

# THE GENEALOGY FROM ADAM TO NOAH

## INTRODUCTION

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- The primary purpose of the genealogy in Genesis 5 is to connect Adam to Noah, through the godly line of Seth
- Two recurring phrases in the genealogy (“he had other sons and daughters” and “and he died”) demonstrate two contrasting realities: 1) the need for the creation mandate to be fulfilled (i.e. “be fruitful and multiply” – Gen 1:28); 2) the promise of death for sin (“you shall surely die – Gen 2:17)
- Each reference to a patriarch in Genesis 5 follows the same pattern:
  1. It states his name
  2. It gives his age at the birth of his first son
  3. It states the length of his remaining life (with a statement that he begat other children)
  4. It lists his age at death
- Genesis 5 contains the second *toledot* in Genesis
- The Hebrew word *toledot* (“these are the generations of...this is the account of...this is the history of”) appears 11 times throughout the book of Genesis
- *Toledot* is the story or genetic line that came from – *generated* from – a person or event
- *Toledot* can have slightly different meanings depending on the context:
  - In Genesis 2:4, it is used somewhat metaphorically as “heaven and earth” don’t literally procreate...it refers to the events that came about with the advent of heaven and earth
  - In the other instances in Genesis, *toledot* identifies both the progeny of these men and the stories that ensued in their time

| Section | Topic  | Reference   |
|---------|--|---|
| I.      | Book Preface: Creation Narrative   | 1:1–2:3   |
| II.     | The Genealogy of the Heavens and the Earth   | 2:4–4:26  |
| III.    | The Book of the Genealogy of Adam  | 5:1–6:8   |
| IV.     | The Genealogy of Noah<br>And the Genealogy of Noah’s Sons  | 6:9–9:29<br>10:1–11:9   |
| V.      | The Genealogy of Shem<br>And the Genealogy of Terah<br>And the Genealogy of Ishmael<br>And the Genealogy of Isaac<br>And the Genealogy of Esau | 11:10–26<br>11:27–25:11<br>25:12–18<br>25:19–35:29<br>36:1–8; 36:9–37:1 |
| VI.     | The Genealogy of Jacob   | 37:2–50:26  |

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- The recurrence of the word *toledot* is critical to understanding the structure of Genesis as each instance marks the heading of a new section

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<sup>1</sup> Chart taken from Terry Mortenson, *Searching for Adam: Genesis and the Truth About Man’s Origin*, 24.

- “The *toledot* heading announces the historical development from the ancestor (or beginning point) and could be translated paraphrastically ‘this is what became of \_\_\_\_\_,’ or ‘‘this is where it started from’’ (with reference to the following subject.)”<sup>2</sup>
- Each *toledot* contributes greatly to the theological message of Genesis...namely the narrowing process of God’s chosen line through which He would bring His Promised Deliverer

Adam → Noah → Noah’s sons → Shem → Terah/Abraham → (Ishmael) Isaac → (Esau) Jacob

- This structure is the very fabric around which the whole book of Genesis has been constructed
- This unifies the book as a whole...as one historical narrative...thereby contradicting those who say that Genesis 1-11 is myth whereas Genesis 12-50 is historical narrative
- It shows that the early chapters of Genesis are just as much history as the later chapters

## KEY ISSUES IN THIS GENEALOGY

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### The Summary Introduction

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**Genesis 5:1-2** ~ This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

- Moses refers to the creation of mankind by calling both male and female, “man”
- In this restatement of the original creation of mankind, Moses reaffirms that God “created them male and female”
- This further corroborates that sex is binary...either male or female
- The fact that God “named them Man” proves God’s dominion over mankind in a similar way that Adam naming the animals proved his dominion and vice-regency over creation

### The Repeated Use of the Phrase “and he died”

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- This phrase occurs eight times in vv. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31
- The fact that each of the pre-flood patriarchs died shows the folly of Satan’s blasphemous lie (“you surely will not die” – Gen 3:4)
- “Adam did not die physically the moment he ate the fruit – spiritual death, separation from God, was the immediate result – but according to 5:5, ‘he died.’ The same thing – ‘and he died’ – is said of seven other patriarchs in this chapter. Death reigned, and God’s word was fully vindicated.”<sup>3</sup>
- There can be no doubt that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin (Rom 5:12)

### The Birth of Seth

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**Genesis 5:3-5** ~ When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

<sup>2</sup> Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 72-73.

<sup>3</sup> John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, 105.

- The dismal story of the moral failures of the line of Cain (Gen 4) is followed by the good news of the birth of Seth
- His name means “the appointed one...the compensation...the substitute,” signifying that he was thought of as taking the place of Abel who had been slain (cf. Gen 4:25)
- The birth of Seth was crucial since Can obviously could not fulfill the promise of Genesis 3:15
- It is noteworthy that Seth was born in Adam’s “likeness, according to his image”
- These same two terms (“likeness” and “image”) were used in Gen 1:26, indicating that there was a parallel between Adam being created in the “image and likeness” of God and Seth being born in the “image and likeness” of Adam
- The image of God in man was passed on to subsequent generations through the act of procreation
- “The spiritual capacities that were imparted to Adam and Eve, that endowed them with the ability and responsibility to represent God on earth, were passed on by natural reproduction. Even in a cursed world human beings are in the image of God (as Gen. 9:6 reiterates) and may yet serve him and enjoy his blessing.”<sup>4</sup>

## Enoch Walked with God

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**Genesis 5:21-24** ~ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

- Only Noah and Enoch are said to have “walked with God” (cf. Gen 6:9), a statement that denotes intimate fellowship with the Lord
- This one exception to the reign of death in Genesis 5 provides a ray of hope for the human race, showing that death does not have the final answer
- Because he walked with God, Enoch was taken directly to heaven without having to die
- He is the only one in the chapter who is exempt from the repeated statement “and he died”

**Hebrews 11:5** ~ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

- Elijah was the only other person who by passed death by being taken to heaven

**2 Kings 2:11** ~ As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

- Enoch’s godly character is evident that, before the Flood, he prophesied about Christ’s second coming in judgment
- He served as God’s spokesman

**Jude 14-15** ~ It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

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<sup>44</sup> Allen Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 174.

- Walking with God is a common description of fellowship and obedience with the Lord, something that must be true of all believers of all ages

**Ephesians 4:1** ~ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

**Ephesians 4:17** ~ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

**Colossians 1:10** ~ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**Colossians 2:6** ~ Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

- “The phrase is full of meaning. Enoch walked with God because he was His friend and liked His company, because he was going in the same direction as God, and had no desire for anything but what lay in God’s path. We walk with God when He is in all our thoughts; not because we consciously think of Him at all times, but because He is naturally suggested to us by all we think of; as when any person or plan or idea has become important to us, no matter what we think of, our thought is always found recurring to this favorite object, so with the godly man everything has a connection with God and must be ruled by that connection. When some change in his circumstance is thought of, he has first of all to determine how the proposed change will affect his connection with God – will his conscience be equally clear, will he be able to live on the same friendly terms with God and so forth. When he falls into sin he cannot rest till he has resumed his place at God’s side and walks again with Him. This is the general nature of walking with God; it is a persistent endeavour to hold all our life open to God’s inspection and in conformity to His will; a readiness to give up what we find does cause any misunderstanding between us and God; a feeling of loneliness if we have not some satisfaction in our efforts at holding fellowship with God, a cold and desolate feeling when we are conscious of doing something that displeases Him...it is to open to Him all our purposes and hopes, to seek His judgment on our scheme of life and idea of happiness – it is to be on thoroughly friendly terms with God.”<sup>5</sup>

## The Birth of Noah

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**Genesis 5:28-32** ~ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. 29 Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.” 30 Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. 31 So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died. 32 Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

- The birth of Noah also injects another ray of hope into this otherwise sad chapter
- The days before Noah’s birth must have been difficult one since Lamech named his son “Noah,” meaning “to rest, to lie down, consolation”...his name is related to a Hebrew word meaning “comfort”
- Verse 29 explains that Lamech hoped his son would give them rest from the curse on the ground (Gen 3)
- This would happen in a couple of ways:
  1. A son would be able to join in the labors of farming, giving Lamech relief from years of manual labor
  2. In contrast to the world’s pre-flood evil, Noah would represent righteousness and bring rest and peace in the midst of God’s judgment, which he did by leading people and animals through a time of judgment and into a new world
- Thus, Noah’s life brought the prospect for comfort under the curse, but not in the way Lamech thought

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<sup>5</sup> Marcus Dods, *Book of Genesis*, 51-53.

- Noah's sons are not listed in birth order: Japheth was the oldest (cf. Gen 10:21)...Ham was the youngest (cf. Gen 9:24)
- Shem is mentioned first since it was through him that God's Messiah would come, proving God's faithfulness in His promise of a chosen seed

## KEY QUESTIONS RAISED BY THIS GENEALOGY

### Were These Historical Individuals?

- There is nothing in this genealogy to view these records as anything other than accurate history
- The records are given just as one would expect for a historical record
- Both OT and NT writers clearly accepted the individuals in this genealogy as historical fact

**1 Chronicles 1:1-4** ~ Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

**Luke 3:36-38** ~ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

### Pre-Flood Patriarchs

| Patriarch  | Year of Birth after Creation | Age at Birth of Next Patriarch | Year of Death |
|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Adam       | 1                            | 130                            | 930           |
| Seth       | 130                          | 105                            | 1042          |
| Enos       | 235                          | 90                             | 1140          |
| Cainan     | 325                          | 70                             | 1235          |
| Mahalaleel | 395                          | 65                             | 1290          |
| Jared      | 460                          | 162                            | 1422          |
| Enoch      | 622                          | 65                             | 987*          |
| Methuselah | 687                          | 187                            | 1656**        |
| Lamech     | 874                          | 182                            | 1651          |
| Noah       | 1056                         | 500                            | 2006          |

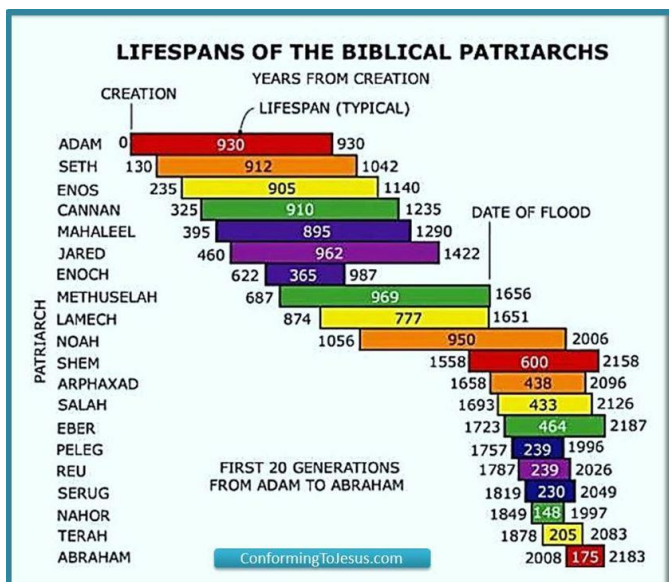
\* Enoch was translated to heaven without dying

\*\* Methuselah died the year the Flood came

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### Did Adam and His Descendants Really Live 900+ Years?

- Yes, which is sadly abbreviated when we remember that God initially created us to live forever



- Seven of the first 10 patriarchs lived more than 900 years
- The average longevity of those who lived pre-flood was 912 years, with Methuselah living the longest at 969 years
- Recorded ages at the births of various children ranged from 65 to 500 years old (see previous chart)
- For 1500 years after creation, men lived such long lives that most were either contemporaries of Adam or personally knew someone who was (i.e. Noah's father Lamech lived at the same time as Adam)
- During the 500 years following the Flood, there was a progressive decline in life spans with Abraham living only 175 years

<sup>6</sup> Chart taken from Henry Morris, *The Book of Beginnings*, 214.

- Their longevity has convinced some scholars that the entire narrative is mythical
- They argue that each name in the list is a dynasty rather than an individual
- Or they argue that “year” means “month”...but if that is the case, then Seth fathered Enos when he was 105 months (about 9 years old)
- There is no reason to take the ages of these men as anything other than historical fact
- Some possible reasons for their longevity:
  1. Some have suggested that God blessed Seth’s line (through whom the Messiah would come) with especially long life as a result of their godliness and obedience (but is likely that everyone pre-flood lived several hundred years, not just Seth’s line)
  2. If the canopy theory is true, then the water layer around the earth may have protected them from harmful UV rays
  3. Following the flood, there was a change from the earth being primarily a tropical environment to one in which 30% of the earth was covered in ice...this would have adversely affected life spans
  4. Prior to the flood, the effect of genetic mutations and genetic bottlenecks (occurs when significant portions of the population die or become isolated which results in a major reduction of genetic variety) was likely less than after the flood, making human beings more and more susceptible to death and disease and, therefore, drastically reduced lifespans
  5. This may just have been God’s plan to fill up the earth in accordance with the creation mandate

### **Are There Gaps in the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies?**

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- Although genealogies are often thought of as containing only boring details, Genesis 5 and 11 are two of the most controversial chapters in the Bible
- These two chapters are at the center of the debate about the age of the earth
- “Because so many Christians and Christian leaders have accepted the secular dates for the origin of man and the universe, they must work out ways that such dates can somehow be incorporated into the Bible’s historical account. In other words, they must convince people that the Bible’s genealogical records do not present an unbroken line of chronology.”<sup>7</sup>
- The motivation for postulating gaps in the Genesis genealogies is to accommodate evolutionists’ belief that human life is millions of years old
- “Most of these scholars believe that genealogies experience fluidity over time; that is, names are often added, omitted or changed in form...Thus, in their view, these genealogies do not contradict the generally accepted and quite old dates for the age of the earth and mankind.”<sup>8</sup>
- When omissions of names are made, this fluidity results in the compression of genealogical records, namely a shortened, abbreviated list
- This is the non-chronogenealogy view: “A number of modern historical-critical scholars think the Genesis 5 genealogy is not an accurate historical record. They see it as the result of an ancient Mesopotamian list of legendary heroes (either a king list, sage list, hero list, or a list of tribal ancestors) that has experienced so much fluidity during the long process of transmission from one generation to the next that most or all of its historical and chronological value, if it ever had any, has been lost. They express similar views concerning the Genesis 11 genealogy. For these scholars, the early Genesis genealogies, if they every were genealogies, are discontinuous; this is, they contain generational omissions or gaps.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Larry Pierce and Ken Ham, “Are There Gaps in the Genesis Genealogies” in *The New Answers Book 2*, 173.

<sup>8</sup> Travis Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?” in *Coming to Grips With Genesis*, 283.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 284.

- Even many evangelical scholars hold a similar view (Gleason Archer, Gordon Wenham, Derek Kidner, John J. Davis)
- They differ with the historical-critical scholars in that they believe the individuals listed in the genealogies are historical, but agree with them that there are gaps in the genealogies due to fluidity
- One of their primary arguments is that the word “begat/became” can skip generations, allowing for names to be dropped from genealogies thereby creating chronological gaps
- For example, they claim that Genesis 5:6-7 says, “Seth lived 105 years, and begat **an ancestor of Enosh**. Then Seth lived 807 years after he begat **an ancestor of Enosh**, and he begat other sons and daughters.”
- They claim that the oft repeated formula “X fathered Y” should be interpreted to mean that X fathered the line leading to Y, leaving room for any number of generations between X and Y
- It is true that some Biblical genealogies are abbreviated by skipping generations
- In the OT, *ben* (“son”) can mean “son, grandson, or descendant,” and *’ab* (“father”) can mean “, father, grandfather, or ancestor”
- Sometimes a man is called the “son” of a distant but significant forefather
- For example, the genealogy in Ezra 7:1-6 is abbreviated when compared with the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6:4-15 (six generations from Chronicles are omitted from Ezra)
- However, it is important to note that the abbreviated version in Ezra uses the word *ben* (“son of”) instead of *yalad* (“begat”) used in the complete genealogy in 1 Chronicles
- The word *yalad*, when it occurs in the hiphil voice, always expresses a direct cause and effect relationship between the subject (the father) and the object (the son)
- This indicates that the father and son are directly related, not distantly related
- When the hiphil voice of *yalad* is used in genealogies, there is not a single known case of any skipped generations
- Nowhere in the OT is *yalad* used in any other way than to mean a single-generation relationship...i.e. it never skips generations
- In the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies, it is the word *yalad* (“begat/became”) that is used, rather than the terms *ben* (“son”) or *’ab* (“father”)
- Thus, in the Genesis chronogenealogies, “begat/became” indicates immediate descent (i.e. there are no gaps in these genealogies)
- In other words, there is nothing in these chapters that indicates that the word “begat” means something other than a literal father/son relationship
- Therefore, this argument cannot be used to support gaps in the Genesis chronogenealogies
- This is because “one of the most widely accepted principles of interpretation, especially among those who employ the grammatical-historical method, is that the author’s intended meaning is the correct meaning of the text. How does one know the author’s intended meaning? His meaning is normally the most obvious sense of his statements as determined by his target audience and read in context. Throughout Jewish and church history up until the time of Lyell and Darwin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, virtually all believers, the target audience, understood Genesis 5 and 11 as continuous genealogies which recorded a name from every generation between Adam and Abraham and the number of years between those generations. To change the wording of the formula from, ‘When X and lived Y years, he became the father of Z’ to ‘When X had lived

Y years, he begat someone in the line of descent that led to Z,' changes the author's intended meaning and constitutes a major violation of a well-established hermeneutical principle."<sup>10</sup>

- In Matthew 1:1-17, Matthew has clearly left out some names in his genealogy (for a literary purpose), as seen by comparing it to the OT history (but all the people are equally historical all the way back to Abraham, who is first mentioned in Genesis 11)
- Matthew 1:8 omits Ahaziah, JOash, and Amaziah, going directly from Joran to Uziah
- Matthew 1:11 skips Jehoiakim between Josiah and Jeconiah
- But it is exegetically unsound to read gaps in Matthew's genealogy into the Genesis genealogies
- "Here, the Greek word for *begat* is *gennao*, which shows flexibility not found in the Hebrew word and does allow for the possibility that a generation or more may be skipped. The only way we would know that a generation has been skipped is by checking the Hebrew passages. However, it is linguistically deceptive to use the Greek word for *begat* to define the Hebrew word for *begat*. Also, Matthew 1 is intentionally incomplete when reading Matthew 1:1 and Matthew 1:17, merely giving 14 generations between key figures of Abraham, David, and Jesus."<sup>11</sup>
- Further evidence that there are no gaps in the Genesis 5 genealogy:<sup>12</sup>
  1. There are no missing generations between Adam and Seth, since Seth is a direct replacement for Abel, whom Cain murdered (Genesis 4:25).
  2. There are no missing generations between Seth and Enosh since Seth named him (Genesis 4:26).
  3. Jude says Enoch was the seventh from Adam (Jude 14), so there are no missing generations between Adam and Enoch.
  4. Lamech named Noah, so there are no missing generations there (Genesis 5:29)
  5. Some Hebrew scholars believe that the name *Methuselah* means "when he dies it is sent," referring to the Flood. Assuming no gaps in the chronology, Methuselah died the same year the Flood began. Some Jews believed that God gave Noah time to mourn the death of Methuselah, whom they believe died a week before the Flood began (Genesis 7:4). If this is so, then no missing generations can be inserted here. If this were not the case, then this is the only place in Genesis 5 one might attempt to shoehorn the missing...generations!
- Interestingly, the biblical math backs up the notion that Methuselah died the same year the Flood occurred
- Methuselah fathered Lamech when he was 187 years old (Gen 5:25)
- Lamech fathered Noah when he was 182 years old (Gen 5:28)
- The Flood occurred when Noah was 600 years old (Gen 7:6)
- Doing the math... $187 + 182 + 600 = 969$ , which is the age Methuselah was when he died (Gen 5:27)
- The only conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no gaps in the genealogical record in Genesis 5 and 11...as a result, these genealogies form a continuous linear genealogy from Adam to Abraham
- Both are unique among all genealogies in Scripture because they include both chronological (time) and genealogical (parentage) information
- These chronogenealogies are reliable God-given historical records of name, age, birth, and death information for direct father-son pairs
- Thus, the tightly interlocking structure of these genealogies is compelling evidence that the lines of descent are continuous with no gaps

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, "Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?" in *Coming to Grips With Genesis*, 303-304.

<sup>11</sup> Pierce and Ham, "Are There Gaps in the Genesis Genealogies" in *The New Answers Book 2*, 176.

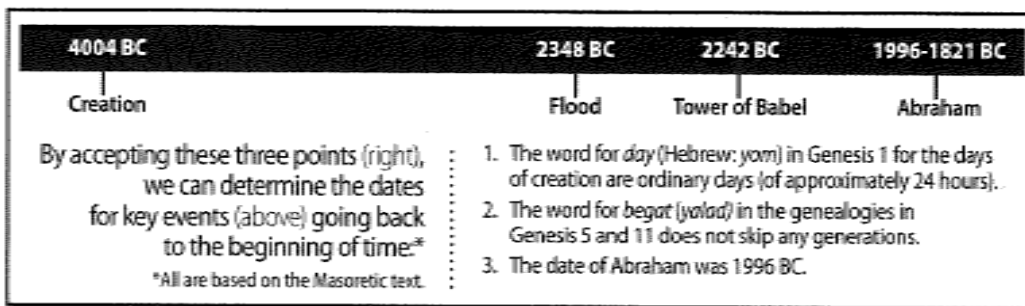
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.



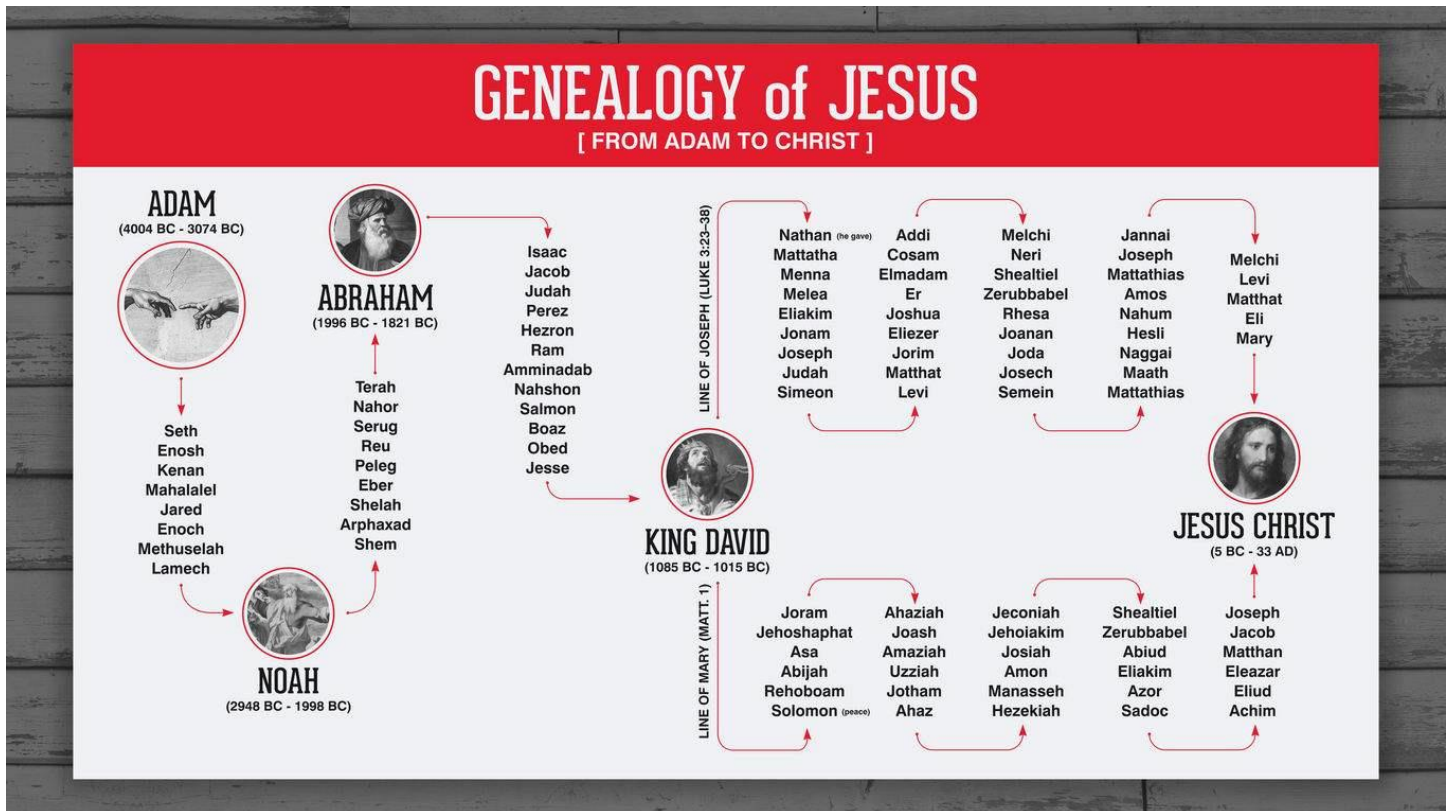
## What Does this Imply About the Age of the Earth?

- Despite the claim by old-earth proponents that the universe is about 14 billion years old and the earth is about 4.5 billion years old, a straightforward addition of the chronogenealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 points to the biblical age of the earth and universe of about 6,000 years
- It results in a date for the beginning around 4000 BC using the following basic math:

5 days before the creation of Adam  
 + ~ 2,000 years from Adam to Abraham  
 + ~ 2,000 years from Abraham to Christ  
 + ~ 2,000 years from Christ to today  
 ~ 6,000 years



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<sup>13</sup> Chart taken from Larry Pierce and Ken Ham, "Are There Gaps in the Genesis Genealogies" in *The New Answers Book 2*, 175.