier and trickier as we move down through the Pre-Flood genealogy because we get down to Jared and we see now that the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint match each other, but the Samaritan Pentateuch is 100 years less for the beginning age and the remaining years are completely different. They're not reduced or changed by 100 or increased, but they're actually less. And the lifespan is different. This phenomenon at the end of the Pre-Flood period for the Samaritan Pentateuch, the result is that Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech all die in the same year of the Flood.

Now my conclusion is that that is evidence that's been artificially changed for some reason in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

But then we have on the other side Jared numbers being the same in the Masoretic and the Septuagint.

We see Enoch now kind of a switch back to the first pattern we saw with Adam and probably the reason for that in my judgment is that Enoch didn't live long enough to come up against the Flood. He was taken away by God so he "only lived 365 years".

Then we have Methuselah and we have the same thing with the Samaritan Pentateuch. The number has been reduced compared to the other two witnesses. And then we have the case of Lamech, which is sort of its own problem in that the numbers are different in all three traditions.

Here we have only a six-year difference in the beginning age between the MT and the Septuagint. But then the remaining years are different and that makes the lifespan different. So that's a unique problem that I've tried to work on to try to figure out what happened with that. So you can see there's a lot that's taken place here.

I should say that while there are accidental mistakes that have been made, particularly in the Septuagint, because it was spread all throughout the Mediterranean world and not under the control of any particular central authority, like the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch were, we have more accidental errors. But we've been able to identify those pretty easily. But it's clear that these texts have been systematically revised on the order of 100 years in some cases for different purposes. They're not accidental. They cannot be accidental. They are deliberate.

So again it goes back to the question of what happened?

Let's go to the Post-Flood period. I should mention that we also have commonalities in the text. We have life spans that are all the same across all three. We have someone like Shem, whose numbers have not been changed at all. You'll note in the Post-Flood period though we don't have any lifespans explicitly stated for the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint, but the Samaritan Pentateuch has lifespans which have been added to the text. So you have that issue going on.

As you go down through the period now you see kind of different numbers.

Now there's kind of a switch that takes place. The Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch in the beginning ages match each other largely throughout the genealogy, but then their remaining years are different. The Samaritan Pentateuch has reduced it by 100 years and added a lifespan. So there's a lot going on here with the numbers.

As you get towards the end of the period you see some numbers going across the board. Just looking at Serug again, Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. They match the beginning age but the Samaritan Pentateuch has reduced the remaining years by a hundred years and added a life span. Then to add even more to the complexity of it, Abraham's father Terah, his lifespan has been deliberately reduced in the Samaritan Pentateuch by 60 years and that's its own unique issue. There's a lot of reasons for that that I can't get into.

But the point of all of this is just simply to show you just as an overview sketch of what's happening here. Again, we have a number of clearly deliberate changes that have taken place to the text. In antiquity this took place.

So here's how the numbers shake out. Here's why this is important because, if we have the Bible yielding your chronology, but we have different chronologies from the traditions, how can we know which one is the original? Because we need to get it right, particularly when we're

calculating the date of the Flood. Because that's critical for understanding everything that happens after the Flood, the Ice Age, the archaeological evidence, the Tower of Babel, all of animal distribution after the ark lands on Mount Ararat, and we have human population growth.

So many different things that are influenced and affected by the date of when the Flood is and so that's why this is important. And one of the reasons why I was unsatisfied with a lot of the answers that I found in the academic materials, because I wanted to know the truth of the matter. I want to know when the Flood happened because if I don't have the date right, then I can draw all kinds of wrong apologetic conclusions from that. So that's sort of been one of the motivating factors in trying to adjudicate all of these numbers.

So now before your eyes glaze over, we're not going to go into minute detail with numbers. We're going to kind of try to keep it at a broad higher view here, just to give you an idea. And I'm going to tell you up front what conclusion I've drawn.

I should say I started drawing it through in the beginning about a third of the way through my research. And then I kept testing my theory after that because I thought that was the best way to explain the evidence. And I'll tell you what that is shortly.

So we have large-scale changes, accidental scribal errors. And I've documented a lot of this in the articles that are on our website. So if that's of interest to you, you can go there and have at it.

So the million dollar question has been historically who changed the numbers? If you just pick one tradition. Let's say you pick the Hebrew text and you say I think that's original. Well then the job of advocating that position is you have to explain the changes in the Samaritan Pentateuch and the changes in the Septuagint. If you pick the Septuagint, you got to explain the other two as well. And if you pick the Samaritan Pentateuch, which many people have not, but there's been a few scholars have done that, then it's the same issue.

So the data has to be explained in the context of the theory that explains the data as it has explanatory power. It's almost like a scientific hypothesis. So a couple of things that I developed that made sense to me: one of the things that I would see in the literature is a lot of claims that oh this scribe changed this number and he changed this number, he changed that number and then he changed this. A very random selection of claiming that changes were randomly made.

And my theory that I started to develop was wait a minute, particularly in the Hebrew text and the Pentateuch, these texts were in the control of the religious authorities and the changes that were made had to be inculcated into those communities by people who are in a position to be able to do that.

So, the theory that you come up with can't be just random renegade scribes because they don't have the authority to inculcate the changes into the religious community. I hope that makes sense. A renegade scribe would sort of be caught doing what he's doing and the correction would be made to it.

So the changes have to be authorized; this kind of systematic revision of the text. So what motivated them? In other words, they were all handling sacred texts. They believed that to some level. What is it that motivated them in their mind to justify changing the numbers? What were the means that they had available to them? Could they control it? And were there historical circumstances that would allow for such changes to take place?

One of the things that I've done is read extensively the critical scholarship because I wanted to know what all the arguments were and I found helpful nuggets. But their overarching understanding of the origin of the Bible, its divine origin, its deep inherent clarity and sufficiency and accuracy is all missing from their theories. So you can't follow their models. You can get data out of their models, but you can't follow their models.

So we're going to follow a model that has a high view of Scripture, that the numbers were consistent, internally accurate, historically accurate, and that God has preserved them. Doctrine of preservation.

In my view the doctrine of preservation is that God sovereignly over history has preserved His Word but He doesn't give us in His Word the mechanics of how that would be taken out, or who would do that. That's a theological argument, but I think the argument has to come from Scripture itself.

I just see overarching promises from God and the inherent logic of it. How can we obey the word of God if it hasn't been preserved?

So there is a doctrine of preservation, but the mechanism by which God does it, I see as a sort of an open question in terms of could we have an original text that's in the Greek, that's been preserved through translation? Or even more radically outside of the manuscript, perhaps by an external witness like Josephus or something? Does the Bible require that it has to be in a biblical manuscript? That's kind of theological questions that I've wrestled with over time.

So God preserves it, but this is a starting point because we have to think about the doctrine of preservation. If we insist it can only be the Hebrew text, it cannot be anything else and there's a lot of people that make that argument, then this whole discussion is moot, because then you would just follow the Majority Text. But that in my view has to come from Scripture and I don't think Scripture tells us that. That's my assessment of that.

That's something for you to ruminate on. You know I realize that some folks may have a different opinion about that or strong feelings about that, but I've tried to develop that in my research to try to explain the thinking behind that.

So in your other handout, so now I'm going to let the cat out of the bag, which is probably most of you have already realized that I concluded early that I thought, although the Septuagint has been mercilessly slandered by many people, including a lot of people who are young-earth creationists, I think that slandering has been largely inaccurate and I just ignored the Septuagint as a resolution of this to the issue of interpreting these genealogies. I just ignored it because I thought well everything everybody says about it is so negative it can't be the answer.

But actually when I started really investigating this seven or eight years ago, I found something quite different. So I've drawn the conclusion that the Septuagint largely preserves the original numbers and gives us the original chronology by and large with a couple of living exceptions. And so we're going to work off of that. So instead of working up to the conclusion I'm giving it to you up front. And then I'm just going to sort of tell you the reasons why I've drawn that conclusion.

So this is my proposed dating based on the text that I think are the original readings and this is in some of the articles that I've written. And I'm doing more with my book with it. So you can take a look at that at your leisure. And if you need to refer to it during question time, that would be great.

So now just really quick, when I say that the Septuagint has been mercilessly slandered, I don't say that lightly. It has been and there's a couple of categories where it's been sort of treated very poorly.

One has to do with Kainan who is in Luke chapter 3, but he's not in the Hebrew text in Genesis 11. And so there's a lot of work that's floating around out there about Kainan. I co-authored a very in-depth article with someone on the issue of Kainan because I was unsatisfied with all of the opinions floating out in the literature.

I had to deal with that question and then many of you may have heard that the Septuagint, some of the manuscripts have a lower begetting age for Methuselah and that puts him living past the Flood by 14 years. And so the inference has been well, that can't be right, which of course it can't be right, therefore this Septuagint is an illegitimate source for us to look at for the chronology.

So I deal with the issue of the Methuselah variant and I conclude that it was an accident, some kind of mess up in the transmission of the text, and that it was just incorrect. But it doesn't make the whole Septuagint illegitimate because of this one error.

Now it's an important error. It's not insignificant and so I tried to deal with that in one of the articles that I wrote as well.

So let me take a breath here for a moment. Because of time we cannot get into a lot of things that I would like to. So what we're going to do is just sort of cover as a general sketch the Septuagint, which is a Greek translation, and then we're going to talk about the Masoretic Text. That'll be our main focus.

One of the things that you'll find floating out there all over the place is the argument that the Septuagint's chronology is longer because the translators inflated it. So they just simply inflated those numbers to stretch the chronology.

So the question of motivation comes into play. Why would they do that? And the answer has largely been because they lived in Egypt and they were aware of Egyptian chronology and therefore they were trying to stretch the Bible's timeline as an apologetic. So that's the accusation that this takes place. It's kind of interesting the way it plays out in the literature. Because it's like they're accused of being less pious than the Jews who were living in Israel, which actually you find out when you see what they do to the text that that's not true. And it's just ad hominem. It's just a personal attack against the Alexandrian Jews.

The thing we want to do is deal with the evidence. Where does the evidence lead us? And so the first thing I asked was well, does this achieve the goal that purportedly they had in mind? And the answer is no. The fact of the matter is that Egyptian chronologies from antiquity, there was a few of them and they were longer than the Septuagint.

Beneath those is one of them and in its ancient form it gives dates that are longer than the Septuagint chronology. You see Julius Africanus and Eusebius, church fathers, deal with this issue saying look, the Egyptians say that their civilization is 10, 15, 20, 50,000 years old. They actually document that.

So the point I'm making is just very simply, it doesn't achieve the goal that supposedly the Alexandrian Jews were trying to accomplish by inflating it. So the Egyptian chronologies are too long. The Septuagint chronology is just not long enough to satisfy that motivation. And I have

found, by the way, that in the literature, I've got a long list of scholars who just sort of default to that argument.

One of the things the sort of as a secondary argument is can we find people in antiquity that said that this is what they did. So far the answer has been no. I've been able to trace this back to 1834. That's the earliest source that I can find that makes this claim. There may be sources that are earlier, but I haven't found them yet.

One of the things you want to do in terms of a forensic investigation is: does this idea come from antiquity or is it more of just a modern kind of invention. So far in my judgment it seems to be a modern one. So it doesn't achieve the specified goal and if the goal was to equal Egyptian chronology, then the chronology has to be much, much longer.

There are ways that you could actually manipulate the Septuagint's chronology to make it much longer than what it is already there. You could expand the pre-Flood period by 2,000 years if you wanted to blow the begetting ages up even further, because the men lived for so long.

If you think about it Noah had his sons after the age of 500. So you could do that with Adam and all the others and blow the chronology up even further. But that didn't happen. The difference is only 100 years in the Hebrew text.

One of the clues that you would look for is, if you're looking at the rest of Genesis, do you find evidence in the Genesis text that the translation is deeply influenced by Egyptian worldview plans? Because if that's the case, then that would be consistent with trying to change the chronology, because that's a worldview claim as well. Time is a worldview claim.

So do you see any evidence of significant conformity to Egyptian theology by the Alexandrian Jews? The answer is no.

All of the experts I've read on the Septuagint of Genesis say that they treated the text carefully, that they tried to remain faithful to the underlying Hebrew, that they were conservative in their translation choices, and so on. They just simply didn't have the freedom to import other worldview paradigms into their translation.

We do see evidence of Egyptian language and syntax at the lower level, which is a reason why it's good, it's proper to believe that the text was translated there, but not worldview plans—enough to override the mean meaning of what the text is saying.

So these are the kind of things that I've walked through as I began reading these theories in the literature.

Another one is very interesting. The liberal critical scholars, their paradigm is wrong, but they make the observation that when the translators were translating, it's pretty clear to us when we look at the way that they translated the rest of Genesis that these numbers were in the Hebrew text that they were using, that they didn't make this up, they didn't inflate it, that they would remain faithful to the underlying text. So that the numbers should be attributed to it, it's called the *Vorlage*, which is the word that's always used for the Hebrew text that they were using.

That's the consensus that you read in the literature. I wanted to get a sense of what do they say about the translation techniques of the translators when they were utilizing the text.

So here's an example of a world-famous textual critic, Emmanuel Tov. He's worked with Dead Sea Scrolls and so on. The numbers should not be ascribed to the translator, but to the Hebrew

text. He says that there was some freedom, a little bit, and some of the details or translation techniques, but no evidence of large-scale changes throughout the Book of Genesis.

Another reason why we should reject this theory is because we see in the Samaritan Pentateuch in Genesis 11, numbers that match the Septuagint in the beginning age. That's independent of the translation into Greek. So you have a sectarian community in the Samaritan Pentateuch who's preserving numbers that match the Septuagint. These are two independent traditions. It certainly shouldn't be argued that the Samaritans were interested in Egyptian chronology in any kind of way.

Their Hebrew text had these the numbers in Genesis 11 in them. That's another reason to think that this theory doesn't work very well when we examine it closely.

Then we're going to talk about internal evidence. That's another thing is look internally in the text. What are some of the things that the text yields? I'm going to show you towards the end how there's actually several errors that the Masoretic Text yields that pointed me to the conclusion that something happened to the text. We'll talk about that a little bit later.

One more item that we'll discuss as it relates to the Septuagint. One of the ways that I wanted to try to envision this was, let's look at what I call external witnesses. This is somebody in the ancient world who has a biblical text at their desk—you want to say it that way—who's writing and they've recorded the numbers from Genesis 5 and 11. You're getting a snapshot of a biblical text from that time.

They might be using the Septuagint or they might be using the Hebrew text. You have to work that out, but the point is that they have before them a text. This is a really important part of the investigation. Because it's not a manuscript in our possession, but it's a snapshot of a manuscript that existed in antiquity.

So Josephus is important because he records all the numbers and he actually adds them up for both epochs, which is fascinating. But when I started reading that in the literature, I became very frustrated because there were all these conflicting opinions. "Ah, he was just parroting the Septuagint." "He had both in his possession." "No, he followed the Hebrew. No, he did this. No, he did that."

So I said, "I've had enough. For that I need to go investigate this myself and find out what the story was." I wanted to get to the sources, the scholars who've actually looked at the manuscripts of Josephus and who understand, who were experts on Josephus' work from antiquity.

What I found was several things. One is we have overarching statements from Josephus extending a biblical history from Adam to Artaxerxes in his writings. These are only compatible with the Septuagint's chronology. They're not compatible with the Hebrew Masoretic Text nor the Septuagint.

So he's doing a calculation. He's given an overarching calculation of sacred history. He says also, I'm translating from Hebrew. That's what he's claiming. It's not that he didn't use Septuagint text. He certainly did, especially in later books, but his claim was he's doing the translation work. And scholars have extensively looked at that. So that's interesting.

He says that in many places. So, then I said, "well if Josephus is saying that, could he be mistaken? I don't know how he could be mistaken about that, but maybe he's just not telling the truth. So what do the scholars say about Josephus? What do they say about the biblical text that

he was using? You find all of the major experts over the last 125 to 150 years all universally agree that he had a Hebrew text of Genesis when he wrote *Antiquities*, when he was in Rome around AD 90.

I said wow, so if that's true, then either he had a Hebrew text that had the Masoretic's numbers, or he had a Hebrew text that had the Septuagint's numbers. Which is it? That's the next phase of the question.

Here's one scholar, a French scholar [Etienne Nodet]. He's had some stuff translated into English, but he basically says, look I've looked at this exhaustively. Josephus was using Hebrew text for his early books.

Once you start sort of unpacking that, you start to realize, wow if this is right, Josephus had in his possession the Hebrew text of Genesis with the longer chronology. That's a very significant witness from the ancient world.

Then what I did was I found conflicting information in the literature, a different chronology for Josephus for Genesis 5 and 11. I said well, what's going on with that? It turns out that I had to actually look at the scholars who've studied the manuscripts of Josephus, the ones that are still in museums and libraries in Europe.

Fortunately, now we have modern technology. A lot of them have been scanned and they're available for people all around the world. When you analyze that, you see that he records the longer chronology. When you put the whole argument together, he's got a Genesis text. It's written in Hebrew. It has the longer chronology, and he's in Rome.

Nodet even argues that he thinks he had scrolls from the Temple. We can't say that for sure, but he received a gift from Titus, books, sacred books. It could be that these were Temple scrolls that had survived the destruction of the Temple.

I've got to be careful how far we go with that argument. But the point is simply that all of the scholarship points in the direction that would point to the longer chronology in a Hebrew text.

There are other external witnesses that support that argument, as well, that I've documented. I can't cover that today. But this is an important part of the forensic investigation. Josephus is the critical witness from the first century AD. And, in fact, the last thing I'll say about that from a positive standpoint about the Septuagint, let's say just for the sake of conversation because we don't know 100%.

Well, maybe he did have some Septuagint scrolls of Genesis with him. That's a reasonable argument. We don't see a lot of the Septuagint in his writings in the early part of his books. But let's just make that reasonable judgment. He had the ability to draw comparisons. So if his Hebrew text conflicted with the Septuagint text, he would have been aware of those differences in the numbers because they were substantial when it comes to chronology. But nonetheless he deposits the longer chronology for both periods of time. So that's very significant for us as we unpack all this.

In summary, as I mentioned in the beginning, I'm not giving you all the reasons why I think the Septuagint preserves the original numbers. It's just a sketch dealing with some objections about inflation and then one external witness. I wrestled with what do I do here. Do I give you all the positive reasons for the Septuagint or do I say, "okay tell me why the Masoretic Text was changed? Because that's somebody changing the Hebrew Bible. That's a very serious charge.

That's a very serious crime and we ought not throw that accusation around very lightly. And I agree with that.

So I will say upfront to you, when I first encountered the idea that the Hebrew text had been altered to this degree, I couldn't accept it. In fact, it took me over a year to accept it. I kept reading about it in older Christian literature and kept saying that sounds like a conspiracy theory and all that other kind of thing. Maybe it's antisemitism. I was wrestling through all that kind of stuff.

But I got to a point where I couldn't get away from the force of the evidence anymore, so I began to cognitively sort of accept that idea that that actually might be the case. What I call this is when it comes to changing the Masoretic Text, you can tell up front I'm going to make the argument that it was the old rabbis who changed the text, that it happened in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple. And I'm just going to sketch out for you the reasons why I think that happened. Then I'm going to show you some inconsistencies in the MT that sort of point to it being changed.

This is what I call it: the Deflation Theory. It's been sketched out in a couple of articles I've written. The full development of it is in one of the chapters in my book I'm almost done with that, but I haven't quite gotten there yet. I'm still working on some elements of it. So let's just sort of walk this out together.

I've tried to make a little bit of a positive argument for the Septuagint. And now this is sort of a negative argument in terms of, okay if you follow the Septuagint, then you got to show me why you think the Masoretic was changed. That's what we're going to do together.

So if you go back to the beginning of my talk you'll recall I talked about

- a. motive
- b. means
- c. opportunity.

Circumstances in history, the means to control the manuscript tradition to inculcate the changes into the religious community, and motivation. What is it that motivates someone to do this to the Word of God? It's one thing to make accidental mistakes when you're copying a manuscript. It's another thing to systematically change it in such a radical way.

That's what we're dealing with.

As I began examining the question of motivation and what's going on here with these texts, I discovered this phenomenon in Second Temple Judaism, which uses the text of Genesis 5 and 11 extensively to calculate time. There was this phenomenon called Chrono-Messianism. What do I mean by that? Well, there's a lot of evidence from the writings from this period that all the groups in Judaism, different sects, thought that they could take various texts of the Bible, including Daniel 9, Genesis 5 and 11, and calculate when they thought the Son of David was supposed to arrive, the Son the Messiah. It was based on a variety of different biblical texts.

When the creation occurred, the view that each day of creation represented a thousand years, that was another view that they had. So with each block the world is going to last so long based on the creation account. The psalm says that a "thousand years are as a day."

So they took that text and misinterpreted it and used it as part of this Chrono-Messianic doctrine that had been developed. There was a variety of different opinions about it but it was all over the place in Second Temple Judaism. You see it show up in the literature.

In some sense there was something right about this, they wanted to know when the Messiah was going to arrive. Now that's a big subject of discussion. How do you interpret Daniel 9, for example? But nonetheless this was in the heart and soul of Jewish thought in Second Temple Judaism.

They all thought in these chronological schemes that they could calculate the time of the coming the Messiah and this closely was related to the chronology of Genesis 5 and 11, because that makes up such a large portion of the history of biblical revelation. This was critical to the whole discussion.

As I mentioned, the rabbis thought, "look God made the world in six days. Each day represents a thousand years and then when the seventh day comes, that will be the sabbath. The world will last seven thousand years."

The question was, where are we on that spectrum of time and when is the Messiah going to come? That was sort of the way that they thought about this. And by the way, this doctrine made its way into the early church and was really a point of debate. There were people like Jerome and Eusebius who opposed this very strongly. Others like Julius Africanus adopted this idea. Eusebius called it a Judaizing heresy. He did not believe that we should interpret cosmic history this way.

But it was a conflict in the early church. It really lasted for several centuries. It kind of lingered for quite some time. It has a long sort of pedigree of thought that influenced the way that people thought about these things.

Follow along with me here. Some folks thought the Messiah would arrive in the sixth millennium and usher in the Kingdom in the seventh. That was one view that was sort of floating out there sometime between 5,000 and 5,999. Or they would try to be more specific. It depends on who you read in the literature.

That's one sort of general notion. But there was another one that developed. It was very interesting because this was a shorter chronology that developed out of this period of time. You find these numbers sort of like artificially imposed upon some of these writings outside the Bible, sort of artificial chronologies that get created and then imposed upon them.

The book of Jubilees is a great example of that. All of biblical history has a jubilee cycle put on top of it and then the texts are reinterpreted to try to fit it into this scheme.

This idea of the 4,000 years finds its way into the rabbinic literature later. This is influencing the way that people are thinking about the coming of the Messiah.

And then Jesus of Nazareth comes along right in the middle of all of this. We already know from outside the Bible and the biblical text itself that there was a Messianic fervor taking place. This was one aspect of that messianic fervor, that was they were waiting to be delivered from Rome. And the kind of Messiah and who he's going to be and all that was the question. But they were waiting for this Messiah to deliver them.

What we see in the rabbinic literature starting in the second century BC is we see this newly designed world history chronology that comes out of their writings called the Seder Olam. It's very interesting because it is a shorter chronology than even the Masoretic Text is.

What it does is, first of all, it collapses the Persian period by 165 years. It just is vaporized from history. It just disappears in the Seder Olam. But this is their official world history, and some orthodox Jews still follow it.

The destruction of the Temple also led them to reinterpret Daniel 9 to a non-messianic reinterpretation. So there's a lot going on here in terms of what's happening in Second Temple Judaism.

So they vaporize 165 years, they're just completely gone. It's incongruent with what we know about the history of that period. But that's what finds its way into their chronology. And Seder 'Olam like rabbinic thinking when it comes to history is not really history, it's sort of mysticism. They create these deterministic chronologies that they impose upon history.

So it's not really about dates and times. It's sort of this mystical idea of numbers and of timeframes that really don't have to correlate with real-world history or chronology.

They treated chronology like an accordion and they could do that because of this new adoption of their theology in the rabbinic literature after the destruction of the Temple. So their history ignores secular history and it really is just theology or apologetics or a polemic against that. It doesn't matter if it correlates. It's a spiritual kind of thing. So you see that's what's playing itself out after the Temple is destroyed.

So, what is the motivation to change those numbers? Now I'm going to get it back to the numbers. I've gone off on this rabbit trail here about Chrono-Messianism. You're going, "make the connection. Help me see what you're doing here."

What the argument has been, and I'm going to show you some sources from much earlier that have made this argument that, look when Jesus shows up the church claimed, "look He's the fulfillment of the Old Testament" and some people in the church claim "He fulfills this Chrono-Messianism." He's arriving at the right time based on our calculation.

And the rabbi said "No, no, no. Based on our authoritative text, the Seder Olam, Jesus is here too soon. The Messiah is not supposed to arrive yet. So you have a false Messiah." This is a powerful motivation, because we see that the rabbis are just the ancestors of the Pharisees, the only sect that survives the destruction of the Temple.

They are determined, you see this in Justin Martyr and many other places, to oppose the church, to oppose the gospel, to oppose Jesus of Nazareth. This is a very powerful motivation.

Now you've got to remember they're the spiritual ancestors of the Pharisees, the same people that crucified their own Messiah. And in the rabbinic literature you see vehement opposition against the gospel, the claim that Jesus—I can hardly repeat it—the claim that Jesus was under the power of Satan, casted out demons under the power of Satan, and is now in boiling in excrement in judgment. That's the kind of rhetoric that comes from the rabbinic literature towards Jesus of Nazareth.

So my argument is, that motivation is so powerful and so delusional that it would not put them beyond the possibility of changing the biblical text to line up with this new theological chronological argument against the church.

It's not a conspiracy theory in the sense of just this random kind of thing, but it's an outflowing of what's happening in this period of time. It would have been very easy for them to alter their texts to line up with this new ideology that they developed out of the destruction of the Temple, the opposition to the church, and the opposition to Jesus Himself.

Of course, I think that this has theological support from the New Testament, not Genesis 5 and 11, but just the whole spirit of the whole thing. This is a motive that's very powerful. I'm not saying it lightly because it's easy to craft conspiracy theories. What I what I tried to do in all this is say, that they knew they were handling the Word of God, just like they knew at some level who Jesus was, and they killed Him anyway.

And they claim that He's in judgment. So it seems very plausible that they would be willing to do something like this, as outrageous as it is that someone would change the text of the Bible in such a way.

Now the question is, did they have the authority to do this? The answer is a profound yes. One of the major figures was Rabbi Akiba, who had not only the power over the whole religious community during that time period as the major rabbi who supposedly had 30,000 or 40,000 students—that's a little bit of a legend surrounding him—but that he had the power to remove manuscripts, to change them, to get rid of manuscripts.

They had complete control over the text that had survived the destruction of the Temple. So they had the authority to change the text and they had the opportunity. They were the only sect that was left. So if you wanted to have circumstances where you would change this chronology and then you would be able to convince your religious community that it was legitimate—and I say the mechanism of that was the Seder Olam and rabbinic literature—this was the perfect historical circumstances for that to take place.

A number of scholars from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and from the Middle Ages made the same argument that I make. That's where I kind of developed the idea. So it's not a new idea. I just tried to do more with it because a lot of the literature just looked like it was finger wagging and I wanted to be more meticulous in terms of why did they really do this? What's really going on here?

So, motive means opportunity. I think they all converge and makes a good case for the argument that I'm putting forth. So what I've said so far is a positive argument in favor of the Septuagint. Reasons why I think the Masoretic Text would have been changed and some people from the ancient world that supported the idea.

Eusebius ascribed the motive to something different. His motive was inadequate. It had something to do with child age of child bearing, and that kind of thing. I don't think that was a very good argument. But he thought that the rabbis changed the text. He thought that the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint was the original.

We have Julian of Toledo, Jacob of Edessa, an Armenian scholar from that time period, Bar Hebraeus.

We have a trail of sort of evidence over a period of time of people who pointed in this direction to explain this is what happened to the text. This is why it happened.

Just let me share with you one little anecdote that I found from my research. That is this guy Jacob of Edessa. He was a Syriac scholar and he knew Hebrew, knew Greek, Latin. He was a

prolific scholar from this time period. He believed that the text had been changed by the old rabbis. But what's interesting is, and he tried to do his own Bible translation and so on, he follows the Septuagint chronology even though largely he follows the Masoretic Text in many other places. But what's interesting, if you read down here at the bottom, Jacob claimed "that in his time there were certain Hebrew manuscripts that confirmed the Septuagint chronology."

So these had apparently survived somehow the destruction of the Temple and that they were in Syria and that he was aware of them. He used this as a supporting argument or to support his argument for the longer chronology when he was trying to construct his own translation of the Syriac Bible.

It's really fascinating. I stumbled across this sort of quote-unquote by accident. I had no knowledge of who Jacob of Edessa was. And so here's an example of a trail, it's breadcrumbs across the scope of history pointing us back to what happened here and where does the evidence lead us forensically.

One other observation. This is particularly true for Genesis 11, when you look at the complete timeline from Adam to Abraham, you won't find any source before the second century that records the complete timeline of the Masoretic Text. All sources before the second century record the longer chronology, especially in Genesis 11. Genesis 11 never shows up until after the rabbinic period. Again, this is not enough to prove the case, but it's a part of the forensic investigation. Sort of like a piece along breadcrumb trails.

Why is it that Josephus and others before the destruction of the Temple advocated the longer chronology? That's the question that I kept asking myself. Every external witness that was reliable I could look at used longer chronology. So that's again part of the thinking.

The last thing I'm going to say—I know it's been a boatload of stuff—maybe some of you are wrestling with this in a way that did. I don't know if I can go with you there. Sounds like a conspiracy theory. I get it. Just ponder it for a while. I'm not trying to force it down anyone's throat. It's where it's led me and I keep trying to falsify the theory. I can't find any evidence falsified. So that's all part of the process. That's what we do.

I'm putting myself out at risk. If we found some data before the destruction of the Temple that went against what I was arguing, then a lot of my theory would be torched. I'm aware of that. So it has to be put to the test. It would be nice if we could dig up some scrolls from like 200 BC that had Genesis 5 and 11 on them and that might settle the issue. But unfortunately, the Dead Sea Scrolls don't record the numbers. Otherwise, that might have been a decisive piece of evidence for the whole thing.

The last thing I'm going to say and then we can open up for questions. One of the things that I wanted to look at was internal evidence. When you look internally at what's going on, what the differences are between the two traditions, you'll see some things that are interesting. One of the things that I observed about it was if the rabbis were going to change the text, here's text that they wouldn't have changed because it would have created all kinds of chronology problems.

Those are Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, and Terah because of the Flood. The ones before the Flood, if you start messing with the numbers you got to start changing the life spans or they would live past the Flood.

We see that in the Samaritan Pentateuch—three of the patriarchs die in the year of the Flood. You can't mess with Noah's numbers because it's way too complex. There are way too many

things intersected with Noah, and the same thing with Shem, and Abraham's father Terah. The rabbis didn't touch any of those texts. They're all intact. It's really fascinating to see that.

If you're thinking about if somebody's doing that, what would they leave alone? Well, they would leave those texts alone because then they would have to manipulate other texts to fix the problems caused by changing those.

So then I said, but that's sort of like an anecdotal evidence, it's not evidence of a mistake. Can I find evidence of a mistake because God's Word is internally consistent. That would be the coup de grace. I think I found mistakes in the MT. I'll explain them to you and you can think about whether you think they're mistakes.

We have Genesis 25:8. Abraham says this. He says at the age of 175 he died an old man and full of years. He might be a man that you might say today was the age of 90. Just as an analogy, perhaps 80. An old man full of years.

Now let's take the Masoretic chronology and see what happens. But what we find is the statement appears to be contradicted by four different points. The first in the Masoretic Text. Eber is still alive when Abraham dies and he's 464 years old, about two and a half times greater than the life of Abraham.

Second, Shem dies only 25 years before Abraham's death in the Masoretic Text. These are comparisons. These are other men who are his contemporaries living around the same time—a man who's 464, a man who's 60. Then if we want to stretch it back to Abraham's birth time, Noah is still alive and dies a couple years before his birth.

The fourth point, which I think is the most significant. We read in Genesis 11 that the patriarchs had other sons and daughters. We can infer from that, I think very logically, that these descendants would have been living to lifespans similar to Arpachshad, Shelah, and Eber.

There's no reason to think well they only live to be 60, but just the selected patriarchs lived for hundreds of years. I don't see that as being a logical deduction. What is logical is these post-Flood descendants all were living to contemporaneous ages as the ones that are not named, they were living to similar ages.

So if Abraham in the MT is living at the time of Eber, then everybody living around him is living to be three and four centuries old. Yet the biblical text tells us that he was only 175. If that's the case, I think we have a mistake. He would have neither been an old man, nor full of years compared to his contemporaries.

He would have been in today's day and age a man who was 40. We would not call him an old man who was full of years if he was 40. At this time that people would have been 300 or 400 years old in the shorter Masoretic chronology.

I've concluded that I think that's an actual error that's derived from the text that the rabbis didn't account for. But when you use the Septuagint's chronology, Noah had been dead for a millennium, Shem for about 800 years, Eber for about 400. So that when Abraham dies at 175, that is contemporaneous with those living around him. 175 years of age would it make more sense in the Septuagint context as opposed to the shorter Masoretic context where the epitaph makes more coherent sense.

I don't think that the numbers yielded by the Masoretic can be reconciled with Abraham's lifespan and the statement about his age at that time. I think this is actual evidence of an actual error in the text.

But, like I said, if the Masoretic's not the original text, the problem goes away.

So all of that being said, and I've said a lot, I've tried to put together in the research project the last seven and a half years a coherent overarching theory that tries to put all the evidence together: the texts, the external witnesses, the context that the different traditions are being developed, who could change them, who had the power to do it, who could inculcate them into the communities, were they motivated enough to do so?

The last thing I'll say about the Septuagint, by the way, is once it was translated in Egypt and went out, it was under nobody's control. Once it went out into the Jewish Diaspora, there was no central authority to control the Septuagint's text. So that's one of the things that actually works in its favor, because there's no close community that could manipulate the text and keep it the way they wanted it and then inculcate it. Because nobody was in charge of the Septuagint.

It just simply went out into the Diaspora and was preserved for centuries by the Jews before the church even adopted it. So I think that argument too supports the case that I'm making. It would have been impossible to control the Septuagint's text by a central authority, whereas the other way around, it wasn't impossible. So I've ultimately concluded that I think this is the answer to the 2,000-year-old problem.

In many ways none of what I'm saying is new. The arguments have been out there for centuries. Some of the textual stuff is new because that's relatively new in terms of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint studies and all that. But most of it has been around for a long time.

So I think if that's right, that's the basis we ought to work off of in terms of developing our models after the Flood. Our age for creation is changed by 1,500 years. Significant certainly, but not an evolutionary maneuver. I am a no wild-eyed long-ager here making this case.

It still fits very well within the entire young Earth paradigm, I think. So that's sort of the sketch of what it is. Got lots of stuff on our [website](#) to try to back all that up: videos, articles, you name it.

Shall we open it up for questions?

Questions—here comes one.

**Q:** This one actually relates a little more to our talk last week, but I was curious why do you think it's so important that God recorded for us the exact date of creation, so to speak. Why is this chronology important for us to know, that it isn't just, well, sometime in the past? And we have the names of the people. But why do we actually need to know the year that Creation, the year that the Flood happened?

**A:** I think it's a good question. I think I tried to address it a little bit at the beginning in two ways.

One is we can infer from the fact that God has given all this data in Scripture, that it's important because He's given it, and in great detail. I mean we have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of chronological data points in the Bible. Especially like the divided kingdom, for example. So

time is very important to God. “In the fullness of time God sent His Son.” Now is the exact date of Creation and/or the Flood, per se, in and of itself important in terms of the gospel or what God is doing in history. In and of itself I would say yes and no. Like does it matter that the date for the Flood is 3300, 3400, or 3200?

Well, it’s important if we’re dealing with archaeology, apologetics, dealing with science, and all that kind of thing. But I just think the inference kind of flowing out of all of what God has given in the text, and particularly these phrases where He says on that day, that day in Noah’s life, if you remember last week, the 600<sup>th</sup> day, in the second month, on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month, on that day. That’s when the Flood began. The fountains of the great deep burst forth and the windows of heaven were open. Like God is telling us something there. I’m bringing judgment of the Flood and this is the exact day in history when it occurred.

I think that’s how you can infer out of it that this is important. Now we have to be careful that we’re not in our discussions about this, if we’re disagreeing with each other by 100 years here or 50 years there, that we don’t become contentious about it. That’s a different matter.

I don’t know if that’s helpful or not. I hope that it is.

**Q:** I have a question and maybe a further thought. Maybe you can answer this, that there are a lot of Jews who don’t believe in the Exodus. Because they’ve looked for evidence of the Exodus and while looking at the Egyptian chronologies and oh there were no Jews in Egypt when those chronologies match. We know the Egyptian chronologies are wrong and it sounds like the chronology in the Masoretic Text might also be wrong. If we correct those things, I think we have a good chance of saying, “oh, there were Jews in Egypt at that time. So is that even a possibility?”

**A:** Well, that’s a great question and problem. What’s interesting about all that, I can only make general comments about it. Our ministry has done quite a bit of research on this period. I haven’t personally, but my colleagues have. And the thing about it is there’s a massive amount of evidence of a large population of Semitic people from Canaan living in the Egyptian Delta at the time that the Bible places them there.

When Jacob and his family migrate down there during the famine. The evidence is already there. There’s a palace that’s been found that was built right next to a branch of the Nile River. There’s again evidence of a huge population of foreigners living in the eastern Delta from that time.

I don’t know how effective that actually would be with the proposed audience you’re talking about. I don’t know how far they’ve drifted from the authority of the Bible. If they follow the rabbinic teaching where they just consider themselves of Jewish heritage ethnically, but they’re functionally atheists.

**Q:** That is an issue, but it’s like it’s going to take some work to do it there. Another issue. The Septuagint, is this correct, it adds about 1,450 years to the Masoretic Text, approximately?

**A:** Yes. The number is 3080 [not sure what number he said] if you include Kainan. I’ve published a 50-some page article with a co-author arguing for his originality. But let’s say you don’t go there. Let’s just say you think Kainan is secondary. Then you knock out 130 years for Kainan and you get 1,250.

**Q:** So, as you mentioned, does this help reconcile the Bible with evolutionary science? Not even close. We’re not talking about billions of years. How much does it help? I know there are

archaeological pottery datings and whatever they say that go back maybe 5000 BC and maybe 6000 BC. So it helps, but it doesn't even quite come up enough with what archaeology is trying to put into ancient history. Is that correct?

**A:** Yes. That's right. Because if you just remotely read this, the secular claims of what the time frame is, it doesn't even remotely fix the issues. It's funny some people have written that they think that's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to manipulate the text to fix these apologetics. It's like, okay there's a few like, for example, the Babel dispersion. Where do you put that and how much time you have for that? That's affected by this. And that's important. So that would be an example.

The explosion of the conventional date around 3000 BC of like Sumerian and Egyptian writing that just suddenly appears in the archaeological record. With the Masoretic Text you've got to redate that material and get it past the Flood.

In this case, you might have the luxury of keeping the dates relatively close, depending on what they are. If they're say 3000 or 2900, and that might fit this better. So you might not have to do as much work to redate that material because it might fit the Septuagint timeline. But that's about it.

But it also does affect animal distribution population, like things like the woolly mammoths and all these other things. Like how much time do we have for these things to happen? Well, we've bought ourselves another 700 years or so to work with. But again, that wasn't my motivation. I wasn't trying to buy anything. We want to get it right.

So other questions?

**Q:** I've been hearing a lot about the Masoretic is better from younger creationists and it's strongly held by some. I've heard that Methuselah living 17 years after the Flood was one argument they used that the Septuagint is wrong. But I'm thinking that can't be the only argument they have. There must be other arguments that favor the Masoretic. Do you know those? You probably do. Have you researched into those other arguments besides the chronologies of Genesis 5 and 11?

**A:** That's a great question you're bringing up a couple of things in that. Overall I completely agree with the assessment that the Masoretic Text has been faithfully preserved, a vast percentage of it. I mean it's remarkable of the antiquity of it and the preservation of it on the whole across the whole Hebrew Bible. There's no doubt about that. That's our best witness. But that reliability gets conflated with this particular problem.

That's one thing. So, we have to separate out the two because each issue that we deal with where there's variance in the text is its own unique issue that has to be tackled. This issue is very unique because in each place where it was changed, it was done systematically.

I've interacted with Rob Carter and Lita Cosner at CMI. We've had a debate about this. They wrote an article. I wrote a response. They wrote another article. I kind of dropped it for a while until I kind of reset. In some cases we're talking past each other a little bit. In other cases, I feel they're not responding to the substance of my arguments.

And then they have some arguments that I haven't critiqued yet, which I think are problematic. Because they try to push the changes way back. Like what they say is the Masoretic's original and these changes to the text that led to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint occurred

before the translation. They're kind of borrowing some ideas from the liberal literature to try to show how that works in one of their articles. I haven't published anything to show I don't think their reconstruction works.

So I know I'm being vague a little bit with that answer. I don't know what the underlying issues are. I don't know if they're theological issues that are really underlying the hold on the Masoretic. I think people are really bothered by the idea that somebody would radically change the text that way. I've had people write to me and say I just can't believe that. I've literally had that. I understand it because that's how I felt in the beginning. I think we have to keep trying to have that conversation.

And then there's been other arguments that are just really bad, where they just slander the Septuagint. The Septuagint was changed over here in the Book of Isaiah and because it was changed in the Book of Isaiah, you can't use it for anything. Now that's just a straight up fallacy. If it's changed in the Book of Isaiah, then you deal with what's happened in Isaiah and you compare it to the Masoretic, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and you determine what's the better text.

But that has nothing to do with Genesis 5 and 11. That's a separate issue. But what they'll do is they'll take the problems over in these other books and then conflate them with this particular issue. That's a fallacy. You would never do that.

Let's say you were doing New Testament and you were trying to figure out some variants in the Book of Revelation. You would never say, oh this papyrus is deficient in Revelation, so therefore I'm going to throw out all the good readings that are in John. You would never do that. You would deal with each one on its own merits.

**Q:** Yes, that's reasonable.

**A:** So it's a methodological kind of thing. So those are some things. I don't know if I satisfactorily answered your question or not. Follow up with me here if I'm not going far enough.

**Q:** First of all, you made a good case. But yes, I'm wondering about the other arguments. I think I did read about something about Isaiah being contradictory and so that's why they favor the Masoretic Text. But they must have a whole bunch of arguments, I would think, that favor the Masoretic besides Genesis 5 and 11. That's what I was wondering. What are some of those other arguments? He mentions Isaiah. Are there any others?

**A:** When we use the word Septuagint, and I couldn't develop this at the beginning of the talk. We often speak of it as an "it". It actually is not. The first part of it is only the first five books were translated in Egypt, the Pentateuch. The rest of them were translated over a period probably about 150 years. Most scholars think the translation was completed by 130. But then the scrolls were distributed individually. You had scroll of Joel. It wasn't put all into one big book like it was later in the church, like Codex Alexandrinus or something, where we have the entire Septuagint together.

These scrolls circulated individually. So let's say you're doing a study on Isaiah and you're finding differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text. And there are problems with the Septuagint. Well, what that means is there's problems with the Septuagint of Isaiah. But those problems are irrelevant to the question of the problems that might be in Genesis.

**Q:** Yes, because they were formed at different times.

**A:** Different times, different book, sometimes even a different place. Like some people think that some of those some of the translations were done in Israel. So that would have nothing to do with the Alexandrian translators in Egypt.

My answer to your question is because the Septuagint is a highly complex organism, has a highly complex history, people tend to take the problems with it in these other books and just conflate it and throw the whole thing out. And methodologically that doesn't make sense. The text critics don't do that. But a lot of Christians do because it's very complicated. It's easier to just throw it out. It's got to be methodologically we've got to deal with each issue on its own.

Other questions?

Smith: I forgot. On the screen I put my proposed new timeline, blasphemous as it may be.

I will say something in sort of favor, if you will. I try not to do this, but the timeline you see there is from our friends at "Is Genesis History", which I'm sure you've all seen. I've had a lot of conversations with Thomas Purifoy and persuaded him that this is a very viable alternative, enough so that he's been willing to put it out in public. I'm not looking for a pat on the back with it, but what I'm saying is I like the fact that he's open to having the conversation. And we should have that conversation.

I don't begrudge anybody for following the MT. I only begrudge it when they come after me with really bad arguments or personal attacks. Then I begrudge it. But other than that, I understand it. I'm trying to find the truth and if somebody agrees with me so much the better.

**Q:** I agree. My understanding is when Jesus was here and they were quoting from the Old Testament, they largely quoted from the Septuagint because that was already in Greek and that was the language that people were speaking. And so if Jesus thought of it as an important text that they used it.

**A:** If we have a moment can I expand on that thought? So there's two sides of that. The first side is people who love the Septuagint so much will think that that endorsement endorses the whole thing. It doesn't. On the other side, you'll have people who will say the Septuagint is so bad that in every instance where you say this in the New Testament, you're wrong. They can only be quoting from the Hebrew. Now that's a theological argument. The right place is what you expressed. If the apostles and Jesus were using Septuagint texts, at minimum they took the text seriously. Those texts they were quoting were faithful representations of the original.

Therefore, we ought to at minimum take the Septuagint seriously, without going to one extreme or the other that I just described. I think that's the proper way to do it. I mean there's books that have been written, the Septuagint's use in New Testament research. It's very useful. So, there you go. And Paul used it. And Paul could use Hebrew or Greek because he was a pharisee of pharisees. He knew it all.