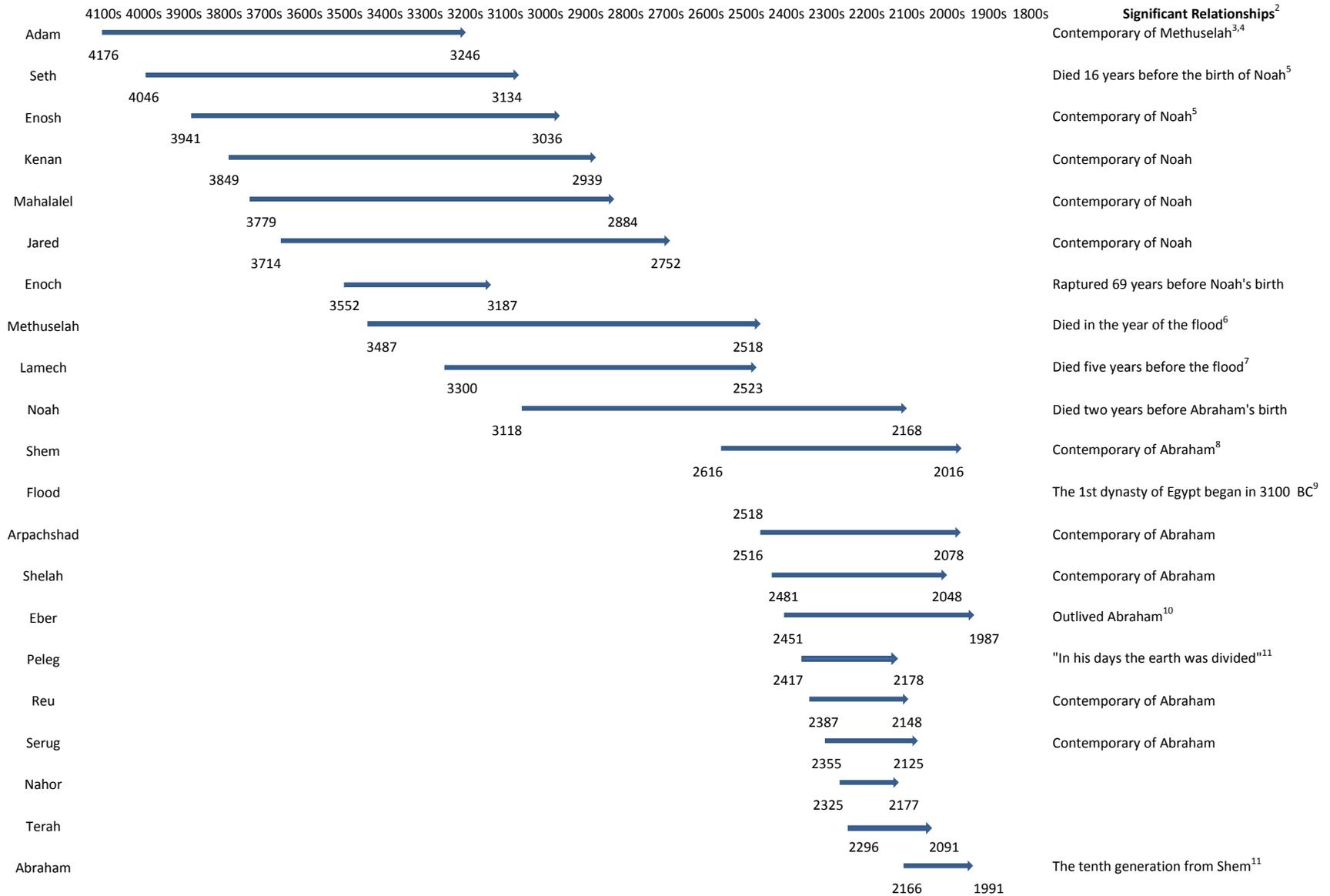


The Chronology of Adam to Abraham according to the Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11¹



End Notes

¹ The chart is a slight modification of one by Eugene Merrill in "Chronology," *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 119. Merrill has Shem born when Noah was 500 years old. Genesis 5:32 states that "after Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham and Japheth." Then Genesis 7:6 indicates, "Noah was 600 years old when the flood waters came upon the earth." However, Genesis 11:10 says, "When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood." This means that Shem could not have been Noah's first born son when Noah was 500. Genesis 9:24 refers to Ham as Noah's "youngest son," so the question is who was born first, Shem or Japheth? Here the key passage is Genesis 10:21, "To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born" (ESV). The interpretational issue is whether the Hebrew word *hagadol* "elder" or "eldest" modifies "brother" or "Japheth." Wenham points out that "LXX, Symmachus, Rashi, possibly the MT, and Cassuto suppose... that 'oldest' modifies 'Japheth'" (Genesis 1-15, vol. 1 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, 228). Wenham concludes that "probably the best solution is Cassuto's, who holds that the order Shem, Ham, and Japheth is not chronological but euphonic. In pairs of words Hebrew tends to put the short word first..., hence 'Shem, Ham and Japheth' came more easily than Japheth, Shem, and Ham.... (Genesis 1-15, 291). This would be in keeping with Genesis 10 where Japheth the oldest is listed first and the pattern in Genesis of the firstborn being replaced by the son born second.

Therefore if Japheth was the first-born, he was born when Noah was 500. Then according to Genesis 11:10, Shem was born two years later when Noah was 502. Since Merrill has Shem born when Noah was 500, two years have been added to each of Merrill's dates from Shem to Adam.

² Adapted from Merrill, "Chronology," 119.

³ Eugene Merrill states that "... unless one discounts scientific anthropology altogether, even the most conservative Bible students are persuaded that humans appeared on the scene thousands of years before the earliest date allowed by a 'closed' chronology (c. 5000 B.C.). He goes on, "...the emergence of urban civilization as early as 7000 B.C., a view held across the whole spectrum of biblical scholarship, also necessitates something other than a closed chronology ("Chronology," 119). Of course, a universal flood in 2518 B.C. would have destroyed all earlier evidence of human existence so it is virtually impossible to compress all of human history into the four and a half millennia since 2518 B.C.

⁴ If there are no gaps in the chronology, Adam was a contemporary of Methuselah, their lives spanned the time from creation (4149 B.C.) to the flood (2518 B.C.).

⁵ Genesis 4:25-26 states, "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth.... To Seth also a son was born and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD." Since this beginning "to call upon the name of the LORD" is in the godly line of Seth, one should be able to assume that this calling upon God continued at least throughout the lifetimes of Seth and Enosh. However, since Enosh was a contemporary of Noah, it does not make sense that Noah would be singled out as the one godly man on earth (Gen 6:9). However, the story line makes much more sense if there are gaps in the genealogy and Enosh was not a contemporary of Noah.

⁶ Was the person whom God had rewarded with the longest life an unbeliever who died in the flood? If he was a believer, why was he not invited on the ark?

⁷ The one quotation of Lamech in the Bible is a faith statement, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands" (Gen 5:29). Since Lamech died just five years before the flood, why is Noah described as the only person who "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen 6:8)? Why was Lamech not invited on the ark?

⁸ Merrill asks, "Why God would have called Abram from paganism when Shem, a survivor of the flood, was living and available is puzzling, as is the fact that Abraham is considered to be an exceptionally old man at 175 (Gen 25:7-8) when two of his contemporaries died in those days at 600 [Shem] and 464 [Eber] years of age

respectively! The impression clearly is that Shem and Eber long antedated Abraham. Yet strict adherence to the genealogy would mean that Shem died just twenty-five years before the death of Abraham." ("Chronology," 119-20).

⁹ If the Bible's chronology has no gaps, Noah's flood was in 2518 B.C. But not only did the first dynasty of Egypt begin in approximately 3100 B.C., but there were three successive earlier cultures, the Tasian and Badarian, Naqada I, and Naqada II in the fourth century B.C. The first pyramid was built in the fourth dynasty by King Djoser ca. 2650 B.C. The rest of the 35 remaining pyramids were constructed by 2500 B.C., all during the fourth dynasty (K. A Kitchen, "Egypt," *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd ed., 294-95).

According to D. J. Wiseman, "Assyria was inhabited from prehistoric times (e.g. Jarmo c. 5000 BC) and pottery from the periods known as Hassuna, Samarra, Halaf and 'Ubaid (5000-3000 BC) has been found at a number of sites, including Assur, Nineveh and Calah, which, according to Gen 10:11-12, were founded by immigrants from Babylonia. Although the origins of the Assyrians are still disputed, the Sumerians were present at Assur by 2900 BC...." ("Assyria," *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd ed., 96.)

¹⁰ It makes no sense that Eber, the patronym of the Hebrew people, outlived Abraham by four years and yet is never mentioned in the account of Abraham (Merrill, "Chronology," 119). "Hebrew" is the gentilic form of Eber (Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 228) and Abraham is called "Abraham the Hebrew" (Gen 14:13).

¹¹ According to Genesis 10:25 in the days of Peleg "the earth was divided," an apparent reference to the account of the tower of Babel recorded eight verses later in Genesis 11:1-9. The name Peleg itself is from the Hebrew root *plg* "to divide." The account of Peleg is found at the end of the table of nations contained in Genesis 10, indicating when the nations were divided (Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 230-31). Yet according to the genealogy, all of Peleg's ancestors from Noah on were still living. So why would it be stated that "in his days the earth was divided"? See William Henry Green, "Primeval Chronology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 47 (1890): 302-3. In addition, it is inconceivable that all the nations of Genesis 10 could have developed after 2500 B.C.

¹² Merrill points out that "there are ten generations from Adam through Noah (Gen 5:3-29) and ten more from Shem through Abraham (Gen 11:10-26). This is reminiscent of the three segments of fourteen generations each that make up the genealogy of Jesus as recorded by Matthew (Mt 1:1-17). The fact that the latter omits names known from the OT proves that Matthew's intention is not to provide a full ancestry... but only enough names to achieve the symmetry" ("Chronology," 303). As Davies and Allison point out, the opening words of Matthew are "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David...." the Hebrew name "David" has three consonants with a numerical value of fourteen. It is also interesting to note that David's name is fourteenth in the genealogical list. In addition to his being named in the first verse of the chapter, David is also mentioned twice in the concluding verse (Matt 1:17). "The name David is the key to the pattern of Matthew's genealogy" (W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew [The International Critical Commentary]*; eds., J. A. Emmerton et al.; Edinburgh: Clark, 1988], 1: 163-65).