

Genealogies In Relation To Chronology

By Raymond C. Faircloth

Certainly, a possible chronology can be worked out from the Bible record at least back to the time of Abraham (please see STUDY 12). However, the biblical genealogies do not seem to have been compiled for the purpose of forming dated chronologies; but rather: "to authenticate hereditary succession and inheritance rights, biological descent and geographical or ethnological relationships." The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*.

Many of the biblical genealogies appear in **abbreviated** form so that there is a compressing of time - a telescoping. Hence no all-encompassing chronologies are to be found in the Scriptures. Again the *ISBE* comments: "It was not uncommon for individuals to be **omitted** from such records for a variety of reasons." Even genealogies that would seem to lend themselves to a chronological application were not totalled by the writer. Many of the genealogies focus on outstanding individuals so that a mnemonic (memory aid) is accomplished often using the numbers 7 or 10 or multiples of them. This is particularly relevant to the Messianic line.

Since the time of significant contact with the Greek world the Jewish rabbis wanted to show the historicity of the Scriptures by compiling dated chronologies leading back to creation; the first such chronology being produced in the 3rd century B.C. Nevertheless, to have formed any such chronologies from the genealogies is a misapplication of them and therefore a valueless exercise.

Relationships in Ancient Near Eastern Thinking

The term *father* often means *ancestor* and the term *son* often means *descendant*. There were no words in Hebrew for grandfather or grandson etc.

OBED is described as "**a son born to Naomi**" in Ruth 4:17, yet he was not directly biologically related to Naomi because Ruth was his actual mother and Boaz was his father.

THE SONS OF ELIPHAZ

The family of Eliphaz, **the son of Esau**, is spoken of in the following terms in 1 Chronicles 1:36: "*The sons of Elipha: Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz, **Timna**, and Amalek.*" Yet, in turning to Genesis 36:11, 12 we see that the first five are sons of Eliphaz but the sixth, Timna, his concubine, was the mother of the seventh-Amalek. This is so plainly written in Genesis that the author of Chronicles could not have mistaken it. But trusting to the knowledge of his readers to supply the omission, he leaves out the statement respecting Eliphaz's concubine, but at the same time connects her name and that of her son with the family to which they belong, and this though he was professedly giving a statement of the sons of Eliphaz.

JACOB'S SONS, GRANDSONS AND GREAT GRANDSONS

GENESIS 46:8-27

"These are the sons of Leah , whom <i>she bore to Jacob</i>	33 (persons)." But only 6 were sons.
"These are the sons of Zilpah ... <i>she bore to Jacob</i> these.....	16 persons." Only 2 were sons.
"These are the sons of Rachel , who were born to Jacob.....	14 persons." Only 2 were sons.
"These are the sons of Bilhah <i>she bore to Jacob</i> 7 persons in all."	Only 2 were sons.

MANNASSEH and EPHRAIM

These were Jacob's grandsons, yet just before dying Jacob said to Joseph: "*Now your two sons...are mine*" (Gen. 48:5).

SHEBUEL

In 1 Chronicles 26:24 we read in a list of appointments made by King David (see 1 Chron. 24:3, 25:1, 26:6), that **Shebuel** *the son of Gershom*, the son of Moses, was **the ruler of the treasures**: and again in 1 Chronicles 23:15,16 we find it written, "*Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel was the chief.*" It is clearly impossible for the grandson of Moses (c.1450 B.C) to be living in the reign of David (c.1000 B.C). This must mean that many names have been omitted and the term "*son*" has the meaning of descendants.

JERIJAH

Similarly, in 1 Chronicles 26:31 we read that "*Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief*" who was, according to 23:19, *the first of the sons of Hebron*, and Hebron was, according to verse 12 *the son of Kohath*, the son of Levi. Again, it could appear that a great-grandson of Levi (c.1750 B.C) was holding a prominent office in the time of David. This is evidently a larger gap than for Shebuel and again "*sons*" means *descendants*.

JEHU is called, in the Hebrew of 1 Kings 19:16, “the son of Nimshi,” but in reality he is Nimshi’s grandson.

BELSHAZZAR is described as the *son* of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 5:22 when in fact he was not even biologically related to him, yet was viewed as his legal heir.

SAMUEL

1 Chronicles 6:22-24 records the ancestry of Samuel as:

- ❖ “*The sons of Kohath, Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son; Elkanah his son and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son...*”

While the general rule is that of descent from father to son, yet **the third, fourth, and fifth names** in this list represent brothers. This is shown by a comparison of Exodus 6:24 and the parallel genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6:37, 38. So that **the true line of descent** is the following:

<u>1 Chronicles 6:22-24</u>	<u>Exodus 6:24</u>	<u>1 Chronicles 6:37, 38</u>
Kohath		Kohath
Aminadab		Izhar [Aminadab]
Korah	“ the sons of Korah were:	Korah
Assir, and Elkanah, Ebiasaph	Assir, and Elkanah and Abiasaph”	Ebiasaph
Assir		Assir
Tahath,etc		Tahath,etc

NOTE: The detail that the son of Kohath is called in one list Aminadab, and in the other Izhar. There is no real discrepancy here, since it is not unusual for the same person to have two names.

Abridgement of Genealogies

EZRA'S ANCESTORS

Ezra’s presentation of this genealogy has been abridged by the omission of six consecutive names.

1 Chronicles 6:13, 14		Ezra 7:1-5
1. Aaron		Aaron
2-7	the same	
8. Meraioth		Meraiot
9. Amariah		-----
10. Ahitub		-----
11. Zadok		-----
12. Ahimaaz		-----
13. Azariah		-----
14. Johanan		-----
15. Azariah		Azariah
16-21	the same	
22. Seraiah		Seraiah
Ezra		

THE ANCESTORS OF THOSE WHO LEFT BABYLON c.537 BC

“Now these were the heads of their paternal houses and the genealogical enrollment of those going up with me during the reign of Artaxerxes the king out of Babylon:

...of the sons (descendants) of Phineas, Gershom;

...of the sons (descendants) of Ithamar, Daniel;

...of the sons (descendants) of David, Hattush” (*Ezra 8:1*).

Here, if no abridgement of the genealogy is allowed, we should have a great-grandson (Gershom) and a grandson (Daniel) of Aaron, and a son of David coming up with Ezra from Babylon around 450 to 950 years later.

ANCESTORS OF MOSES AND AARON

A. The Exodus 6 genealogy of Moses and Aaron is stated as:

Verse 16: “...the names of the sons of **LEVI**...Gershom, **Kohath** and Merari.

Verse 17 The sons of Gershom...

Verse 18 And the sons of Kohath: **Amram**, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

Verse 19 And the sons of Merari...

Verse 20 And Amram took Jochebed his fathers' sister to wife; and she bore him **Aaron and Moses**: and the years of the life of Amram were 137."

The 4 links here from Jacob to Aaron must be an abridgement by the omitting of some of the less important names. Proof of this is accomplished by examination of parallel genealogies of the same period:

- 1) Bezaleel in 1 Chronicles 2:18-20. This records 7 generations from Jacob.
- 2) Joshua in 1 Chronicles 7:23-27. This records 11 generations from Jacob.

It is hardly conceivable that there should be 11 links in the line of descent from Jacob to Joshua, and only 4 from Jacob to Moses.

B. "These are the names of the sons of Levi...**Kohath**...The sons of Kohath: ... **Amram** ...married his father's sister Jochebed, and *she bore him Aaron and Moses*" (Ex. 6:16, 18, 20).

A surface view would seem to make Amram and Jochebed the literal immediate parents of Aaron and Moses until one realizes that **Kohath** was born *before the descent into Egypt* (Gen 46:8,11) and that the:

- ❖ "...time that the sons of **Israel lived in Egypt** was **430 years**. And at the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the host of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." (Ex. 12:40, 41).

Because Moses was 80 years old at the exodus (Ex. 7:7) he must have been born more than 350 years after Kohath, who therefore could not have been Moses' grandfather. The fact that Exodus 6:20 says "**Jochebed...bore him Aaron and Moses.**" does not prove, in Hebrew terms, that she was their actual mother in view of the statements about Jacob's sons:

- ❖ "These are the **sons of Zilpah**...*she bore to Jacob* these **16 persons**."

Yet only 2 were sons, the 14 others being grandsons and great-grandsons.

The greater part of the 430 yrs of Israelite history is left blank with only the key incidents described.

COULD IT BE THAT ISRAEL WAS IN EGYPT FOR ONLY 215 YEARS?

This argument is based on the Septuagint reading of *Exodus 12:40* as:

- ❖ "the sojourning in the land of Egypt, **and the land of Canaan** was 430 years."

This is then coupled with the statement in Galatians 3:16, 17 that: "*the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed*" in an attempt to extend the 430 years back to the time when the covenant was made with Abraham. This total of 215 years is obtained by adding:

25 years for Abraham's crossing the Euphrates to when Isaac was born. (Gen. 12:4; 21:5).

60 years to when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:6).

130 years which was Jacob's age when he went down to Egypt (Gen. 47:9).

However, the Septuagint is a somewhat less complete or reliable text than the Hebrew; and the extra words may have been entered by rabbis who were embarrassed about Israel's long captivity. Furthermore, it is likely that Galatians 3:17 refers to the Abrahamic covenant as ratified or confirmed (NKJ) "*to his seed*" in Jacob's time (Ps. 105:10) just prior to his entry into Egypt (Gen. 46:1-5).

Affirming Israel's 430 years to have been *only in Egypt* are God's words to Abram for him to:

- ❖ "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be *enslaved* and oppressed **four hundred years**" (Gen. 15:13).

Additionally:

- ❖ "...in the **fourth generation** they will *return here* (Canaan) for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16).

The disciple Steven later quotes this text:

- ❖ "*And after that they will come out and serve me in this place* (Canaan)." All of this contradicts the Septuagint addition of "**and the land of Canaan**" (Acts 7:6, 7)

The genealogy of Joshua in 1 Chronicles 7:23-27 records **11 generations** from Jacob as compared to the abbreviated genealogy of **4 generations** of Joshua's contemporary Moses. The 4 links in Exodus 6 from Jacob to Aaron must be an abridgement by the omitting of some of the less important names.

- 1) Bezaleel in 1 Chronicles 2:18-20, recording **7** generations from Jacob.
- 2) Joshua in 1 Chronicles 7:23-27 recording **11 generations** from Jacob.

As noted earlier, it is hardly conceivable that there should be 11 links in the line of descent from Jacob to Joshua, and only 4 from Jacob to Moses. These 11 generations adequately cover the 430 year dwelling in Egypt. So the unambiguous statement of:

- ❖ "...the dwelling of the sons of **Israel, who had dwelt in Egypt** was **430 years**" (*Ex. 12:40, 41*) is confirmed.

Numbers 1:1-47 states that the exodus total of men (excluding the tribe of Levi) leaving Egypt was 603,550. So the total population is estimated at 2.5 million. If the original population of only 70 that entered Egypt increased to 2.5 million in 215 years the growth rate would have been the extremely large figure of 5%. If, however, this population growth was spread over 430 years the figure would be 2.5%, a figure still more than twice the growth rate of modern western countries. Moreover, the 430 year time scale gives good correlation with the dating given by archaeologists for Egyptian history.

C. KOHATH'S 8,600 DESCENDANTS

- ❖ "*Of Kohath* was the family of **Amramites** and the family of the **Izharites** and the family of the **Hebronites** and the family of the **Uzzielites**...In the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, there were 8,600 persons performing the duties of the sanctuary" (*Num. 3:27, 28*).

Amram is obviously the father of the **Amramite** sub-division of the Kohathites comprising 8,600 male descendants *one year after the exodus*. Yet Moses' father certainly could not have been the ancestor of ¼ of this number (2,150) in Moses' own days. Hence, if no abridgement had taken place in the genealogy it would mean that the grandfather of Moses had, within Moses' lifetime, produced 8,600 male descendants, of which 2,750 were between the ages of 30 and 50. (*Num. 4:36*).

Some (Thiele and Keil) assume that there were 2 Amrams, one the son of Kohath, another, the father of Moses. A problem still arises from making Jochebed the mother of Moses. However, the structure of the genealogy in Exodus 6 is such as to make this hypothesis improbable.

Exodus 6:16:	names the 3 sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
Exodus 6:18:	gives the 4 sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
Exodus 6:20-22:	gives the children of Kohath's sons.
Exodus 6:23-24:	contain descendants of the next generation.
Exodus 6:25:	the generation next following.

So should we think that a different Amram, one belonging to a later generation than Izhar and Uzziel, is introduced to us? Really the regular structure of the genealogy makes this extremely unlikely, as well as the fact that the sons of Izhar and the sons of Uzziel, who are named here, were the contemporaries of Moses and Aaron. (*Num. 16:1, Lev. 10:4*). However, the problem is resolved by realizing that Amram and Jochebed were not the immediate parents, but the ancestors of Aaron and Moses. It may also be observed that in the actual history of the birth of Moses his parents are not called Amram and Jochebed. It is simply said that: "a certain man of the house of Levi went ahead and took a daughter of Levi" (*Ex. 2:1*).

NOTE: In Leviticus 10:4 Uzziel, Amram's brother, is called *The uncle of Aaron*. The Hebrew word here rendered uncle has, both from etymology and usage a wider sense. A great-great-grand uncle is still called an uncle in Ancient Near Eastern thinking.

EXAMPLE OF TRIBE, DIVISION, AND CLAN:

- ❖ "Korah the son (clan) of Izhar, the son (division) of Kohath, the son (tribe) of Levi" (*Num. 16:1*). *This telescopes out the remaining generations between Korah and Izhar. Similarly, Dathan and Abiram's genealogy is by clan (Eliab), division (Pallu), and tribe (Reuben).*

Jesus' Ancestors

This entire genealogy is summed up in verse 1 in two steps, "*Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham*" (*Matt. 1:1*) meaning that Jesus was a **descendant** of David who was a descendant of Abraham. This genealogy of Jesus is set out in a pattern of 3 groups of 14 names. There are omissions in the listing such that in verse 8 three names are dropped **between Joram and Uziah** viz. Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25), Joash (2 Kings 12:1), and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1). So when the record says "*Joram the father of Uziah*" it really demonstrates that Joram was, in

fact, the **forefather/ancestor** of Uzziah. Additionally, in Matthew 1:11 Josiah's son **Jehoiakim** (2 Kings 23:34: 1 Chron. 3:16) is **omitted** from the genealogy so that the phrase "*Josiah became father to Jeconiah*" means that Josiah became **grandfather of Jeconiah**. However, one theory states that because Josiah knew that his own sons were bad he appointed Jehoiachin at 8 years of age to become king (2 Chron. 36:9) in the event of his death. To do this he would have had to have adopted him as his full son; yet, 2 Kings 24:8 shows that he did not actually ascend the throne until he was 18 years old.

COMPARISON OF MATTHEW'S AND LUKE'S GENEALOGIES OF JESUS

From David to the exile: 14 generations in Matthew, but 21 generations in Luke.

From the exile to Jesus: 14 generations in Matthew, but 21 generations in Luke.

Although Matthew and Luke are following the descent through two different sons of David, namely, Solomon and Nathan respectively, they are both clearly working to patterns based on the number *seven*, with Luke's pattern being 21, 14, and 21. To obtain such a pattern Luke would have to leave out at least a few names. If this is so with Luke's listing then Matthew's must have been in an even more abbreviated form. Matthew's listing of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah shows that he did not simply copy the genealogical record of Joseph; but seems to indicate his intentional arrangement.

It is evident that these genealogies were not for the purpose of forming a chronology. It is a noticeable fact that Bible writers never put them to such a use themselves. They nowhere add up these numbers, nor suggest their summation. All such genealogies purely authenticate hereditary succession, inheritance rights, and biological descent. Similarly Matthew's 3 x 14 generations. Hence, it is not a chronology, but a mnemonic showing God's safeguarding of the Messianic line. The Messianic links were seldom the first to be born sons e.g. Abraham was 60 years younger than his oldest brother.

NOTE: In Matthew and Luke Zerubbabel is listed as the son of Shealtiel. But in 1 Chronicles 3:17-19 we find that he is actually the son of Pedaiah (Shealtiel's brother).

Dating Factors in Genesis

SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH WERE NOT TRIPLETS

If one were to take statements in these chapters on a surface reading, one would mistakenly believe that Shem, Ham and Japheth were triplets born to Noah in his 500th year (Gen. 5:32) and making it appear that 3 years were missing (Gen. 8:13 and 11:10). The *Word Biblical Commentary* explains the issue concerning when Shem was born:

10 On the names "Shem" and "Arpachshad," cf. 5:32; 10:22. "Two years after the flood." This is the last mention of the flood in Genesis (cf. 9:28; 10:1, 32). The narrative is now entering a new phase, leaving the primeval history behind. The mention of "two years" creates a problem for which there is no obvious solution, though many have been offered (cf. Cryer). According to 5:32, Noah was 500 years old when he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and 7:6 states that he was 600 years old when the flood came. This would appear to mean that Shem was 100 years old in the year of the flood, whereas here Shem is said to be 100 years old two years after the flood. Gunkel suggested that some of these figures are approximations—this is Cryer's (*Bib* 66 [1985] 247) approach to 5:32. Skinner held that this remark, "two years after the flood," is a gloss; Jacob, that ancient methods of computation explain it; Cassuto, that Japheth, being the oldest, was born in Noah's 500th year, and Shem, the second, about two years later. This would be the neatest solution, but whether 9:24 and 10:21 will bear this interpretation is uncertain.

ABRAM, NAHOR AND HARAN WERE NOT TRIPLETS

Also a surface reading would lead one to the mistaken conclusion that Abram, Nahor and Haran were triplets born to Terah when he was 70 years old (Gen. 11:26). However, careful examination of all of the data reveals a very different picture with Abram being 60 years younger than his oldest brother. This highlights the great amount of care that must be taken when examining these matters. However, the following Scriptures show that only the first of Terah's sons (not Abram) was born when Terah was 70 years old:

- ❖ "The days of Terah were 205 years. Then Terah died in Haran ... Abram was 75 years old when he went out from Haran" (*Gen. 11:32, 12:4*).

Soon after Terah died Abram departed for Canaan. So **Terah** was 205 less 75 = **130 years old** when Abram was born.

Genesis Chapters 5, 10 and 11 Are Abridged Genealogies

Similar to the above it becomes evident that great care must be exercised when we focus our attention on the genealogies of Genesis. In commenting on Genesis 11 *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* speaks of “*drastically abbreviated lists.*” The following factors are strong indicators that the Genesis 5, 10 and 11 genealogies are “*drastically abbreviated lists*” **and therefore have unaccounted for gaps.**

THE SYMMETRICAL STRUCTURE

As with Matthew and Luke with their pattern based on *sevens* so, too, with these chapters in Genesis there is symmetry and a regularity that seem to indicate an intentionally artificial arrangement. When Cainan is included they become a pattern of *tens*, no doubt to act as a mnemonic.

CAINAN IS MISSING FROM THE MASORETIC TEXT

In Genesis 10:22, 23 and 11: 12, 13 in the LXX and Luke 3:36 *Cainan* is positioned between Shelah and Arpaxad in this early genealogy. Yet his name is missing from the Masoretic text of our standard Bibles. With the restored name of Cainan in Genesis 11 the genealogy becomes a perfectly symmetrical pattern along with the genealogy of Genesis 5 namely:

Genesis 5 ...from Adam to Noah (Noah having 3 sons) is 10 generations

Genesis 11 ...from Shem to Terah (Terah having 3 sons) is 10 generations.

Each genealogy ends with the father having 3 sons. A parallel is seen in the genealogy in which Lamech is 7th from Adam (through Cain) and Lamech then has 3 sons (Gen. 4).

THE EBER/PELEG GAP

Because the genealogy in Genesis 11 is evenly divided at its 5th member **Peleg** by the statement that “*in his days the earth was divided*” (Gen. 10:25: and 11:18) and because the life spans of the patriarchs drop off drastically after this point a gap is implied between Eber and Peleg. The life spans of Peleg’s ancestors from Shem forward were: 602, 438, 433, and Eber 464 years. However, from Peleg forward the life spans drop to: 239, 239, 230, 148, and 275 years. This sharp decline in longevity of about 200 years indicates the likelihood of **an unknown number of generations between Eber and Peleg.** Failure to acknowledge abridgement of the genealogy and the **Eber/Peleg** gap leads to the traditional Tower of Babel dating as being c.2300 BC. However, this leads to the following absurdities:

- If this genealogy is complete, then Peleg, who marks the beginning of a new period - “the dividing of the earth,” would have died while all his ancestors from Noah onward were still living. So not only did Shem, Arpaxad, Cainan, Shelah, and Eber live at that time, but all the generations following as far as and including Terah. Yet strangely in Genesis 10:25 only Peleg is mentioned in relation to this major event.
- The 26 cities and all of the many cultures and civilizations in Canaan would have had to have been settled within about 200 years from the Tower of Babel event. However, flourishing ancient civilizations around the Middle-East, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Canaan were in existence when Abram left Ur and before he moved into Canaan in the early third millennium B.C. There Abram discovered very large and well established populations of Kenizites, Kenites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites. Very shortly afterwards he travelled to Egypt with its long line of Pharaoh’s. Possibly this was at the time of the 12th dynasty. Later he came into contact with Philistines who by then had built their latest civilization (An earlier one having been on Crete). Also the 5 cities civilization of Sodom was well established in Abraham’s time. All of this could not, realistically, have been so settled within the short time of about 200 years.
- The Genesis account of Abraham’s time gives the strong impression that the Flood was an event of the long distant past, and that the characters prior to and during that event were long gone.
- Chinese records go very much further back than 2269 B.C as the supposed date of the Tower of Babel dispersion. Such a high level of development is unlikely from this supposed time (200/300 years) until Abram crossed the Euphrates.
- The established dating of written languages reaches back to c.3300 B.C which places the Tower of Babel event at an earlier time and the Flood still earlier.

So the genealogies from Adam to Noah and from Shem to Abraham are abridged and therefore cover only the key events and characters with *nothing to suggest the length of time intervening between events* as seen by a comparison of the LXX/Luke 3 version and the Masoretic version of the Arphaxad/Cainan/Shelah genealogy.

THE FOCUS IS ON THE EFFECT OF SIN RATHER THAN ON CHRONOLOGY

Apart from the purpose of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 as demonstrating how God was guarding the Messianic line (Gen 3:15, Luke 3) there seems to be a focus on the effect of sin on human vitality and longevity particularly the fall in longevity after the flood and then later in Peleg's time. This data given concerning human longevity, however, makes no contribution to the formation of a chronology. So in view of the characteristics of biblical genealogies one can not legitimately use those that are recorded in Genesis chapters 5 and 11 to form chronologies. To do so would be a misuse of them.

We Cannot Assign a Date to Adam's Creation

"FATHER" OFTEN MEANS "ANCESTOR"

Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament notes that: "The Hebrew word translated "begot" does not necessarily mean "became the father of," but in these it means "became the ancestor of,"" p.53

"SON" OFTEN MEANS "DESCENDANT"

As shown in the first parts of this study the term "son" quite often means "descendant." A good example of this concerns the summary in Matthew 1:1 of Jesus' genealogy which is detailed as: "*Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" Clearly this means that Jesus was a **descendant** of David who was a descendant of Abraham. *So, too, the genealogies of Genesis chapters 5, 10 and 11 can be expressed as meaning that: When X had lived Y years, he became ancestor of a family line that included or culminated in Z.* For example **Genesis 5:9, 10** means:

When Enosh had lived for 90 years, and became the *ancestor* (father, grandfather or great-grandfather etc) of Kenan. Enosh lived after he became the *ancestor* of Kenan for 815 years, and became the ancestor to *other descendants* (male and female).

Therefore, at ninety years of age Enosh had an unnamed (*in the genealogy*) child who, as the start of Enosh's family, produced descendants who eventually produced the notable individual —Kenan. In this case the 90 years does not apply to **Kenan** and so **does not tell us when he was born** but rather it tells us when his ancestor was born. Evidently, Kenan did not even necessarily have to be born within the remaining 815 years of Enosh's life. This pattern must also be true for many of the key descendants of their relevant ancestors, particularly because of the author's purposeful abridgement of each of these genealogies. **So there can be no chronological starting point for the next person in line.** However, unless the naming of a child can be the prerogative of a grandfather, there are some who may have been of a direct father/son relationship:

- Seth because Eve and Adam named him (Gen. 4:25, 5:3).
- Enosh because Seth named him (Gen. 4:26).
- Noah because Lamech named him (Gen. 5:29).

COMPLETING THE SYMMETRY IN GENESIS 11

❖ "...the son of Shelah, the son of **Cainan**, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem..." (*Luke 3:35, 36*).

The LXX of Genesis 10:24 states: "Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Sala."

The LXX of Genesis 11:12, 13 states:

"And Arphaxad lived *a hundred and thirty five years* and begot (*became the ancestor of*) **Cainan**. And Arphaxad lived after he had begotten Cainan, *four hundred years*, and begot (*became the ancestor of*) sons and daughters, and died.

And **Cainan** lived a hundred and thirty years and begot (*became the ancestor of*) Sala; And **Cainan** lived after he had begotten Sala *three hundred and thirty years*, and begot (*became the ancestor of*) sons and daughters, and died."

NASB (from the Masoretic text) of Genesis 11:12, 13:

"Arpachshad lived *thirty-five years*, and became the father (*ancestor*) of Shelah; and Arpachshad lived **four hundred and three years** after he became the father (*ancestor*) of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters."

NOTE: 1 Chronicles 1:24 also does not have the name of Cainan inserted between Arpachshad and Shelah in either the Masoretic or the LXX texts. In overall terms the Masoretic text is far superior to the LXX. But that does not mean that the LXX could not be the correct one in the case of Genesis 11:12, 13.

However, because all copies of the inspired Luke account include “Cainan” it is more likely to be the correct one than the much later Masoretic text which could have been subject to some scribal error. Furthermore, it is easier to omit a name than to insert one by accident, and the number of years involved in the LXX up to the two births is 265. Subtracting the number of years involved in the Masoretic account of 35 years gives a difference between the two accounts of 230 years. So if we add in these extra years to account for Cainan we extend the traditional dating of 4004 BC (Ussher) for Adam’s creation to 4234 BC. So conservative scholar Merrill Unger says:

The total length of the period from the creation of man to the flood and from the flood to Abraham is *not specified* in Scripture. That the genealogies in Genesis chapters 5 and 11 are most certainly drastically shortened and contain names that are *highly selective* is suggested by the fact that each list contains only ten names, ten from Adam to Noah and ten from Shem to Abraham (author’s italics).

Introductory Guide to the Old Testament, p.193

Even Young Earth Creationist scholars Whitcomb and Morris demonstrate the impossibility of using Genesis chapters 5 and 11 as a chronology. In *The Genesis Flood* Appendix 2 on pp. 474-489 they show that:

1. The Messianic links were seldom firstborn sons.
2. It is significant that the number of years were not totalled.
3. Cainan should be included to complete the symmetry of Genesis 11.
4. The information concerning each patriarch is irrelevant to forming a strict chronology.
5. The postdiluvian patriarchs could not have been contemporaries of Abram.
6. The Bible implies a great antiquity for the Tower of Babel.

Illustration of Abridgement of the Genealogies in Genesis Chapters 5, 10 and 11

In his book *The Old Testament Documents—Are They Reliable & Relevant?* Walter Kaiser Jr. gives the following illustration:

Let me suppose, for the purposes of this illustration, that my own father (“A”) was one of these VIP’s (very important persons) mentioned in the Genesis accounts. Let us say that he had four sons born (to give biblical types of numbers) on his 100th, 120th, 140th and 160th birthdays. Let us say that I was born on my father’s 100th birthday and that it was through my son’s son, six generations removed, that the next VIP (“B”) came. In biblical shorthand, then, my father (“A”) would have begotten my son’s son, six generations removed (“B”) when he was 100, for on his 120th, 140th and 160th birthdays he would have begotten my brothers’ lines of descent and not the next VIP.

Summary of Reasons Why We Should Not Form a Chronology

1. Noting that Jesus was not the Genesis creator (Isa 44:24, please see Volume 1: STUDIES 10 to 14) he certainly seemed unaware of a date when Adam was created (Matt 19:4). If Genesis 5 and 11 were meant for chronological purposes would Jesus, if he had pre-existed, not have used this information in reference to end-time events?
2. If the purpose of Genesis 5 and 11 was to form a chronology, then why were these figures never totalled or a total stated elsewhere in the Scriptures. Nowhere do we find a specific statement of the total length of time from Adam to the Flood and from the Flood to Abram. However, such statements do exist for the period from the descent into Egypt to the Exodus (Exod. 12:40), and from the Exodus to the building of the temple (1 Kings 6:1).
3. The ages given in Genesis 5 and 11 for when each patriarch died serve no purpose toward constructing a chronology. So why would Moses give this detail if he was laying the basis for a chronology to be formed. Yet these age details do serve the purpose of showing the decline in human longevity.

4. Genesis 5 and 11 are evidently constructed so that the genealogies are abridged to form patterns of ten. So numerous individuals in the biological lines must have been omitted.
5. It is hardly likely that only Adam, Cain, Seth and 15 descendants with their brothers and sisters formed the entire population of the earth prior to the flood.
NOTE: Jude 14 Literally reads: "The seventh from Adam, Enoch." and refers to the Genesis 5 genealogical list wherein Enoch is **listed** seventh but is not necessarily the seventh human male to exist.
6. There is uncertainty as to whether or not the 230 years concerning Cainan according to Luke 3 and the LXX should be added in.
7. The Eber/Peleg gap means that there are an unknown number of generations unaccounted for in this gap.
8. Unlike the names for individuals in later Bible times, those of Genesis 5 and 11 are not composites of "el" or "Yah" as there are in later times. This gives the impression of the post-Abrahamic times as being at a great distance in time from those of the early patriarchs and not just a few hundred years.
9. There is uncertainty about which ancestors were fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers or even great-great-grandfathers etc. of the named sons. So it cannot be known for sure when the Son mentioned in each case was born.

Important Individuals and Human Longevity Are Demonstrated in Genesis 5 and 11

The greater part of Israel's 430 years of dwelling in Egypt is left blank in the biblical record. Only a few key incidents are recorded at the beginning of the 430 years. These were connected with the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt and their settling there. At the end of the period mention is made of important incidents concerning Moses which led to the Exodus. Apart from these exceptions no account is given of this 430 year period. The interval is covered only by a genealogy which extends from Levi to Moses and Aaron and their contemporaries among their immediate relatives (Exod. 6:16-26). This genealogy records the principal line of descent **and gives us the length of each man's life**, namely, Levi (137 years, v. 16), Kohath (133 years, v. 18), Amram (137 years, v. 20). As shown earlier the genealogy from Levi to Moses did not record all the links in that line of descent, and so was not for the purpose of creating a chronology. As with the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies this one in Exodus also has the purpose of demonstrating the longevity of those named. Because Moses wrote both of these sets of genealogies we may rightly make the inference that from the similarity of construction there must be a similarity of purpose.

THE STAB IN THE DARK CALCULATION

Basing these calculations on the reasonable certainty that Cainan should be included, the 230 years attributed to Arpaxad and Cainan from the LXX must be included. Also an estimated allowance of 1500 years, for the drop of 200 years in lifespan to have occurred from the Eber/Peleg marker, should be included. So the totals of Father's ages when the named descendant or his ancestor was born are:

From Adam to flood	1,656 years
The flood to Abram's birth (c. 2,200 BC. See STUDY 12)	352
Add years to include Cainan	230
Allowance for Eber/Peleg generations	<u>1,500</u>
Total years	3,738

Because it is known that biblical genealogies range between 10% and 90% complete we can make an average calculation based on these percentages. But as *Unger's says, these are "drastically abbreviated lists"* and **so the idea that they are 90% complete is very unlikely.**

- If the genealogies are 70% complete then it is 5,340 years from Adam to Abram
- If the genealogies are 40% complete then it is 9,345 years from Adam to Abram
- If the genealogies are 10% complete then it is 37,380 years from Adam to Abram

So with the birth of Abram at c. 2,200 BC., then, on the above calculations, Adam's creation could have occurred around 7,540 BC., or 11,545 BC., or 39,580 BC.

NOTE: The Eber/Peleg gap could be much larger than the proposed 1500 years for the average age at death to have dropped by 200 years.

However, the point of this exercise is to show that one should not attempt to form a dated chronology and that there is a reasonable limit as to how far back in time we might imagine that Adam was created. In *The Genesis Flood* Whitcomb and Morris state:

To stretch the genealogy of Genesis 11 to cover a period of over 100,000 years is to do violence to the chronological framework of all subsequent Bible history and prophecy...The incongruity of insisting upon 100,000 years between Noah and Abraham...becomes obvious, p. 485.

Conclusion

It must be acknowledged that most of the research on this subject was accomplished in 1890 by **William Henry Green** who spoke of:

considerations which seem to me to justify the belief that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 were not intended to be used, and **cannot properly be used, for the construction of a chronology.**

Comparative analysis of overlapping genealogies throughout the Bible suggests that they may range anywhere from about 90% complete at best to 10% complete at worst. Also we have noted **significant abbreviation of most of the biblical genealogies** by the omission of whoever was deemed unessential to the immediate purpose of the writer. There is no explanation given for these exclusions. Although the earliest readers were perhaps able to fill in the gaps for themselves from their own knowledge of the times, this is not the case today. For those who have no additional information, the key to such understanding is lost. In other cases we are able to understand them, because the information necessary to make them intelligible is supplied from parallel passages of Scripture.

In particular Genesis chapters 5 and 11 have been wrongly viewed as a means to arrive at a chronology rather than the specially structured genealogies that they are, and for the purpose of teaching about God's protection of the Messianic line and the results of mankind's sinful behaviour. The fact that there are no chronological markers in the rest of the Scriptures that specify the total length of time from Adam to the Flood and from the Flood to Abram should put us on alert. Therefore we must conclude that it is impossible to arrive at even an approximate date for either the Flood or a date for the creation of Adam.

www.biblicaltruthseekers.co.uk

§