

Answer to Dr. Leslie McFall's Critique of 'The Time of the End'

Part 1 – Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

By Tim Warner | June 11, 2014

Dr. McFall's first major argument, and the one he spent the most space defending, is apparently one that he believes to be the greatest impediment to my work. I have constructed a chronology for the first two millennia that in principle is the same as virtually every other biblical chronology for this period¹ whether Jewish² or Christian, using the genealogies of Moses. Of conservative Christian chronologists, Dr. McFall is virtually alone in his claim that these cannot be relied upon for accurate dating. His argument is that there are significant gaps in Moses' genealogies. I agree with Dr. McFall that if there are any significant gaps in Moses' genealogy, then my entire chronology necessarily falls apart since man's time on earth would have already greatly exceeded 6000 years.

What Dr. McFall is implicitly arguing is that human history is much longer than 6000 years based on his 'gap theory' for the Genesis genealogies, and therefore my chronology must be wrong since his is obviously right. The reader must keep in mind, however, that Dr. McFall and I are working from vastly different starting points. His devotion to the secular histories and established dates makes him much more likely to bend the Bible to fit the secular chronologies. His 'gap theory' for Moses' genealogies is not something that flows from a natural reading of the text or from any known exegetical principles. The text itself argues against any gaps by the inclusion of all the chronological information which has no possible purpose except to establish a chronology.

Moses' work can be dated approximately to the time of the exodus. 1 Chronicles can be dated to about the time of the Babylonian exile, about a millennium later. The record of this period in the Chronicles is almost certainly based on Moses' record. The writer summed up the genealogies from Adam to Abraham with no gaps or intervening generations.³ These are the only true ancient records of Israel's history. Modern scholarship cannot overturn them with the stroke of a pen in order to bend Moses to fit secular chronologies. There is no other ancient record of this period that can provide a legitimate primary source to inflate Moses' numbers. Jude's statement that Enoch was

¹ It is the same in principle, not in the mathematical assumptions as Ussher and most others.

² The Jewish chronological process in Seder Olam differs only in regards to the age of Terah when Abram was born.

³ 1 Chron. 1:1-28

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

*"the seventh from Adam"*⁴ illustrates that the New Testament writers did not believe there were any generational gaps in Moses' record, or such a statement would not have been included. Even Josephus provides us with the same genealogical list as Moses with no additions or omission to the 20 generations from Adam to Abraham.⁵ All of the ancient primary sources agree.

When reading Dr. McFall's treatment of Moses' genealogies, it is easy to get the impression that he has some unstated reason for not taking Moses' work at face value. He seems determined to place gaps where nothing of the sort is hinted at in the text. In my opinion, he has an unwarranted devotion to the secular dating system. His own published paper on Daniel's 70 weeks points out that within the timespan Daniel gives from Cyrus to Jesus there is a seven-decade discrepancy with the secular histories for the same period.⁶ The secular record is several decades too long if Jesus is the Messiah of Daniel's prophecy. Dr. McFall's solution to this problem is to make Nehemiah the "messiah" and insist that Daniel's "weeks" are really single years (70 years). He puts the Scriptures through all kinds of contortions in order to get the desired result – to sever the chronological link between Cyrus and Jesus – thereby leaving the secular history of the Persian period undisturbed by the embarrassing claims of the Bible.

Even though I disagree, I can understand his tendency to take the secular chronologies as proven fact given the arena in which he must deal with the likes of atheism's high priest, Richard Dawkins. It is useful to argue against atheists from a common frame of reference – the scholarly chronological record based on archeology – and thus try to defend the Bible's accuracy by attempting to show that it does not contradict established dates. Yet, subjecting the text of Scripture to such contortions in order to apologize for its alleged inaccuracies is not missed by the skeptic or Christian. The end does not justify the means. Making the modern secular chronologies the standard of truth at the expense of Jesus being the Messiah of Daniel's prophecy is not the path to objective truth.

The same devotion to the secular chronologies seems to be behind Dr. McFall's 'gap theory' concerning Moses. Unless he can create huge, undefined gaps in the Genesis genealogies, then Moses is at loggerheads with the work of secular historians and archeologists. The reason is simple: The secular histories for the Persian period depend on identifying cross-synchronisms with Egyptian histories. The Egyptian histories date the first dynasty to nearly 2000 years before the flood, and this does not even allow for

⁴ Jude 1:14

⁵ Josephus, Antiquities, Bk. I, ch. 1-6

⁶ DO THE SIXTY-NINE WEEKS OF DANIEL DATE THE MESSIANIC MISSION OF NEHEMIAH OR JESUS? p. 4, http://lmf12.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/daniel_69_weeks.pdf

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

the prior histories of Upper Egypt. Yet, if we believe Moses' record of a universal flood and the Tower of Babel, then it is impossible that these civilizations formed prior to the division of nations by God's confounding their languages. If Moses' genealogy is an accurate chronology the secular dates are off by millennia. Dr. McFall cannot allow such aspersion to be cast upon the secular dating system so he seeks to destroy the chronological links established in the Bible by fabricating huge gaps in Moses' chronology from Adam to Abraham. This kind of defense might insulate an apologist from a Flat Earth Society membership label, but it does a great disservice to biblical exegesis. What good is defending the text of Scripture for inerrancy if it requires mutilating it with our forced interpretations? If we have established the Bible as reliable, yet in so doing we also demonstrate that it can be bent to fit our presuppositions, what good has been done? It only serves to give permission to other Christians to make the Bible fit their presuppositions as well.

Aside from some minor differences in conservative Christian chronologies that take the 'no gap' approach, they all agree that about 6000 years have now elapsed since creation, give or take a few decades. Thus, the 'no gap' theory necessarily produces a date for creation very close to 4000 BC, roughly 6000 years ago.

Before I deal specifically with Dr. McFall's 'seed emission' proposal in support of his 'gap theory,' I would like to offer four counter arguments to his claim that my interpretation of Moses' genealogies cannot be correct because it fails to account for his alleged gaps.

1. Paul (and to a lesser degree, Peter) provided apostolic authority for the early Christian tradition that Christ will return to establish His rule over all the earth in the 6000th year from creation.⁷ Dr. McFall did not address this in his rebuttal at all even though it established my primary presupposition for my chronological work – the total years from Adam to the return of Jesus must be exactly 6000 years, no more and no less. Since Dr. McFall did not address this evidence, which if true makes his 'gap theory' utterly impossible, then it remains unrefuted and continues to be my first line of defense. Since Paul held up the Millennial Kingdom of Christ as "*the seventh day*" in a scheme where a "day" is a millennium, and since Christ has not yet come, the only possible conclusion is that less than 6000 years have elapsed since creation. This must be dated no earlier than 3985 BC as of 2014.

⁷ I refer the reader to chapter 3 of my book (pp. 73-100) where my exegesis of several passages is found, the most important being Hebrews 4.

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

2. Dr. McFall's argument that Moses' purpose was exclusively to establish a line of descent for Jesus, as did Matthew and Luke, leaves no logical reason why he included any numbers of years at all in either Genesis 5 or 11. All of the ages of the patriarchs when their sons were born, the remaining numbers of years of their lives, and the total number of years they lived add absolutely nothing to such an alleged purpose. It is of no interest whatsoever to Israel, the intended audience. Dr. McFall's theory makes Moses the originator of a great mass of useless fodder intended exclusively for Bible-trivia quizzes. The only possible reason that Moses would have included the ages of every father when his son was born for his entire list of 20 generations was so that Israel could back-date the creation week. It was important for Israel to view the Sabbath day as having an unbroken link to the first Sabbath when God rested.⁸

3. Dr. McFall's argument that Moses omitted names in his genealogy for the purpose of a neat symmetry of 20 generations from Adam to Abraham (ten before the flood and ten afterward allegedly as Matthew did for his symmetry of three sets of 14 generations) is completely undermined by the fact that the actual chronological information that he included is completely asymmetrical. There is no pattern whatsoever to the ages of each patriarch. Nor is there any symmetry in adding up these numbers for balancing out those before the flood with those after the flood. The numbers Moses provided completely undermine the natural symmetry of the 20 generations. They yield a total of about 1650 years before the flood (from Genesis 5) and about 350 years from the flood to Abraham (in Genesis 11). Thus, Moses' goal was not symmetry, but historical accuracy.

4. The bulk of Dr. McFall's supporting evidence, showing that sometimes the Bible claims a distant ancestor as a "father," only establishes a possibility that Moses omitted generations in Genesis 5 & 11, not a probability, and certainly not a certainty. It was not uncommon to omit names when the writer only had as his goal establishing that someone was a descendant of someone else. However, if the writer's purpose was an accurate history or even a chronology, then no names were omitted. Dr. McFall's argument carries very little weight in establishing dogmatic assertions that Moses cannot be relied on for constructing a chronology. The only attempt that he made at showing that Moses actually omitted a name in a genealogy was the extra Cainan in Luke's genealogy. There are two possible solutions to this apparent discrepancy:

a. Moses did indeed omit this particular person. In support of Dr. McFall's theory is the fact that some late copies of the Septuagint also have this second Cainan in both Genesis 11 and 1 Chron. 1 (but earlier copies do not), and it is found in the Book of Jubilees, written by a Pharisee shortly before Christ. Yet, even if Moses omitted a second Cainan,

⁸ Ex. 16; Ex. 20:8-11

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

this does not necessarily change a chronology based on his numbers. There is enough time (35 years) allowed in a chronological reading of Moses' genealogy from Arphaxad to Selah for two generations. This, of course, assumes that in the clause, "*Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah,*"⁹ the verb "begot" refers to Saleh's actual birth rather than to Arphaxad's fathering this alleged second Cainan according to Dr. McFall's 'seed emission' theory. I am not claiming this as the solution, only pointing out the possibility, which necessarily makes Dr. McFall's assertion less than conclusive even if there was another Cainan.

b. Our copies of Luke's Gospel have a copy error, the second Cainan having been added by an early scribe. In support of this occurring accidentally, Dr. Jonathan Sarfati offers a convincing argument of how this could have easily occurred if the mistake originated exclusively during a copying of Luke's Gospel.¹⁰ He also argues (but does not prove) that the copies of the LXX that contain this reading post-date Luke and are likely Christian copies influenced by the corrupted copies of Luke. The problem with Dr. Sarfati's argument, however, is that it does not account for the inclusion of this name in the Book of Jubilees, which almost certainly predates Luke. It is very difficult to argue for a Luke-influenced correction of copies of Jubilees because of its internal dating system based on Jubilee cycles that will not permit any generational omissions.

I think the most likely scenario is this: The original addition of Cainan to the genealogical record was made by the Jewish author of the Book of Jubilees himself. This is to my knowledge the earliest mention of a "Cainan" as the son of Arphaxad. His purpose was to try to convince his readers to adopt a new lunar calendar calculation method rather than relying on the sighting of the new moon each month. The new moon must be sighted from Jerusalem. Therefore, those still living in foreign lands could not calculate the festivals in advance from their location. A new calculation method would have been useful for predicting future feast days, and thus release the Jews still living in foreign lands from the need to constantly receive calendar updates from Jerusalem.

The Book of Jubilees seeks to do what I have done in my chronology – harmonize Moses' genealogies with a continuous cycle of Jubilee years beginning with creation. The major difference in that author's work and mine is the use of a 49-year cycle instead of the true God-ordained 50-year cycle.¹¹ The Book of Jubilees contains historical myths that have no substance in Israel's historical primary sources and for which the author

⁹ Gen 11:12

¹⁰ <http://creation.com/cainan-can-you-explain-the-difference-between-luke-336-and-genesis-1112>

¹¹ During the early second Temple period, the Jews stopped intercalating the 50th year because they were under foreign rule, and it was therefore impossible to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land."

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

was highly unlikely to have had any accurate historical data that was not derived from Moses. While the author tried to follow Moses' chronology as much as possible, he also adjusted his Jubilee chronology to make it appear that it supported his new proposed calendar. Using an incorrect 49-year Jubilee cycle, however, seriously marred his work. Perhaps he needed an extra undefined generation. Whether or not the author originated the second Cainan, or got it from some other source, it was not part of the official record of Israel's history.

The additional Cainan from the Book of Jubilees was probably added to copies of the Septuagint by scribes who believed the mythology in Jubilees and consequently "corrected" their Greek copies of Genesis (and sometimes 1 Chron. 1:18)¹² to conform to the chronology in the Book of Jubilees. Or, perhaps the "correction" to LXX copies were made by the author of Jubilees himself. Eventually, an early Christian copying Luke's Gospel, who had at his disposal both the Book of Jubilees and corrupted copies of the LXX that contained this erroneous reading, thought that it must be true since he found it in both of his available sources. So he corrected what he thought was an omission in his exemplar of Luke. From this "corrected" version of Luke our extant copies have descended.

Josephus was familiar with the Book of Jubilees and therefore its mythological second Cainan between Arphaxad and Selah. Yet, his history has Arphaxad as the immediate father of Saleh.¹³ Josephus' motivation was an official and accurate record of Israel's history for Roman consumption. He was motivated to make sure that his record agreed with the commonly extant official records available to his readers (including the LXX). A missing second Cainan in Josephus' record would have been grounds for challenging his historical accuracy if a second Cainan in the genealogical record had any official sanction in his day. No one can accuse Josephus of trying to validate Jesus' family history.

An early fifth-century Greek copy of Luke, codex Bezae, does not contain the second Cainan. That there were much earlier copies of Luke circulating without the second Cainan can also be deduced from the third-century¹⁴ chronology of Julius Africanus of Alexandria (the recognized father of Christian chronological scholarship). His sources were both Luke's Gospel and the Septuagint.¹⁵ Yet, he did not include the second

¹² In several copies of the LXX Cainan appears in Genesis 11 but not 1 Chron. 1.

¹³ Josephus, Antiquities, Bk. I, ch. 6:4

¹⁴ AD 200-245

¹⁵ He wrote in Greek; his chronology is based on the larger numbers in Moses' genealogies from the LXX; as a Christian, he accepted Luke's Gospel as inspired Scripture.

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

Cainan in his chronology.¹⁶ *“And after the flood, Sem begot Arphaxad. Arphaxad, when 135 years old, begets Sala in the year 2397.”*¹⁷ It is fair to say that he did not find the second Cainan in either his Greek copy of Genesis or in his Greek copy of Luke, because his math does not allow for an intervening generation. In my opinion, this is the most satisfactory explanation that takes into account all of the known evidence, yet keeps Luke's own integrity as a faithful scribe. It completely removes the necessity for any gap in Moses' genealogy.

Where Luke got his original chronological information to construct a genealogy for Jesus is also an important question. I doubt any thinking person will claim that it was given to him by divine revelation. Rather, as a careful historian, Luke consulted the official public records at the Temple to construct his accurate genealogy of Jesus.¹⁸ Yet, what was the source of those records? Was it not the chronology of Moses? It certainly was not the Book of Jubilees, which was a late creation and carried no official authority. Unless the public records included this second Cainan as the son of Arphaxad, Luke would not have included it in his genealogy. Doing so would necessarily cast doubt on the validity of Jesus' genealogy. Thus, we are forced to conclude that if the second Cainan was in Luke's original Gospel, it was necessarily in the public records as well. But, if that was the case, it is difficult to explain how an official history of Abraham's genealogy (not based on Moses) could have survived the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, only to resurface again and then gain sufficient status within the public records to actually displace the genealogies of Moses in the Torah! Since Moses was revered as the supreme prophet of Israel and the custodian of its most ancient history, it is hard to imagine that the official public records, which Luke no doubt consulted, did not agree perfectly with the Hebrew copies of Moses. If Luke followed anything other than Hebrew copies of Genesis in his genealogy of Jesus, he left the door wide open for the criticism that his genealogy was a fabrication and therefore Jesus was not the Messiah. For all these reasons, it is best to take the second Cainan in Luke as a scribal addition. And this would render useless Dr. McFall's only evidence that Moses omitted any generations. Unless he can prove that the second Cainan was a part of what Luke originally wrote, he has no shred of evidence that Moses actually omitted any generations. The best he has done is demonstrated that Moses might have done so based on his 'seed emission' theory. Yet, showing a potential omission on Moses' part is a far cry from proving it.

¹⁶ Neither does the alleged second Cainan appear in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the first-century works of Philo, or the history of Eusebius.

¹⁷ Julius Africanus, Book V, Chronology, ch. vi His vastly incorrect date is because of his reliance on the Septuagint version of Genesis which has much longer ages for the patriarchs when their sons were born.

¹⁸ Luke 1:1-4

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

Even if we grant Dr. McFall's view that Moses omitted some names from his genealogy, it does not affect the chronology derived from the numbers in Genesis unless Dr. McFall's 'seed emission' theory can also be proven true and that it must apply to Moses' genealogies. Here's why:

Suppose there were two generations between Adam and Seth, that Adam was Seth's great-grandfather. Moses wrote that Adam was in his 130th year when Seth was born. So, even if Seth was his great grandson, Adam's age when Seth (his great grandson) was born is still the same, the chronological link remains without any gap. The biblical statement is still literally and chronologically true. *"And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died."*¹⁹ The same pattern is repeated for the entire genealogy. This claim, of course, assumes that the word "begot" refers to birth and not conception.

However, Dr. McFall has developed an ingenious 'seed emission' theory that is based in part on fact and in part on his own imagination. The factual part is that the Jewish way of reckoning does allow for the concept that all of one's descendants are carried within the loins of the father as "seed." This principle makes no distinction between near and far 'seed.' It is based in part on God's promise to Abraham that He would multiply his 'seed' as the stars of heaven. The Jews concluded that God did that immediately within Abraham's loins. Paul mentioned this principle clearly in Hebrews 7 when speaking of Levi and the entire Levitical priesthood as being present in Abraham's loins when he paid tithes to Melchisedek. I pointed out this well-known principle in my book and made use of it in chapter 12 in my interpretation of both the 400 years from Isaac to the exodus and the 430 years from the Abrahamic Covenant to the exodus.

The fictional part of Dr. McFall's theory, however, is that in Moses' genealogical record, the verb "begot" (which has as its direct object a named descendant) can refer to the emission of the patriarch's sperm that produced the father of the named person in the distant future. That is, the verb rendered "begot" refers to conception²⁰ not to the birth of the child 9 months later. On this point, Dr. McFall plays a bait and switch game.

*"We just need to ask the question, 'When did Levi **emerge from** the loins of Abraham?' The answer is, 'When Isaac was born.' At that time Abraham was 100 years old. So Scripture is accurate at the generational level **if it had said**, "When Abraham was 100*

¹⁹ Gen 5:3-5

²⁰ The point in time when he no longer carried the seed of his distant offspring

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

*years old he **begat** Levi." But Scripture would be inaccurate if we interpreted this at the chronological level, because when Levi was 'begotten' by Abraham, he was not born because he was still in the loins of Isaac, his grandfather."²¹*

Notice that Dr. McFall did not use an actual statement of Scripture, but instead used a hypothetical statement which he supposes might have appeared somewhere in Scripture. He equated the seed "emerging from" Abraham's loins with the word "begat" without any justification. When Paul was referencing Levi being in Abraham's loins when he met Melchisedek, he did not use the word "begot" in reference to Levi. He did not mention Levi's conception or his birth. He merely acknowledged that Abraham was carrying the seed of Levi (and the whole Levitical priesthood) in his loins. He did not discuss when he emitted that seed, nor whether the Hebrew term "begot" is broad enough to include ejaculation, after which he no longer carried that seed. The term "begot" is virtually always used of the birth of a child nine months after intercourse. It is difficult to prove that it is anywhere used of ejaculation or conception. If Dr. McFall is correct, then we need to back up all of Moses' generations by the 9-month gestation period. Unless Dr. McFall can produce some Scripture that clearly shows that "begot" refers to the moment of conception, and that this is how Moses used the term in his genealogies, then his theory is a pure fabrication. It is one thing to say that Abraham carried his descendants in his loins, and quite another to say that his descendants were "begotten" at the moment of intercourse with Sarah when Isaac was conceived.

That "begot" refers to birth and not conception is shown from Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1. The text says, "Ἰουδᾶς δε ἐγεννησεν τον Φαρες και τον Ζερα **ἐκ** της Θαμαρ," (lit. "And Judah begot Phares and Zarah **out of** Thamar"). The Greek word for "begot" here is the same word used in the LXX in the Genesis chronologies. The preposition "ἐκ" means "out from," emerging from the object of the preposition. The entire prepositional phrase "out of Thamar" modifies the verb "begot." Thus, the action of the verb "begot" is tied to the exit of Pharez and Zarah from the womb of Thamar. The "begetting" was the delivery of the child, not the conception. In other words, a father "begets" his child when that child is born alive. The same thing is said of Boaz begetting Obed **out of** Ruth.

That Matthew speaks of a father "begetting" a grandchild in his genealogy does not show that it refers to conception. It can just as easily refer to the birth of the named child by his own father, the son of the person named. Thus, a grandfather "begets" a grandson vicariously through his own son. This is no reason to say that he "begot" his

²¹ p. 3

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

grandson at the moment that he conceived his own son, the grandson's father, as Dr. McFall would have us believe.

Relating his theory to Moses specifically, Dr. McFall misses one of the most important keys to proper exegesis – that we must interpret the Scriptures progressively. The meanings of terms and ideas in any given passage should always be based on earlier precedent, particularly by the same author.

The first use of the verb “begot” was from God's own lips when placing the curse upon Eve. “*I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall **bring forth** children.*”²² The pain is related exclusively to delivery and not to conception. In chapter 4, the same word is used of the births of Cain and Abel. Both of these were obviously the immediate descendants of Adam, and both refer to delivery, not to conception.

This is followed in the same chapter with Cain's genealogy down to Lamech. Moses provided a genealogy from Cain to Lamech as follows: Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, Lamech. In each of these six generations Moses used the word “begot.” Why did Moses give the genealogy of Cain down to Lamech with no ages given? No doubt it was to show that the murderer Lamech was the descendant of the first murderer, Cain. Moses gave no ages for Cain's progeny because his only purpose was to show a line of descent and “like father like son.” The five intervening generations are totally irrelevant to Moses' purposes. However, for the sake of historical accuracy, he included the intervening generations. This establishes that Moses was indeed concerned with historical accuracy, an unbroken chain of descent.

In the next chapter, Moses switched from giving merely a genealogical line of descent from Cain to Lamech, to giving a detailed chronology from Adam to the flood. The proper way to understand Moses' use of the verb “begot” was his earliest precedent – that of Adam's fathering his immediate children through Eve at the moment of their birth. The consistent precedent is that of the birth of a man's immediate progeny. Since Jude says that Enoch was “*the seventh from Adam*” we also have proof that the verb “begot” for the bulk of Genesis 5 refers exclusively to immediate offspring. Thus, from Adam to Enoch, the repeated use of the verb “begot” always points to the birth of an immediate son. It never refers to conception, nor to the emitting of a ‘seed’ which is not that immediate generation. This portion of Moses' record covers the first seven generations of the 10 generations before the flood. This is a very significant precedent, and consistent use of the term “begot,” for what Moses meant by repeating the same word in the same way through the rest of the generations.

²² Gen. 3:16

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

Dr. McFall's theory also forces him to invent a second "Terah," which Moses allegedly omitted,²³ as Abraham's grandfather. By pure coincidence, "Terah" (Abraham's alleged grandfather) produced a son whom he also named "Terah," who was Abraham's father. Yet Dr. McFall seems completely impervious to the enormous potential Moses would have created in his own genealogy for misunderstanding.

Gen. 11:24-26

24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah [Terah 1]. 25 After he begot Terah [Terah 1], Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

26 Now Terah [Terah 2] lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Dr. McFall claims that his 2-Terah solution is necessitated by the fact of alleged triplets. However, if Terah in verse 24 is not the same Terah in verse 25, then there is no real reason to think that Dr. McFall's second "Terah" is the son of the first "Terah" the son of Nahor. In other words, unless they are the same person, there is NO requirement in Moses' words to conclude that he was giving Abraham's actual biological history of descent. That Dr. McFall's Terah 1 and Terah 2 just happened to have the same name is the only basis for connecting the "Terah" in verse 26 (father of Abraham) with the "Terah" in verses 24-25 who was the son of Nahor. Therefore, the exclusive purpose of Moses according to Dr. McFall – to establish a genealogical line of descent – is thwarted by Moses himself! Why could not Terah 2 be a descendant of Ham's cursed son instead of Nahor? In trying to force his theory on Moses, Dr. McFall has destroyed the proof that Abraham was a descendant of Shem, Noah's son, and in doing so has broken the genealogy of Jesus Himself! Dr. McFall needs to revisit Occam's razor.

The *problem* that Dr. McFall asserts, and for which he invents a solution, is no problem at all. He acknowledges that the three sons of Terah were not triplets. That is certainly true. But his bizarre solution is not necessary. The vast majority of Christian chronologists have concluded that Terah was 70 when his *first* son was born. Abram is listed first in his list of sons because of the common principle in Hebrew writing of placing the most important figure first. (This is also true of Noah's sons).²⁴ That Abram was not his firstborn is shown from the following:

- Terah (Abraham's father) died in his 205th year.²⁵
- Abraham was 75 when his father died.²⁶
- Terah was therefore 130 when Abram was born.

²³ pg. 5

²⁴ cf. Gen. 5:32 & Gen. 10:21

²⁵ Gen. 12:32

²⁶ Gen. 12:4 & Acts 7:4

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

The primary difference between Dr. McFall's theory and mine is this: Like Ussher, I take Genesis 11:26 as saying that Terah first became a father when he was 70 years old, and that Abram was one of his three children. This is the end of Moses' genealogy in Genesis 11. The next chapter uses this chronology as a basis to tell the story of Abraham, and develop the circumstances more fully. Moses then provided the chronological information to calculate when Abram was born in the next chapter, giving the circumstances around which Terah died and a cross-check of Abraham's age when Terah died. Moses abbreviated the process that he used in Gen. 5. Without giving the actual years Terah lived when Abram was born, he instead gave the total number of years Terah lived and then Abram's age when Terah died. Just as in Genesis 5, one can deduct Abraham's age when Terah died from Terah's total years to get Terah's age when Abraham was born.

Notice also the symmetry between the father's age when Seth was born and the father's age when Abram was born – 130 years for both. Seth and Abram were the immediate patriarchs of a godly line set apart from the ungodly population. I am not suggesting that Moses fabricated the ages of Adam and Terah. Rather, there is a clear symmetry to what God does with numbers and new beginnings.

There is another observation from this passage that deserves our attention. Notice that Moses was careful to distinguish a son from a grandson. In other words, when a "father" was not the immediate progenitor, Moses said so in plain language.

Gen. 11:31

31 And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

The Hebrew text has "ben" (son) for Abram and "ben ben" (grandson) for Lot. The LXX reads "καὶ τὸν Λωτ υἱοῦ Ἀβραμ υἱοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ" (lit. "and Lot, son of Haran, the son of his son"). That Moses made such a generational distinction between a son and a grandson makes it virtually impossible that he would omit such a generational distinction between Dr. McFall's Terah 1 and Terah 2. This is particularly problematic because of the confusion created by having two men of the same name just one verse apart without distinguishing them.

The solution that Dr. McFall proposes is highly unlikely and depends on his faulty and forced idea that intercourse and conception equals "begot." The proper interpretation of Genesis 11:26 is the "firstborn" interpretation of Ussher and most others. My view is the same as Ussher's. There is no problem in the text that needs Dr. McFall's solution.

Moses' Genealogies from Adam to Abraham

Therefore, his proposed solution remains unproven and highly unlikely. It cannot be used as a basis to condemn my chronology.

Dr. McFall seems to have no hesitation in attributing errors to Moses himself. This can be demonstrated from his paper on divorce.²⁷

*“Jesus knew that Deuteronomy 24:1-3 was written by men, for men. Women were given no rights to divorce their husbands. It was a one-sided law. **It was a very unfair law, an evil law. It could not have been written by God.** And Jesus very pointedly stated that this law was given by Moses, not by His Father. He distanced His Father from this law, and He distanced Himself from it. **It was an evil law, concocted by evil men, to gratify their evil lusts.** It exploited women. It degraded women. It treated women like chattels. Jesus put His finger directly on the origin of the idea of divorce. It arose out of the evil heart of man, from man’s hard-heartedness. **By pinpointing the origin of the idea Jesus showed that it was evil in essence. It did not come from God, or from Him.**”²⁸*

What has become of Paul’s statement? “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”?²⁹ Paul was referring to the Holy Scriptures that Timothy had learned as a child – the Torah and the Prophets.

Dr. McFall insists that the date of creation cannot be discovered. His objection to the use of the numerical data in Moses’ genealogies for establishing the date of creation is utterly groundless. It keeps the secular histories intact and unchallenged by the Word of God. If Moses is trusted, then young-earth creationists are absolutely correct. The only way to make any room for the flood-denying, creation-denying, atheistic, secular chronologies is to denounce Moses’ work as incomplete or a total fabrication. It appears that Dr. McFall is trying to keep his balance while he straddles the academic fence between evolutionists and young-earth creationists. However, I believe it is necessary to challenge the status quo of current scholarship on the matter of chronology. I respect Dr. McFall’s goals and intentions to offer a middle ground. But whatever ground he might gain among academics is lost among Christians by validating unsound exegesis.

²⁷ McFall, THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, 22 June, 2009
<http://lmf12.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/divorcemcfallview1.pdf>

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 25, bold and underlining mine

²⁹ 2 Tim. 3:16-17