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New Book Explores Faith and Philosophy

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does not record a similar number game with the ages of Abraham and Ishmael.

It is also possible that the manipulation of the number sequences in the age of the patriarchs may point to a tendentious view that Joseph represents the sum of the patriarchs. As tempting to Latter-day Saints as this view may be, namely, that Joseph and not some other son of Jacob should be considered the sum of the patriarchs, I must doubt that God imparts important doctrine through mathematical games or arcane manipulations. I must question the presence of any authentic secret information encoded in holy writ.

Nevertheless, someone must have enjoyed manipulating the numbers. We too, as the recipients of such manipulations, can have fun discovering the formulas, as long as we don't take them too seriously. The warning of President Harold B. Lee is always appropriate, that some ideas "are not handicapped by having any authentic information" in them.⁸ ♦

By Paul Y. Hoskisson

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Notes

Most of the concepts in this article have been mentioned previously in a wide range of scholarly journals and commentaries.

1. For example, between Ozias and Joatham in verses 8 and 9, Matthew left out Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah (Joash was the son of Ozias [Ahaziah in 2 Kings 11:2] and the father of Amaziah, grandfather of Azariah and great grandfather of Joatham [Jotham in 2 Kings 15:7]). Luke more realistically has 56 ancestors from Abraham to Christ.

2. Some people have suggested that the gematria of King David's name may have something to do with Matthew's choice of the number "fourteen." The Hebrew letters in David's name, דוד, given their numerical value, add up to the number fourteen.

3. See Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 70–71, for the 36,000-year reign of á-lál-gar.

4. Dwight Young, "A Mathematical Approach to Certain Dynastic Spans in the Sumerian King List," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47/2 (1988): 123–24. See the entire article, 123–29, for a convenient summary of some of the mathematical manipulations of the numbers in the Sumerian King List.

5. The age of 110 seems to be an ideal in ancient Egypt. See Rosalind M. and Jac. J. Janssen, *Growing Up and Getting Old in Ancient Egypt* (London: Golden House Publications, 2007), 197, 201–2.

6. It is however the sum of $9^2 + (8 \times 7)$.

7. It is though the sum of $2^2 + 3^2$.

8. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, October 1972, 128. I have placed his words in a different context than he spoke them, but have remained true to the point he made.

New Book Explores Faith and Philosophy

The Maxwell Institute and Brigham Young University are pleased to announce the publication of a new volume by BYU philosophy professor James E. Faulconer.

Faith, Philosophy, Scripture is a collection of ten essays that result from Faulconer's work as a philosopher and his faith as a Latter-day Saint. Faith is the starting point, and philosophy its supplement, rather than a competitor. Faulconer says, "The confidence of my faith, a confidence that came by revelation, has allowed me to hear the questions of philosophy without fear, and philosophy has never asked me to give up my faith, though it has asked questions about it." These essays ask what it means to remember (as our faith often calls us to do), how faith and reason are related to one another, what the place of theology is in revealed religion, and how we should think about scripture.

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INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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