

## A REPLY TO JEREMY SEXTON REGARDING THE GENEALOGIES IN GENESIS

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**Abstract:** *In his article, Jeremy Sexton offers a critique of my observations about the possibility of gaps in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. His critique notes several items in my presentation, but most notably, Sexton attempts to make an argument about the semantics of Hebrew causation in general and about the H (Hiphil) stem of verbs of the root  $\text{חָלַל}$  in particular. In this response, I demonstrate that Sexton's analysis is flawed and involves misunderstanding of my position and false conclusions about the meaning of H (Hiphil) stem of verbs of the root  $\text{חָלַל}$ .*

**Key words:** *causation, causal, trigger action, undersubject, semantics*

An article by Jeremy Sexton in the current issue of *JETS* takes issue with a recent study I published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* concerning my view that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 most certainly contain gaps and cannot be used to calculate the date of the great deluge or the date of creation.<sup>1</sup> I will not attempt to reply to everything Sexton criticizes about my analysis. Instead, I will confine myself to two less-important points followed by one major point.

### I. SEXTON ELEVATES MY CITING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CHRONOLOGIES TO A MAJOR POINT IN MY ARGUMENT; HE MISUNDERSTANDS ITS SIGNIFICANCE

When taking up my arguments, the first objection Sexton raises is my citing of established ancient near Eastern chronologies that preclude the great flood of Noah from having taken place when it would have had to happen if there are no gaps in the Genesis genealogies: during the sixth dynasty of ancient Egypt according to the numbers in the MT or, if following LXX as Sexton does, during late pre-dynastic Egypt. Both Egyptian and Sumerian chronological information preclude this. Sexton treats this as if it is a major assumption of mine. In fact, in my paper it is mentioned near the end of my discussion and is not a major assumption but a supporting observation.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, Sexton misunderstands the point. He is keen to point out that biblical interpreters have read the Genesis genealogies as gapless since before the time of Christ. However, those interpreters did not have access to the chronological data we have. My point is that we cannot know whether those interpreters

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew E. Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?," *BSac* 174 (2017): 141–58.

<sup>2</sup> Steinmann, "Gaps," 153.

would have reexamined their hermeneutical approach in light of this expanded knowledge of ancient chronology. To cite them as a major argument against reading the genealogies as having gaps is disingenuous. Sexton seems to think that I am certain that many would have changed their approach had they had knowledge like ours of ancient chronology. On the contrary, I do not know what they would have done, though I suspect many would have reexamined their conclusions about the Genesis genealogies. Thus, Sexton labels my observation as speculative. However, Sexton's citing of them is equally speculative, since it assumes—without stating as much—that their conclusions would not have changed even if confronted with our modern evidence for ancient near Eastern chronology. My point is that it is fruitless to bring premodern interpretations of these genealogies into the discussion because they were formed in a near-vacuum of accurate chronological data and have no bearing now that we have greater knowledge of ancient near Eastern chronology. Sexton has introduced a red herring into the discussion, an irrelevant piece of information that distracts from the real issue at hand.

However, there is one thing that Sexton correctly sees: I believe that it is incumbent on those who hold that there are no gaps in the Genesis genealogies to offer a plausible reading of the ancient near Eastern chronological data that supports their view. Without such a reading one must always suspect that their hermeneutics and resulting interpretation of the genealogies are tendentious and incorrect. So, I issue the challenge again to anyone who wishes to hold that there are no gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11: Offer a plausible reconstruction of ancient near Eastern chronology based on the extant evidence from Egypt, Sumer, and elsewhere that comports with your reading of the Genesis chronologies. If you cannot do this or refuse to even attempt to do this, your arguments and conclusions about the interpretation of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are obscurantist, since you do not want to deal with the data—both biblical and extrabiblical—in its entirety.

## II. SEXTON CLAIMS I HAVE CHANGED MY VIEW OF THE SEMANTICS OF THE H (*HIPHIL*) STEM VERBS OF THE ROOT יָלַד

I, quite frankly, do not know what to make of this. Sexton cites the book I wrote with Reed Lessing in an attempt to prove this.<sup>3</sup> However, a close examination of page 56 in that book will show that we do not have an in-depth discussion of the semantics of the verbal root יָלַד. Instead, we simply argue that this verbal root does not always denote direct fatherhood. One would not expect a detailed semantic analysis in an OT introduction.

My arguments in my 2017 article explain in much more detail why I believe what we stated in 2014. However, the upshot is the same—I argue that the verb does not necessarily denote direct fatherhood. Sexton's claim that I have changed

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<sup>3</sup> R. Reed Lessing and Andrew E. Steinmann, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014).

my position would be correct only if explaining oneself in more detail means that one necessarily changes one's view. However, Sexton is incorrect. I maintain now as we did in 2014 that this verbal root does not necessarily involve direct fatherhood, and my 2017 article explains why.

III. MOST IMPORTANTLY, SEXTON MISUNDERSTANDS CAUSALITY IN LANGUAGE AND SPECIFICALLY CAUSALITY IN HEBREW VERBS; THEREFORE SEXTON MISUNDERSTANDS AND MISCHARACTERIZES MY POSITION; INSTEAD, SEXTON PRODUCES AN ANALYSIS OF CAUSATIVE VERBS IN HEBREW THAT IS HOPELESSLY FLAWED AND IRRETRIEVABLY INCORRECT

This is the most important point to my objections to Sexton's article. Sexton acknowledges that H (*Hiphil*) stem verbs are often causative. However, he simply does not understand causality. He quotes linguist Leonard Talmy to the effect that a causative verb implies a prior causing action. In fact, at one point he adds the word "merely" before "implies" and also italicizes the word "implies." This betrays the root of his understanding. Causative constructions do not imply the fact of causation (which is a misunderstanding of what Talmy states), they *require* a prior causing action. Moreover, *cause* is not a trivial part of their meaning as the word "merely" might imply. Causative constructions contain the notion of cause as an integral part of their meaning. When Talmy says that the causing action is implied, he means that a specific cause is not identified in the causative construction. Instead, the existence of a cause (i.e. a trigger event) is required and conveyed in an unambiguous way in a causative construction. Cause is inextricably part of the meaning of any causative construction. If this is not true, the construction is not causative. However, the exact action that comprises the cause is implied. That is, the causative construction contains an explicit but general reference to a cause, thereby pointing to the specific cause as an act that triggers the result. This is what Talmy is stating. The specific action in each case could be one of any of countless implied acts: a man shooting an arrow, a child's laughter, a thunderstorm, and so forth. *The grammarians cited by Sexton are not saying causation is implied but that the language points to specific causal act through the more general language that explicitly includes a cause.* Thus, causative constructions reference two items: the cause or triggering action (whose language points toward a specific action) and the result.

Sexton's treatment not only misunderstands this but also misconstrues Talmy's statement in such a way that the trigger action turns into a shadow with no semantic substance. This allows Sexton to avoid the key issue in content: the causative nature of verbs in general and especially Hebrew verbs from the root ילד in the H (*Hiphil*) stem. Sexton's semantic arguments are demonstrably incorrect, since they in effect argue that causative constructions are causative without an actual, though generally stated, cause explicitly contained in them. Since the very root of Sexton's argument is flawed, I will concentrate on that and only mention a few of the particulars of his attempts to disprove my observations on the causative nature of verbs in the H stem from the root ילד.

1. *Causation in English.* Before looking at causation in Hebrew, it is illustrative to examine causation in English, since it can bring to light general principles relating to causative constructions in a language, even though each language treats causality differently. There are several common ways to form English causative constructions. One way is to use a word that denotes the trigger action such as verbs from the roots “cause,” “make,” or “lead.” Consider the following sentences:

Three days of heavy rains caused the river to rise.

The teacher made his students read *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Atmospheric conditions led the National Weather Service to issue a tornado watch.

In each of these sentences the trigger action is required to make the causative construction. Without the trigger action verbs “caused,” “made,” and “led” we would be left with simple declarative sentences like “The rivers rose” or “The students read *The Grapes of Wrath*” or “The NWS issued a tornado watch.” The explicit presence of a trigger action is absolutely required to form a causative construction—it cannot be “merely implied” as Sexton would have it. Even though the actual trigger is not stated, the causative words “caused,” “made,” and “led” explicitly mention the trigger and point toward a specific causing action that lies behind them. In the case of the first sentence, “caused” may point to any of a number of trigger actions—the reservoirs were overflowing or the ground was saturated or the like. Similar things could be said about the specific causes referenced by the more general causal verbs in the second and third sentences. In all three sentences *two actions* comprise the causative construction: trigger action: “caused,” “made,” or “led”; resulting action: “rise,” “read,” or “issue.” *Without both a trigger action and a resulting action or state there is no causation.*

Another common way in which causative constructions are formed in English is by use of verbal roots that contain an affix that signals that a trigger action occurred. For instance, the prefix “en-” can signal causation: “enable” (= make someone or something able) or “enfeeble” (= make someone feeble). Or for another example, consider the suffix “-ify”: “magnify” (= make large or great) or “vilify” (= make [declare] someone to be vile). In these cases the causative affix, and therefore the trigger action, is needed and explicitly indicated by the affix. Otherwise the verb or associated adjective without the affix would not have a causative meaning.

A third common way to signal causation in English is to use a verb with an inner causative meaning. That is, the verb’s semantics include the concepts of both a trigger action and a result as an integral part of its meaning: “Bring” can be ana-

lyzed as an inner causative meaning “cause to go, come, or occur.”<sup>4</sup> For another example consider “kill,” which can be analyzed as “cause the death of.”<sup>5</sup>

Now that we have seen that causative constructions require both a trigger action (a cause) and a result, let us examine the way language can define and specify a trigger action as well as the temporal connection between the trigger and the result. Consider this sentence:

Charles Guiteau killed James Garfield.

This is a causative statement, but it does not reveal what Guiteau’s trigger action was nor does it reveal whether Garfield’s death was immediate or delayed. So, we could state this more precisely:

Charles Guiteau caused the death of James Garfield by shooting him twice with a pistol.

Now the word “caused” is further defined in context by “shooting him twice.” What is only referenced by the word “caused” is further defined in context. Thus, while the causative construction only points toward the details of the trigger event, it is possible to define the trigger event outside the causative construction itself. However, we still have not temporally connected the trigger action and the result. So, we could state this event even more precisely:

On July 2, 1881, Charles Guiteau shot James Garfield twice, causing him to die on September 19, 1881.<sup>6</sup>

In this sentence, the cause is defined as shooting Garfield twice on July 2 and the result is Garfield’s death on September 19, over two months later. The point of this is that the causative construction “causing him to die” does not tell us about the temporal connection between the trigger action and the result. In a causative construction, the trigger action and the result could be simultaneous or they could be separated by minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, or even centuries. Only further information from outside of the causative construction can supply this information. In this case, Guiteau did nothing to Garfield on September 19. Yet he caused Garfield’s death on September 19 by his action on July 2. Therefore, *a causative construction does not tell the reader the temporal nexus connecting the trigger action and the result.* That can only be determined from information outside of the causative construction.

Finally, we should note that a causative construction contains a transitive trigger action with a subject (in this case Charles Guiteau) and a direct object (James Garfield): “Guiteau caused Garfield ...” The result also contains an action with a

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/bring?s=t>. Trigger action stated by “cause,” result stated as “go,” “come,” or “occur.”

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/kill?s=t>. Trigger action stated by “cause,” result stated as “death.”

<sup>6</sup> This is an accurate historical statement as are the two preceding example sentences.

subject (Garfield). The direct object of the trigger action is also the subject of the resulting action. Thus, it can be referenced as the *undersubject*. The subject of the trigger action can be called the *primary subject*.<sup>7</sup>

So, we can conclude the following about causative constructions:

1. Causative constructions *require* the explicit inclusion of both a trigger action (i.e. cause) and a resulting action or state. There are two verbal notions in every causative construction: a verbal action with a primary subject (the subject of the trigger action) and a result with an undersubject (the subject of the resulting action that also served as the direct object of the trigger action). This forms a chain that cannot be missing a single link without losing causation. (However, in Hebrew the undersubject can be present in the verb's semantics but left unstated.)<sup>8</sup>
2. Causative constructions indicate that a trigger action is present. The trigger action is required as part of the semantics of a causative construction. Such constructions do not, however, identify the specific trigger action.
3. Nevertheless, the trigger action can be further defined in context outside of the causative construction.
4. Causative constructions do not indicate what the temporal nexus between the trigger action and the result is. Further information is needed to establish this.

2. *Causative constructions in Hebrew*. In Biblical Hebrew by far the most common causative construction is the use of a verbal root in one of the causative conjugations: D stem (*Piel*) or H stem (*Hipbil*).<sup>9</sup> The discussion at hand is the meaning of the H stem as causative and of the H stem forms of לָדַד in particular. Let us look first at the H stem in general.

It is generally agreed that the H stem in Hebrew is a causative counterpart of the G (*Qal*) stem for most verbal roots. That requires that any H stem verb conveys both the trigger action (i.e. the cause) and the result. The result will be the action or state conveyed by the “basic” meaning of the verb (i.e. the meaning found in the corresponding *Qal* stem verb). This means that in the G stem a verb denotes only one action. Yet in H stem verbs when causation is present, the verb will have *two* verbal notions denoted: the trigger action and the result (as either an action or a state).

That there are two verbal notions in one causative Hebrew verb ought to be obvious, but let me offer two illustrations from Hebrew: Some Hebrew verbs are intransitive in the G stem. This is true of a stative root such as גָּדַל, which can mean

<sup>7</sup> For this terminology see *IBHS* §21.2.2e and §21.2.2n; pp. 355, 358.

<sup>8</sup> See *IBHS* §27.3c, p. 442.

<sup>9</sup> On these two stems as well as Dp (*Pual*), HtD (*Hiltpael*), and Hp (*Hophal*) as causative, see *IBHS* §21.2, pp. 334–361; as well as §24, pp. 396–417; and §27, pp. 433–446. *IBHS* §21.2.2c, p. 355 states, “*Piel* tends to signify causation with a patiency nuance, and *Hipbil* causation notion with an agency nuance. The two types of causation forms differ from one another with reference to the status of the subject being acted upon by the main verb, that is, the voice associated with the undersubject or secondary subject.”

“be great.” In the H stem this root can denote “cause someone [direct object; undersubject] to be great” (i.e. “enlarge,” “magnify”). In the H stem this verb is transitive. Where did the transitive nature of the H stem verb originate? It is not in the underlying meaning of “be large,” which remains intransitive. There is no transitive use of “be large,” since by nature it is an intransitive concept. The H stem conjugation does not magically transform an intransitive notion into a transitive one. Therefore the causation—not the base meaning of the verb—is the source of the transitivity of the H stem forms of this root. Causation is always transitive. Thus, the H stem the meaning is “cause something to be great” or, in other words, “enlarge something,” “magnify something.” In the H stem, this root includes two inseparable verbal notions: the trigger action (i.e. “cause”) and the resulting state (i.e. “being large”).

For a second illustration consider a verb that is transitive in the G stem and doubly transitive in the H stem. The root נחל is transitive in the G stem: *inherit something*. In the H stem it is causative and doubly transitive: “cause someone [direct object; undersubject] to inherit something” [second direct object]. Where did the additional direct object originate? It is not in the underlying meaning “inherit” which still has only a single direct object. Again the additional transitivity originates in the causation, which is also transitive.

Both of these illustrations demonstrate two points which are missed or ignored by Sexton. For all practical purposes, Sexton’s view is that causative verbs contain only one action and that the trigger action is “merely implied” (his words) but not actually present and expressed by the verb. If the trigger action is not present, then the verb is not causative. There is no causation without an actual cause. No lurking phantom “merely implied” cause will make a causative construction in any language, including Biblical Hebrew.

So let us correct Sexton’s fundamental errors concerning H stem verbs: First, “cause” is not an implied action but inextricably part of the meaning, the trigger action in causation. The explicit expression of the trigger action points to a specific action that is not explicitly expressed in the verb itself (though that action might be expressed explicitly elsewhere in context). Second, this is not an “either a cause or a result” situation. Yet as Sexton would have it, this is either cause (trigger action) or resulting state or action. However, that is not causation, and no grammarian that I know of holds that view. This, like every other example of causation, is a “both cause and result situation”: Both trigger action (cause) and resulting state or action are needed. Otherwise one does not have causation. The problem with Sexton’s critique of my analysis of the H stem of the root ילד is that he downplays or ignores the causation in the verbal forms of the H stem to the point where it disappears. He fails to recognize that in an H stem verb *there must be two verbal notions* (cause and result) if it is actually causative. Then he accuses me of inventing a new way of looking at causation and of applying this supposedly new view to this specific verbal root. In fact, his reduction or even removing of cause from its inseparable connection to the underlying action is a new invention. It is a completely erroneous view of causation, a misunderstanding of the semantics of causation in

verbs. Sexton views causative verbs in a way that no grammarian could or would endorse.

Let me be clear: I have not invented anything new about causation. The only “new” observation that I offer is that the H stem of the root ילד must be causative since it can be used to link an action by an ancestor to the much later birth of his descendant.<sup>10</sup> The only way this can be is if H stem verbs of the root ילד are causative. Now it is true that the standard Biblical Hebrew lexicons do not present this root as causative. Waltke and O’Connor, however, point out a common failing among Hebrew lexicons. The lexicons’ glosses for causative stem verbs lack reference to causative meanings of verbs that distinguish them from the G stem meanings:

Because English and other European-language verbal systems are impoverished in morphological treatments of transitivity, causativity, and reflexivity, most modern Hebrew lexicons also fail to show adequately the subtle differences in meaning among the verbal stems. The lexicographers are often forced to assign similar “meanings” of a verb to the different verbal stems. ... Awareness of the ambiguities within the English verbal system when set *vis-à-vis* the subtle distinctions used in the Hebrew verbal stem system with regard to causation and voice, should warn the researcher against giving priority to the stem’s apparent function over its manifest form in trying to decide its functions. Prejudged categories, dictated by the “cruder” English structures, are inadequate for interpreting the Hebrew categories; we must be guided by the Hebrew forms and usages rather than by those of English.<sup>11</sup>

I have simply called attention to the fact that the standard lexicons do not treat the meaning of the H-stem forms of the verbal root ילד adequately when offering English glosses. This is “new” according to Sexton. However, it is not new at all. It is simply an extension of the observations of Waltke and O’Connor.

3. *An example of Sexton’s failed critique of my view of the verb הכשלתם, “you caused to stumble.”* Sexton’s critique of my discussion includes his analysis of my observations about the verb הכשלתם at Mal 2:8:

הכשלתם רבים בתורה

You [i.e. priests] have *caused* many people *to stumble* by [your] instruction.

Sexton states that I think the event described by the verb is when the priests instructed *rather than* when the people stumbled. That is, however, not at all what I think or state. It demonstrates his misunderstanding of causation and his reducing the trigger action to a phantom, non-existent, “merely implied” cause instead of true causation which requires both an actual cause and a result. There are *two acts*, and this causative verb refers to both of them, not one rather than the other: *the*

<sup>10</sup> See the discussion of 2 Kgs 20:18/Isa 39:10 below.

<sup>11</sup> *IBHS* §21.2.2r–s, pp. 358–59.



*priests causing* (defined in context as the act of instructing) and *the people stumbling*. The two are inextricably bound together in one verb.

Moreover, the two need not take place at the same time, and in this case they did not. *The priests caused* by instructing, as stated in the context. Then, somewhat later, *the people stumbled* by bringing unacceptable sacrifices (as stated in the wider context of Malachi 2). Note this carefully: the priests, who are the main subject of the verb, did not stumble. The priests only *caused*, since they are the main subject. The *people* did not cause, they only *stumbled*, since they are the undersubject. *But both actions—those of the priests and those of the people—are in view in the one verb*. When Sexton asserts that I have determined that the verb refers (only) to instructing, he misstates the case. Since he has not properly understood causation, he cannot see that the one Hebrew verb contains within its semantics two actions (cause and result). The verb refers to *causing* and *stumbling*, and the causing is defined in context as *instructing*.

Let me emphasize once again in accord with standard views of verbal causation: The H stem verb in Mal 2:8 refers to two actions—the priests causing and the people stumbling. When Sexton goes on to state that by my analysis the H stem of this verb could never describe the action of stumbling it is because he has a mistaken view of causation which leads him to a mistaken statement about my analysis and belief. His mistake is in reducing causation to the point where it disappears in his analysis and then focusing on only the result denoted by causative verbs, robbing them of their causality. However, in reality, cause and result are both required in order to have causation. I affirm that this verb in Mal 2:8 does indeed refer to stumbling—but it also refers to causing.

4. *The H stem meaning of verbs from the root ילד*: Let us now turn to the verbal root in question: ילד. This root is causative in the *Hiphil*, and this is demonstrated in the many cases in the OT where this verb refers to an ancestor's generation of a descendant two or more generations removed. I find it telling that Sexton does not systematically engage my discussion of 2 Kgs 20:18/Isa 39:10 but simply mischaracterizes it on several occasions. This verse uses an H stem verb of ילד to state that Hezekiah will have descendants who will become eunuchs in Babylon. Hezekiah is the subject and the descendants are the direct object. The verb must be causative for him to take an action that will later result in births of descendants. If the causative verb only refers to actions that happened at the birth of Hezekiah's descendants, then Hezekiah cannot be the main subject of the verb, since he was dead and could do nothing at that point in time.

By any reasonable semantics Hezekiah, who is explicitly mentioned as the subject of the verb, must be the person committing the trigger action. Yet he would be long dead when these descendants who were to go into captivity in Babylon would be born. Hezekiah can take no action when he is dead. As a dead man, he cannot perform the trigger action (the cause). To state it more fully: Hezekiah will cause [someone: unexpressed; the direct object and undersubject] to bear his de-

scendants.<sup>12</sup> There are two actions in this causative verb: Hezekiah causes, and an unstated someone bears his descendants.<sup>13</sup> Hezekiah's action is separated by many years from the births he caused. However, *both actions are in view in this one verb*.

This leads us back to a point which was made earlier: causation does not specify the temporal nexus between the trigger action and the result. That can only be gleaned if one has additional information, which in this case is provided by the chronological notices in the book of Kings. Sexton's reason for denying the actual and active presence of a trigger action in a causative verb is now clear: He wants the entire action indicated by the verb to take place at the birth of the descendants. The only way that can happen is if the verb is not causative and Hezekiah is not the subject. Yet Hezekiah is the subject, and that plus the chronological situation as expressed in Kings requires the verb to be causative and the trigger action to take place many years before the result.

In summary: H stem verbs from the root ילד express a meaning that could be characterized in English as "cause someone [unexpressed undersubject] to bear someone." Since there is no set temporal nexus between trigger action and result in causative constructions, the span of time between the trigger action (cause) and result (birth) can be anywhere from instantaneous to many years later.

5. *H stem ילד in the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies.* This leads us back to the Genesis genealogies which repeatedly state that when an ancestor was such-and-such an age he "fathered" a descendant. The verb is always an H stem form of ילד, specifically יוליד. For instance:

וַיְחִי קִינֵן שֶׁבַעִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֵד אֶת־מַהֲלָלֶל (Gen 5:12)

Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. (Gen 5:12 CSB)

While translated "fathered" here, the verb is causative and means "he caused [someone] to bear." The only thing Kenan did was cause. An unnamed someone—either the ancestor's wife in the case of the descendant being a son or one of his unnamed descendants' wives if Mahalalel is two or more generations removed—bore the descendant, but not necessarily at the time when the causation happened. Kenan is the main subject and only causes.<sup>14</sup> Mahalalel is the direct object of the resulting action (birth), but that result is not necessarily chronologically contemporaneous to Kenan's seventieth year. Again, Sexton fails to see this because he focuses only on the act of birth in the verb and reduces the causation to a "merely

<sup>12</sup> Not every direct object for a causative verb need be explicitly expressed. This is noted in *IBHS* §27.3c, p. 442. *IBHS* also notes that an unexpressed direct object is usually a person, as is the case here.

<sup>13</sup> I will admit that I could have been more explicit in my original treatment had I spelled this out. However, I never imagined that someone would so badly misconstrue the very notion of verbal causation and not consult a grammar such as *IBHS*, thereby creating the necessity for me to state this explicitly.

<sup>14</sup> The action to which the cause points is not made explicit by the causative construction; see the discussion above.

implied” action that for his purposes all but vanishes from the semantics of the verb as if it is immaterial, irrelevant, or overridden by the result action of bearing.

In reality, as we have seen, for causal verbs both cause and resulting action are necessary, and there is no causation without both. This is precisely why gaps can be a possibility in the genealogies. The causing action and the resulting action need not be simultaneous and can in fact be separated by a long period of time (as in the case of Hezekiah). *Thus, all we know is that the trigger action took place when Kenan was 70 years old. We have no information to tell us when the result—the birth of Mabalalel—took place.* There could be no intervening generations or there could be two, five, ten or more intervening generations. We cannot know.

#### IV. FINAL COMMENTS ON SEXTON’S METHOD AND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I find Sexton’s assertions and conclusions about my analysis to be fatally flawed. Based on his incorrect notion of verbal causation, he reasons about the semantics of the verbal root  $\text{לָבַד}$  in the H stem from a starting point that is incorrect and which therefore invalidates his entire argument. From the outset readers should beware, since Sexton never references the standard Hebrew grammars concerning causation. He does not appeal to the well-known but dated Gesenius. He does not cite the more current Joüon-Muraoka grammar. Most importantly, he does not refer to the extended discussion of causality in Hebrew verbs that is found in Waltke-O’Connor. This reveals what his method actually is: overlaying his understanding of English semantics on Hebrew, something Waltke-O’Connor note leads to erroneous conclusions about Hebrew semantics.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, he fails to note that in H stem verbs of root  $\text{לָבַד}$  must be doubly transitive (once for the trigger action and a second time for the result), thereby leading him to false conclusions about the semantics of these verbs.

Sexton has gone to great lengths to defend the indefensible: that there is no possibility of gaps in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. The only way he can defend his contention that there are no gaps in the genealogies against my analysis is to make arguments that are semantically untenable (even in English), without laying the proper foundation for understanding his sources concerning causation correctly, and driven by invalid logic and conclusions. This, in turn, leads Sexton to claim that I have written things that I did not write, implied things that I have not implied, or that I have invented a new view of causation when it is he who is seeking to overturn the well-established linguistic understanding of causation, especially causation in Hebrew verbs.

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<sup>15</sup> *IBHS* §21.2.2r–s, pp. 358–59. See the discussion above where the quote from this source is included.