

Handling Uncertainty in 2022  
Matthew 6:25-34

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# Reasons for Uncertainty

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- Health
- Finances
- Political turmoil
- Cultural pressures

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# Psalm 46:1-2

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God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.

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# Psalm 55:

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Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

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# Psalm 121:7-8

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The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.

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# Isaiah 41:10

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Fear not, for I am with you;  
be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

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# Philippians 4:6-7

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Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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# James 1:2-4

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Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

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# Handling Uncertainty

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- As Christians, we should be concerned about how to live godly lives.
- But the challenges of this world can overwhelm us, especially if we don't know what's going to happen in the future.
- Jesus addresses these concerns in the Sermon on the Mount and says three times not to be anxious.
- Anxious (*merimnao*) - the idea of being drawn in two directions.
- The most repeated command in the Bible - "fear not."

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# Don't waste energy on what you can't control

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“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”

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# Don't waste energy on what you can't control

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- How will worrying solve problems you can't control?
- Anxiety will not add the smallest unit of time to your life.
- Worrying might actually shorten it. An earlier Jewish commentary observed that worry and a troubled heart actually shorten life (Sirach 30:19-24).
- This is not a call to passivity, but a realization that God is in control and we are not God and not always in control.

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# Acknowledge that God takes care of you

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And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

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# Acknowledge that God takes care of you

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- We should acknowledge God takes care of what He creates (verses 28-32).
- We are more valuable than birds and flowers (Psalm 8).
- How much more - Jesus twice uses a Jewish argument called *qal wahomer*.
- If God cares for birds and flowers, how much more does He care for you.
- Taking care of you doesn't mean that you won't suffer.
- All the people Jesus healed ended up dying. Jesus was crucified.

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# Focus on God's kingdom

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But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be added to you.

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# Focus on God's kingdom

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- Pour all of you into God's kingdom (verse 33).
- Seek first - not sequential, means one supreme passion.
- Make the decision that you are "all in."
- Kingdom people are passionate about holiness, concerned about mission.
- Our mission in life should be centered on what God wants us to do.
- These things will be added to you. Not everyone will be rich or well off.

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# Live in the moment

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Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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# Focus on God's kingdom

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- What defines your moment in history is your moment in history.
  - Forget the past
  - Don't fear tomorrow
  - Live for the moment.
- Fulton Oursler: "We crucify ourselves between two thieves: regret for yesterday and fear of tomorrow."

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# Ask Kerby

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What was the average lifespan for someone living when Jesus lived?

Why did people live longer during the time of Noah?

# Lifespan

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## Length of life in the ancient world: a controlled study

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Keywords: length of life; classical era

### Summary

The length of life for a population of ancient Greek and Roman men with quoted dates of birth and death has been compared statistically with three sample populations from different periods. It was found that the ancients who were born before 100 BC lived as long as the moderns who died before 1950; they lived significantly shorter lives than those who have died in the present half century.

### Introduction

It is axiomatic that the inhabitants of the ancient world did not live as long as we do today. For example, Deevey<sup>1</sup> reported that the average length of life in ancient Greece was 35 years whereas in classical Rome it was even shorter at 32 years. Dorn<sup>2</sup> revised these figures downwards to less than 30 years and contrasted them with the average of 70 years in North America and Western Europe in 1959-1960. In a more recent survey Garland<sup>3</sup> concludes that life expectancy for both men and women in ancient Greece was 'well below fifty'.

The figures quoted by Deevey and Dorn are estimates of the average length of life of every member of the sample population. This includes those

forced suicide or death in battle. They were rejected from the series, leaving a final total of 298. Firm dates had been accorded to 70 of these; the remaining 228 were in the *circa* group. Females were not included on the grounds that the sexes might differ in life expectancy. Modern male populations for comparison with the ancient group were obtained from *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*<sup>5</sup>. Thus, both ancient and modern samples were comparable with respect to males who survived into adulthood and who achieved notability (or notoriety). Three modern groups were examined. One group consisted of males who died in or after 1950 AD. The two other groups died between 1850-1899 and between 1900-1949, respectively. In each group, every third appropriate entry was taken in order to eliminate possible familial influences, i.e. if father and son had both been included. The groups were compared statistically by means of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U*-test<sup>6</sup>.

### Results

The figures for length of life of the ancient population were first analysed in isolation. The 298 observations were grouped in consecutive 5-year periods, when the distribution showed a negative skew with a mode at

## HISTORY

### AGEING THROUGH THE AGES

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Throughout the millennia, mankind has pursued the concept of achieving eternal youth. An example of this is the classical pantheon of immortal gods. Again there are the nine Judaic patriarchs with life spans between 777 and 962 years. In the Middle Ages, a major interest of alchemists was to produce an 'elixir of life'. Interest in longevity has been revived in the twentieth century, starting with the transplantation of monkey glands, and moving to the relevance of genetic modification and the use of hormones and anti-oxidants. Those involved in this field might heed Swift (1667-1745) when he describes the Struldburgs, beings who are immortal but live the most miserable of lives, warning that if longevity is to be of benefit it should be linked to a high quality of life.

Progress towards the goal of healthy longevity has lagged well behind the aspirations of philosophers. This paper reviews the record of ageing by considering life span from earliest times to the present as revealed by historical records and archaeological findings. This inevitably will produce biased information, since until recently details have been recorded only on the rich or famous, and a variety of factors have led to the inhumation

is not straightforward.<sup>9</sup> In general there is a feeling among anthropologists that skeletal age is often underestimated.<sup>10</sup>

An indirect assessment of dietary status can be achieved by measuring height, examining the pattern of dental wear using the <sup>13</sup>C/<sup>14</sup>C ratio to assess the amount of vegetation in the diet, and analysing trace elements from a sample of bone to provide more detailed information on the content of the diet.<sup>11</sup> Porotic changes within the orbits (*cribra orbitale*) are considered to be evidence of iron deficiency, though recent studies indicate that recurrent infections may be as important a cause as poor nutrition.<sup>12</sup>

Given the complexity of archaeological patterns in different societies, this account is confined mainly to changes in the British Isles and Europe.

### PALAEOLITHIC PERIOD

Neanderthals (200,000-30,000 BC), who were the losers in the struggle for survival over other hominid species, had the additional disadvantage of suffering from racial prejudice. Reconstructed drawings portray them as ugly, inarticulate, shambling idiots. These misconceptions relate

# Lifespan of Kings in Israel

TABLE 1

Ages of Kings of Judah recorded in the Old Testament.

Name of King	Age at death (yrs)
Rehoboam	58
Joram	40*
Joash	47*
Amaziah	54*
Uzziah	68
Jotham	41
Ahaz	36
Hezekiah	54
Manasseh	67
Amon	24*
Josiah	39*

\*Killed

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# Lifespan

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- Often you will see historians say that the average lifespan during the ancient world was 40-45 years.
- But those estimates are skewed by the high child mortality.
- If you made it to adolescence as a wealthy, educated Roman or Greek citizen, you could expect to live 70 years.
- Of course, there were many other reasons why people would not live that long (men - military action, women - childbirth).

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# Lifespan

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- One study actually argues that lifespan declined in the Roman world.
  - Before 100 BC – 70 years
  - After 100 BC – 52 years
- Daily life in the Roman world:
  - Disease, violent crime, and executions
  - Lead pipes for plumbing

# Lifespans Before the Flood?

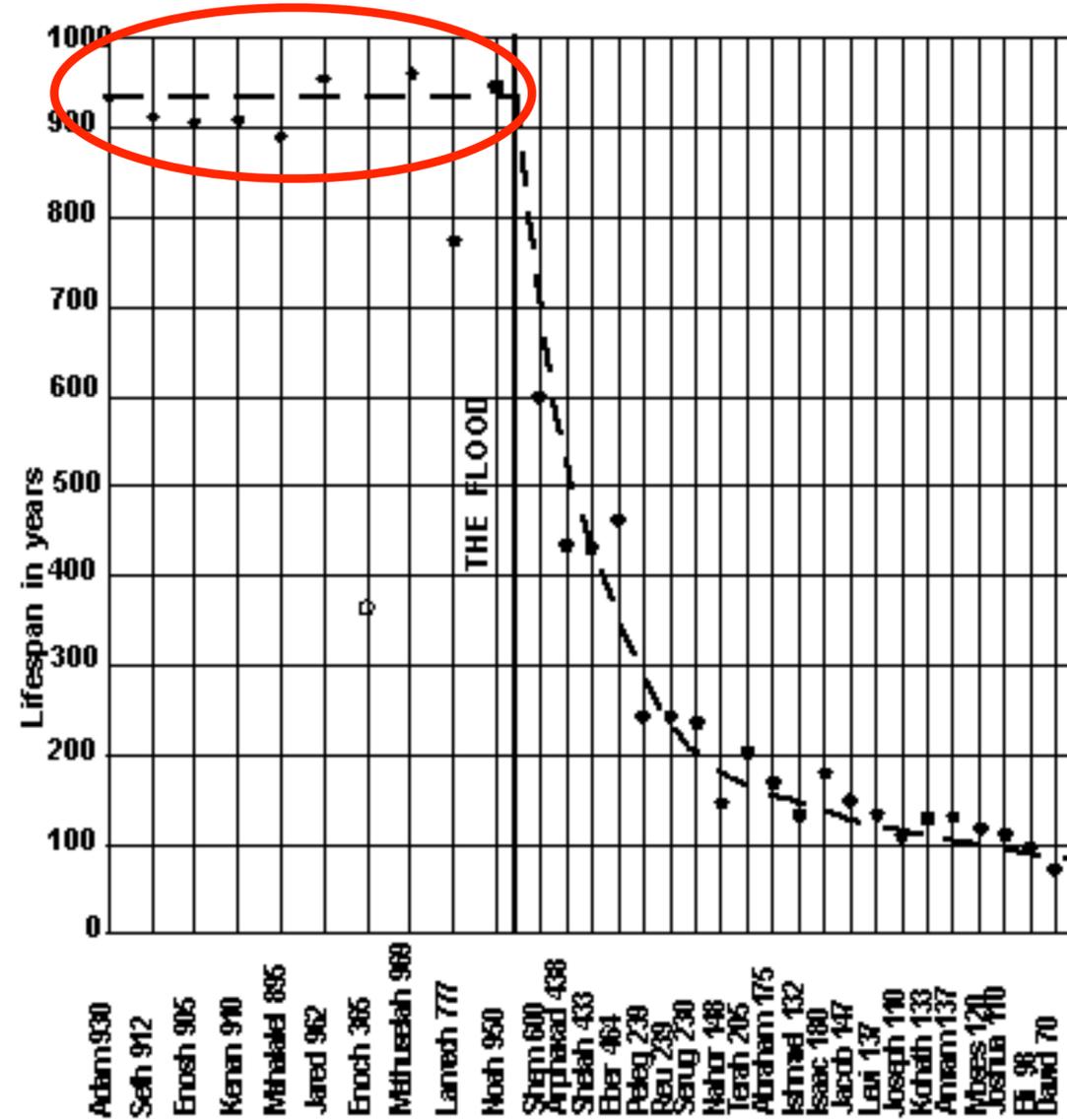
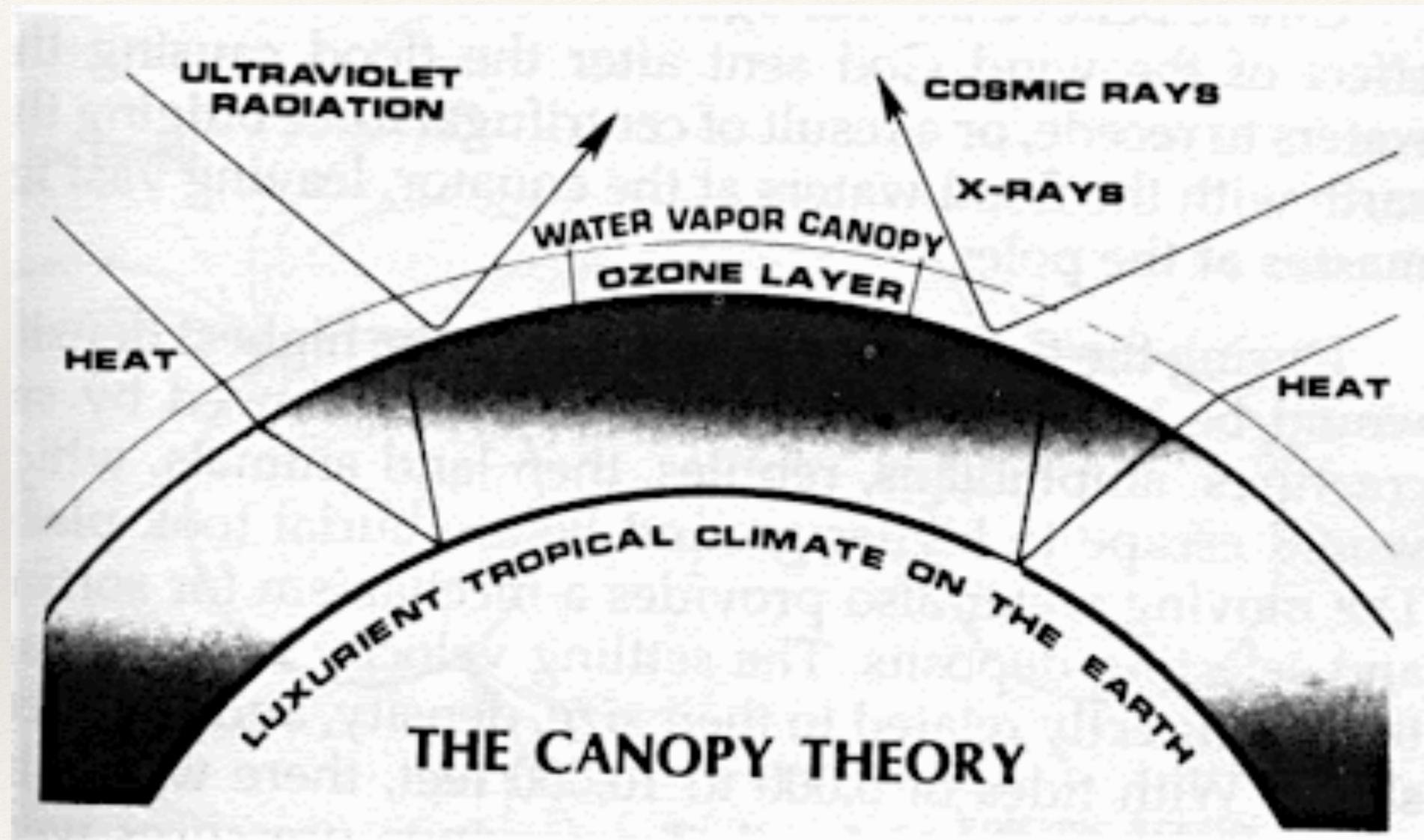


Fig. 1. The life spans of the patriarchs

# Water Vapor Canopy



# Lifespans After the Flood

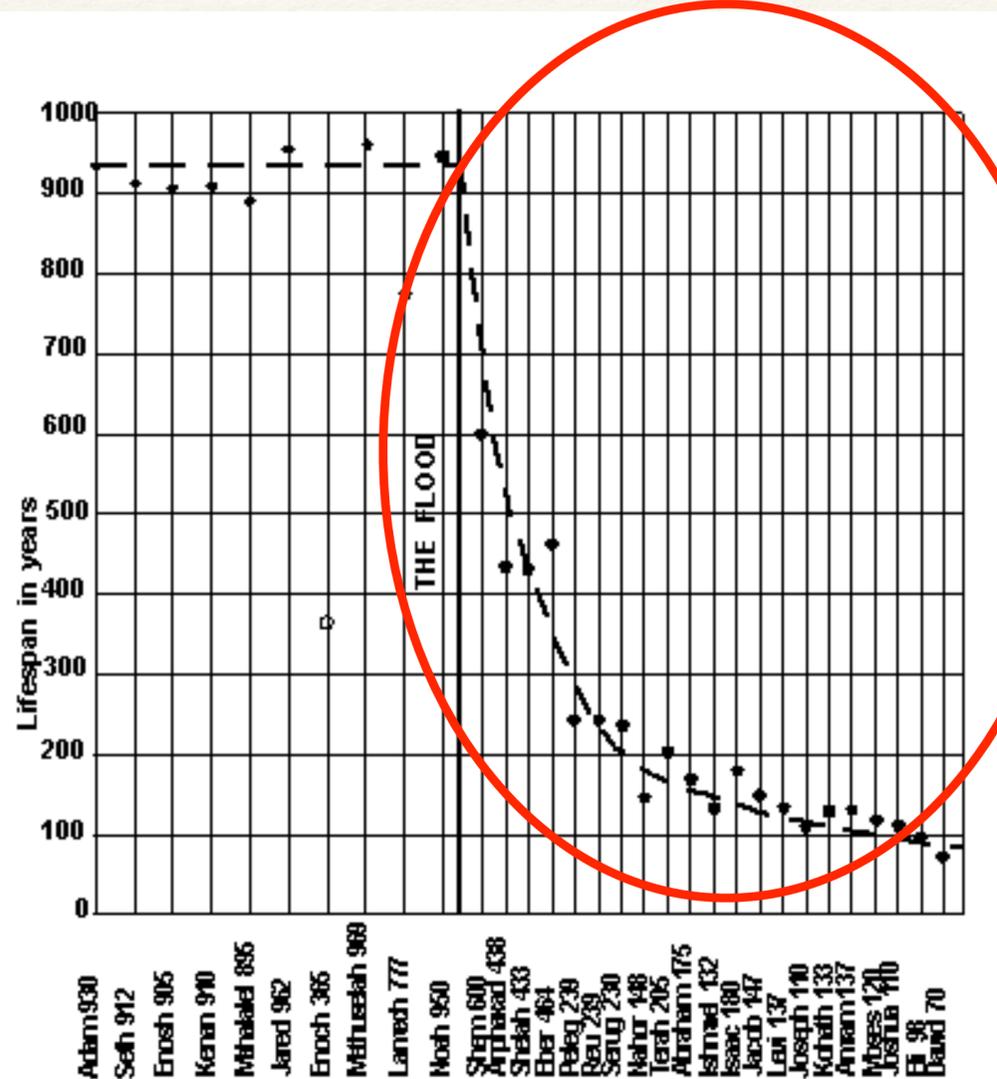
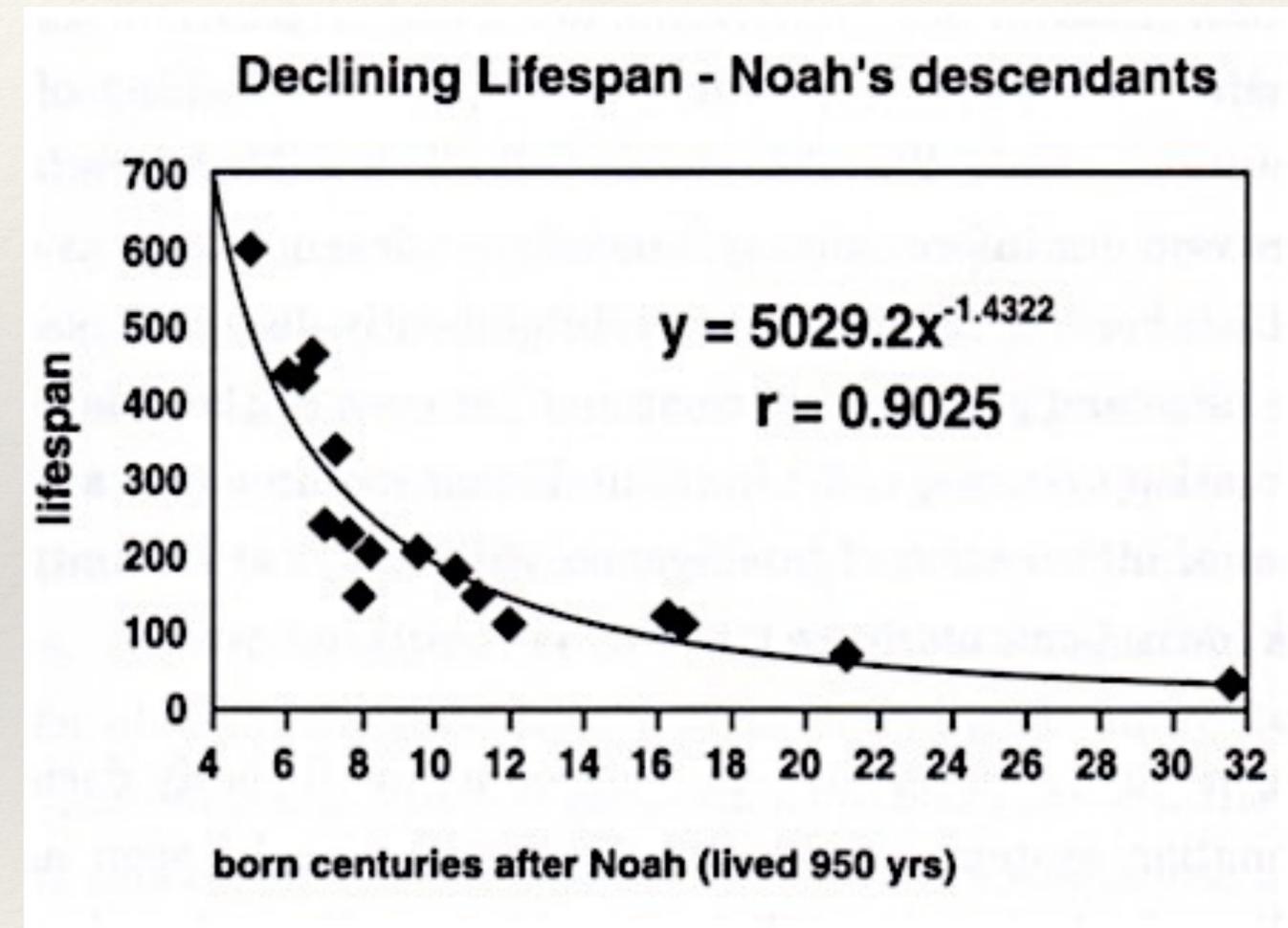


Fig. 1. The life spans of the patriarchs



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# Ask Kerby

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How will there be no tears in heaven, if we have loved ones that didn't choose Jesus?

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# No Tears

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- The promise of “no tears” does not apply to when we are in heaven but when God establishes the New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21:1).
- Then He promises to “wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4).
- It is a repeat of Isaiah’s prophecy about the future (Isaiah 25:8).
- There will probably be tears at the Great White Throne Judgment that takes place earlier (Revelation 20:11-15).
- There may even be tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:13).

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# No Tears

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- When we arrive in heaven, our perspective will change from a limited, earthly perspective to a holy, heavenly perspective.
- There will be no more pain or mourning. Missing our loved ones would fit under the category of pain and mourning.
- We are promised that when we see God face-to-face, we will no longer see in a darkened mirror but see clearly (1 Corinthians 13:12).
- Perhaps we will have no remembrance of them so that the pain and regret are no longer in our memories.

"Other than the Bible itself, this may well be the  
single most life-changing book you'll ever read."

— STU WEBER —

# HEAVEN



RANDY  
ALCORN



# SURPRISED BY HOPE



Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,  
and the Mission of the Church

**N. T. WRIGHT**