



# FIRST ADAM TO LAST ADAM

Biblical Genealogy in  
God's Redemptive Plan



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BIBLICAL GENEALOGY IN GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN



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About the Cover: *The Garden of Eden* by Thomas Cole (1828)

This painting depicts where humanity's story began. Cole's magnificent landscape captures the lost paradise and, fittingly, the hope that unfolds across every generation chronicled in Scripture.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Preface** .....7

## CHAPTER 1

**An Introduction to Biblical Genealogy** .....10

Genealogy ..... 12  
"Now the records are ancient" ..... 12  
Why study biblical genealogy? ..... 13  
The focus of biblical genealogy ..... 14  
Genetics vs genealogy ..... 15  
Genealogies grow faster than genes spread ..... 17  
Ancestor vs descendant trees ..... 18  
'Missing Generations' ..... 21

## CHAPTER 2

**The Early Genealogies** .....26

Great ages? ..... 30  
Can we place the sons of Noah on the Y chromosome tree ..... 33  
A male family tree of all humanity ..... 34  
The distribution of Y chromosomes according to the Table of Nations ..... 35  
Multiple competing hypotheses ..... 37

## CHAPTER 3

**Abraham** .....42

First and second cousins ..... 46  
Inbreeding coefficients ..... 46  
A matter of names ..... 47  
Melchizedek: the most important person without a genealogy in the Bible ..... 48  
    Who was Melchizedek? ..... 49  
    Melchizedek in Bronze Age Jerusalem ..... 50  
    Was Melchizedek a pre-incarnate Christ? ..... 51  
    Was Melchizedek Shem? ..... 52  
    Was Melchizedek Eber? ..... 52  
    Jesus the *priest* ..... 52

## CHAPTER 4

**Parallel Peoples** .....54

Ammon and Moab ..... 56  
Ishmael ..... 56  
The convoluted genealogy of Esau ..... 57  
    Male or female? ..... 59  
    The rise of the nation of Edom ..... 60  
    Hivites or Horites? ..... 60

Identifying Job and his friends .....	61
The genealogy of the book of Job.....	63
Who was Job?.....	65
Placing Job on the lifespan curve.....	66
Non-canonical treatments .....	66
Did Joseph’s brothers sell him to Midianites or Ishmaelites? .....	66

CHAPTER 5

**Hard-to-Place People .....70**

The Japhethites.....	72
The Semites .....	72
The Hamites.....	72
The Canaanites.....	73
Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites .....	74
Girgashites, Arkites, Arvadites, and Zemarites .....	74
Sinites, Hivites, and Hamathites .....	74
Even more Canaanite tribes! .....	74
The Kenites were not Canaanites .....	75
Kenizzites, Kadmonites, and Perizzites .....	75
The Rephaim.....	75
Giants or Nephilim?.....	76
An alternative origin for the Rephaim.....	78
Who were the Philistines? .....	80
Answering the riddle of the Philistines.....	83
Goliath, the ‘Philistine’ .....	85
From whence cometh the other Caleb? .....	87

CHAPTER 6

**Moses, Exodus, and the Judges .....90**

Judges .....	94
A few words about status.....	94
Apportioning the land.....	95
What’s a half-tribe?.....	96
Through the desert .....	97

CHAPTER 7

**The Kings of Judah and Israel .....100**

The kings (and one queen) of Judah .....	102
The kings of Israel.....	106
The end of the Kingdom of Judah .....	107
Concluding remarks .....	109

CHAPTER 8

**The Soap Opera Kings.....110**

CHAPTER 9

**Resolving the Conflicting Genealogies of Jesus .....116**

New Testament genealogies.....	118
Multiple possible solutions .....	120
The grammatical structure of the two genealogies.....	120
Option 1: Matthew traces Joseph’s line; Luke traces Mary’s line.....	121
Option 2: Levirate marriages and adoptions .....	122
Option 3: Matthew’s list is not a genealogy. It is a king list .....	122
Background information .....	125
Descendants of King David.....	125
Implications.....	126
Who was Zerubbabel? .....	127
A proposed solution .....	128
Step 1 .....	128
Step 2 .....	129
Is Matthew’s list really a king list?.....	131
Jeconiah the eunuch? .....	131
A second Jeconiah? .....	132
Box: A few notes about Hebrew names .....	133

CHAPTER 10

**The Biblical Age of the Earth.....136**

Chronogenealogy .....	138
Checksums .....	139
Numerical locks .....	141
Factors which limit dating precision.....	141
Implied precision.....	141
Calendar systems .....	142
Sabbatical cycles .....	143
Jubilee Cycles.....	144
Cultural differences in birthday conventions and counting age.....	145
Rounding imprecision accumulates.....	146
Rounding of ages?.....	146
Calculating the timespan and range.....	147
Creation to Noah.....	147
Noah to Arpachshad .....	147
Arpachshad to Terah.....	148
A 110-year ambiguity centering on Terah .....	148
The Egyptian Sojourn Revisited.....	149

The Exodus through the Babylonian captivity .....152  
 The Babylonian captivity to Christ.....152  
 Masoretic vs. LXX vs. Samaritan Pentateuch.....152  
 Discussion and conclusions .....153  
     Limited, gap-free imprecision.....153  
     Ambiguities and imprecisions do not equate to falsehoods.....154  
     Resulting date ranges.....154

CHAPTER 11

**The Biblical Origin of Races .....158**

The curse on Canaan .....161  
 What does the Bible say? .....164

CHAPTER 12

**Jewish Genetics.....166**

The family before Jacob .....169  
 The sons of Jacob .....170  
 The Exodus population.....172  
 Joshua through Judges .....172  
 From Babylon to Christ .....176  
 New Testament .....176  
 Just how Jewish were the kings of Judah?.....176  
 The genetics of the Jewish population.....179  
 Diaspora Jews .....179  
 Y chromosomes.....180  
 Aaron's Y Chromosome?.....181  
 Mitochondrial DNA .....182  
 Genome-wide comparisons .....183  
 Disease .....183  
 Alternative theories .....183  
     The Khazar hypothesis .....183  
     The 'lost tribes' of Israel.....184  
 Conclusions .....185

CHAPTER 13

**The Documentary Hypothesis.....188**

DH Assumption 1: the sources can be reconstructed .....191  
 DH Assumption 2: there was no repetition in the sources.....192  
 DH Assumption 3: the Redactors were lazy, or stupid, or both .....193

CHAPTER 14

**Closing Remarks.....194**

# PREFACE

**B**etween the Garden and the Cross stands a genealogy—a thread of names connecting the first bearer of God’s image to the One who would perfectly restore it. This book traces that lineage, name by name, generation by generation, from the dust of Eden to a manger in Bethlehem. But before you immerse yourself in the genealogical details that follow, it is essential to understand the theological architecture that gives these names their profound significance.

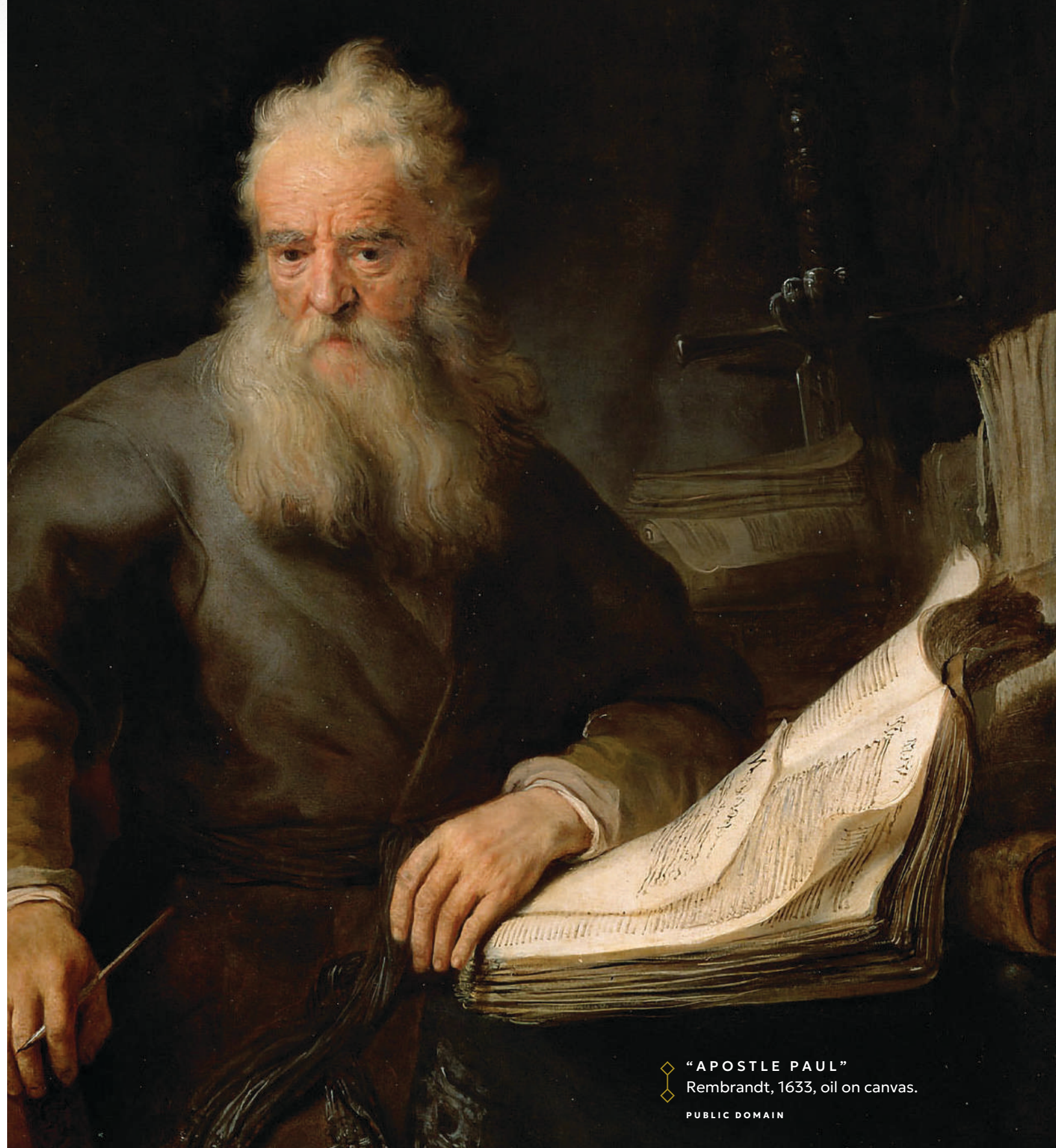
The title of this book was inspired by the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:45:

Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

The Bible presents us with two Adams, and only two. The first Adam was formed from the ground, given dominion, and placed in Paradise. He was created sinless, bearing the unblemished image of God, standing as humanity’s representative before the Creator. The last Adam entered the world through a virgin’s womb and lived among us. He too was sinless, the perfect image of the invisible God, standing as humanity’s representative before the Father. Between them stretch millions of other human beings, and the line continues to the billions of people alive today, but none of the others can be called an ‘Adam’.

What, then, does it mean to be an ‘Adam’? In the context of what Paul is discussing in 1 Corinthians, an Adam is a federal head, a covenant representative whose actions determine the destiny of those he represents. When the first Adam disobeyed, his sin was imputed to all his descendants; death spread to all because all were present ‘in’ him. His single act of rebellion plunged humanity into condemnation. We inherit not only his nature but his guilt, born into a world where the sentence has already been passed.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned (Romans 5:12).



“APOSTLE PAUL”  
Rembrandt, 1633, oil on canvas.  
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This is why you and I cannot be Adams. We are not starting points but continuations. We are not representatives but the represented. We enter the

story already fallen, already contaminated by the rebellion we inherited. We sin not as pioneers but as participants in a long-established pattern. Even

our best attempts at righteousness are tainted by the corruption that flows through our veins from that first, fatal choice in the Garden.

But it is not like we are without hope!

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).

The last Adam came as the second starting point, the new representative. Where the first Adam was tested and failed, Christ was tested and prevailed. Where the first Adam grasped at equality with God, Christ, being equal with God, humbled Himself unto death. The last Adam’s perfect obedience is imputed to all who belong to Him. Through one man came death; through one Man comes life.

He is called the “last” Adam not because there will be no more humans, but because there will be no more representatives. His work is complete, final, and unrepeatable. The destiny of humanity is now fixed in these two men: condemnation in the first, justification in the last. There is no third Adam coming, no other mediator between God and mankind. Christ’s finished work on the cross requires no supplement, no successor, no revision.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

The genealogy you are about to examine is not merely an academic exercise. It is the record of God’s faithfulness. He provided the last Adam through the line of the first. Every name in this chain is a link in God’s redemptive plan, a step toward the moment when the second representative would come to undo what the first had done. As you trace this lineage from generation to generation, remember that you are following the path God carved through history to bring the last Adam to us, so that we might be brought from death to life, from the first Adam to the last.



◀— CHAPTER 1 —▶

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
**BIBLICAL  
GENEALOGY**

*Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body have you prepared for me;  
in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.  
Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,  
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”*

*Hebrews 10:5–7*





If you are classically trained in theology, you may find the arguments I am making in this book quite strange. While only a minority of modern theologians, going back nearly 200 years, believed the names, ages, and history of the early books of the Bible are real, I do. However, if you are a regular church-going person who has been trained to 'trust the Bible from the very first verse,' you might think some of my arguments are too 'scholarly.' I sit in an interesting place. As a dedicated student of the Word, I believe it; all of it. Yet, when I read what the scholars are thinking, I accept more of their arguments than most conservative Christians might be comfortable with. So be it. Let the truth ring out.

Consider the implications. What if Genesis and other parts of Scripture are accurate reflections of historical reality? What if the names and events in the Bible really happened? The later biblical authors certainly thought they did. Just consider the many quotations of Genesis in the New Testament. There are over 100 of them, and about 60 of those come from the first 11 chapters (e.g., Creation to the Tower of Babel).<sup>1</sup> Jesus himself quotes from Genesis as if he really believed it (e.g., Mark 10:6–8). And, since Jesus is the Creator, He should know (see John 1, where the Word that became flesh in v. 14 was the Creator in vv. 1–3!).

I don't know about you, but I'm going to side with Jesus and his Apostles here. So, for the remainder of this book, we're going to treat these names and dates as real history. Let us begin!

## Genealogy

Anyone who has spent time trying to build their family tree has learned one thing clearly: genealogy is hard. Records can be old, handwriting can be illegible, various sources have different names and dates for the same people, documents can be in different languages, and there are always dead ends. The sheer number of possible ancestors makes it impossible to find them all and just keeping up with the records of the ones you know can be daunting.

Yet, millions of people have joined online communities like Ancestry.com and 23andme.com. Clearly, the interest is there. Even with all that 'interest,' when we Christians turn to the genealogical records in the Bible, our eyes tend to glaze over. There are so many names!

## “Now the records are ancient”

One of the strangest verses in the Bible (and thus, one of my favorites) is a parenthetical line in 1 Chronicles 4. The unnamed Chronicler is documenting the various clans in the tribe of Judah during the time of King David, who lived about 1,000 BC. He tells where they lived and what they did (e.g., linen workers and potters). In the middle of all these tedious records, the author throws up his hands and adds “(now the records are ancient)”! Why would he do that? First, he is human, and genealogy is often frustrating. Second, he is hinting that the records from which he is pulling his material are very, very old.

This is good news for those of us who believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God. It means that, no matter when the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles (originally a single scroll) were compiled, the author was working with original source material. This was not sloppy, haphazard work. Instead, the Chronicler loved his history and was trying to save it for posterity.

Consider the source material with which he had to work. The material that is now in our Bibles was potentially compiled from scrolls, parchments, oral histories, and maybe even cuneiform tablets made from hardened clay.

The source material might even be reflected in text (e.g., as when there is an abrupt change in subject or style). The scribes would have had to deal with issues of translation (because languages are not constant), spelling updates (because the form of Hebrew letters changed over the centuries), name changes (hence the repeated phrase “and so it is called to this day”), smudges, torn pages, etc. One might assume that much of the material that went into our Bibles was preserved in single copy documents.<sup>2</sup> Humanly speaking, the fact that it was saved at all is a small miracle.<sup>3</sup>



There is nothing like modern genealogy until modern times. Yet even modern family history buffs will tell you how difficult it is to fix all the obvious errors that crop up in their family trees. It is even worse when one of your family lines hits royalty. You would think that royal lines are well researched, but this is only true for the later stages. There are huge holes in all royal lineages and the most-ancient historical records are highly suspicious. For example, in his book *After the Flood*,<sup>4</sup> the late Bill Cooper<sup>5</sup> includes detailed genealogies of various Nordic, Celtic, and Saxon royal houses. He claims most of these lines trace back to Japheth (spelled *Schaeff*, *Scef*, etc.), the son of Noah. Yet, the number of generations varies, and often the names are different from one list to the next. If these disparate family trees are pointing to the same ancestor, they sure had a hard time keeping accurate records! Ancient people were interested in tracing patriarchal lines, but an exact count of generations was often not part of the package.<sup>6</sup>

## Why study biblical genealogy?

If genealogy is so hard, and if there are so many uncertainties, why study it at all? Worse, if these things are true for secular records, how can we

trust the biblical records? Would they not have the same problems?

There are several good reasons why we should study biblical genealogy. First and foremost, the genealogies of the Bible lead to the most important person ever born: Jesus. It is no insignificant thing that one can build a family tree for Jesus that leads all the way back to Adam. Consider 1 Corinthians 15:45:

Thus, it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Jesus Christ is called the “last Adam,” and our salvation is contingent upon Jesus removing the Curse that came about through the actions of the “first man Adam” in Genesis 3. Thus, the connection between the two is extremely important and there are real Gospel issues associated with biblical genealogy. This alone gives us a great reason to spend time wrestling with those name lists. This concept will be revisited several times in this book.

Second, since the names are often associated with dates, we can use that information to build a timeline of biblical world history.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, this is

not an easy task, but we can at least get a decent sketch of history without too much effort. This can then be used as a guide to understanding ancient history in general.

Third, the New Testament includes two genealogies of Jesus (in Matthew 1 and Luke 3). The lists of names differ greatly from one another. If we are going to crack that nut, and we will, we need to better understand the nature of biblical genealogies. The backstory of Jesus is incredibly important. There are real implications for the gospel if there is something wrong with His biography!

Fourth, someone worked very hard to put all that information into a readable form and save it for posterity. We kind of owe it to them to read that material gratefully. Consider what we would have lost had the records not been carefully preserved. We would not have Jesus' family tree or the picture it gives us of God's overarching plans. That is no small thing.

And yet, the original source records are all gone. When the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70, the only records that survived were the ones contained in the Old Testament books and two of the brand-new Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus. Thus, while Anna<sup>8</sup> and the Apostle Paul<sup>9</sup> knew their family history, no Jewish person in modern times can make that claim with certainty. The only possible exception is the modern 'Cohanim' (descendants of the priests), but even those claims are debated.<sup>10</sup>

### The focus of biblical genealogy

Adam and Eve were the first humans. God created them a little before 4,000 BC and all people alive today descend from them, and from them only. The next important person in the biblical sequence is Noah. He lived through the Flood, which was around about 2,500 BC. The next significant figure is Abraham (c. 2,000 BC). From Abraham came Isaac, then Jacob, then the 12 tribes of Israel. The tribe of Judah gave rise to the kings, culminating in Jesus. The tribe of Levi gave rise to the priests. Take a guess. Which tribes would you expect to feature more heavily in the biblical records? If you said Judah and Levi, you nailed it.

But wait! From the earliest periods of Christianity, Jesus is said to have fulfilled the 'Threefold Ministry' of prophet, priest, and king. These were the three Old Testament offices that were signified by anointing someone with oil. In fact, one of the names we often use for Jesus is "Christ". Christ is not really a name. Instead, it is a title derived from the Greek word meaning 'anointed one' (*χριστός, chrīstós*).

Clearly, Jesus is a prophet. All one has to do is skim through the Gospels to figure that out (see John 14:24 and Luke 7:16, for example).

Yet, Jesus is also a priest. Not a Jewish priest, mind you, for they were all descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses, from the tribe of Levi. Instead, He is a priest *after the order of Melchizedek* (Hebrews 5:1–10), who was not even a descendant of Abraham (there is a special section on Melchizedek later on).

Jesus is also a king. In fact, he is the king, the rightful king of Judah on a line of direct descent from David. Being that God promised David that the Messiah would come through him (2 Samuel 7:12–17), it's kind of important that we can prove it with genealogy, and you will clearly see this in chapter 9.

The fact that Jesus is the foretold Prophet, Priest, and King could be seen as a subtheme of this book.

There are many lists of names in the Scriptures. Genesis contains several (in chapters 4, 5, 10, and 11), as does 1 Chronicles (chapters 1–6). In the New Testament, Matthew 1 and Luke 3 include the genealogy of Jesus, and one of them goes all the way back to Adam (74 generations!). Other genealogical information can be found scattered among the other books as well. In fact, to build any family tree from the Bible, the student will usually have to turn to multiple passages. For example, scattered throughout the book of Genesis are the life and death data for many people. It is only by comparing a number of passages that you learn Abraham was still alive when Jacob was born. It's like a big scavenger hunt, but the

effort is worth it. If nothing else, it gets us into the Bible.

There is only one complete genealogy in the Bible. It runs from Adam to Jesus. The Levitical priests don't even have a complete genealogy in the Old Testament. You can find attempts at reconstructing the genealogies of the priests who served David in the early chapters of 1 Chronicles,<sup>11</sup> but the Levitical genealogies are broken in various places.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, the number of generations also impacts the date of the Exodus. There are some who want a 'late' Exodus in 1267 BC (under Rameses II<sup>13</sup>) instead of the traditional date of 1446 BC (under Amenhotep II<sup>14</sup>). David's reign spanned the year 1,000 BC. With five generations between Nahshon (a descendant of Judah who left Egypt during the Exodus) and David, you would need an average generation time of 53.4 years (267 / 5) for the late Exodus and a whopping 88.6 years (446 / 5) for the early Exodus. How, then, could I support the early date? Read on.

One of the priests (Heman) who served during David's time was 21 generations removed from Levi. Another (Ethan) was only 13 generations removed. 'Missing generations' is something we hear often when dealing with biblical genealogy. We will deal with four classic examples of 'missing generations' and show that there is, in fact, nothing missing in three of these cases. These include the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, the four generations in the family of Moses that span the Israelites' time in Egypt, the relatively few generations in the family of David that span the period of the Judges, and the fact that Matthew has a shorter genealogy of Jesus than does Luke.

This does not mean that every lineage includes every name for every person in the Bible. "Son of" is equivalent to "descendant of" in at least some cases. We have clear evidence that some people are named after a significant ancestor and at least some of the intervening people are skipped over. For example, the genealogical data for the other tribes in 1 Chronicles 1–6 is even more incomplete than that of the Levites. The lists were compiled after the Babylonian captivity, but they rep-

resent the state of affairs around the time of King David (600 years earlier). We are treated to lists of names that sometimes seem cobbled together. Some of the connecting details are provided elsewhere, but often they are not. Many of the people also have more than one name (between books, within a book, or sometimes within the same chapter of a book).

1 Chronicles 1–6 is one of the foundational genealogy passages. The order is:

- ♦ Restating Genesis 5, 10, and 11 (From Adam to Abraham, including Edom and other tribes)
- ♦ A genealogy of David (including many cousins and families descended from Judah)
- ♦ Descendants of Judah, Simeon, Reuben, and Gad
- ♦ Descendants of the half-tribe of Manasseh (e.g., those living in Transjordan)
- ♦ Descendants of Levi, Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, the other half of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher
- ♦ A genealogy of Saul, a list of names of the people returning from exile, then Saul again

However, even though the Bible includes information on people in the other tribes, that's all I am going to say on the subject. I see no need to run people off! Consider also that the Bible itself seems to quickly dismiss the non-seed lines. If you want more details, you can comb through the name lists on your own. The focus of biblical genealogy is clearly on the kings, leading ultimately to Christ. Let's keep that in mind as we go along.

### Genetics vs genealogy

Although we are not going to talk a lot about genetics in this book, since we are talking about ancestry, it will be impossible to ignore DNA entirely. For this reason, I want to take a little time to talk about one of my favorite scientific factoids of all time. This is *not* going to set the tone for the entire book, however. If you feel a little lost, just skip to the next section.



“CHARLEMAGNE”  
Giuseppe Longhi, engraving  
CC BY-SA 4.0

One of the strangest quirks of genealogy is the fact that ancestral DNA disappears over time.<sup>15</sup> The science of inheritance tells us clearly that you did not inherit DNA from the majority of your ancestors. How is this possible?

Due to recombination, blocks of ancestral DNA get broken into smaller sections every generation. Yet, there is only an average of about one recombination per long chromosome arm per generation. Since those arms are millions of nucleotides long, the small blocks of inheritance that reside at any given section of a genome are not guaranteed to be inherited. In fact, the probability that you will inherit any given small section of DNA from a parent is 50:50.

Thus, just because you descend from someone in the past does not mean you have their DNA. People object to this, saying things like, “But I am descended from Charlemagne!” My answer is, “Sure, but you probably don’t carry any of Charlemagne’s DNA!”

Yet, Wikitree.com tells me that I am descended from Charlemagne along 5,664 known lines (when I last checked). There are a lot of loops

in my family tree, where people who were related to each other married and had children. Given enough time and a small enough population, intermarriage cannot be helped. Thus, even if the probability of inheriting Charlemagne’s DNA along one *specific* line is quite low, I have over 5000 chances of getting some of his DNA.

There are multiple things competing for attention here: (1) ancestral DNA is lost, but (2) historic levels of inbreeding mean that you have multiple chances of getting the same DNA from one specific ancestor. Combining these two thoughts tells us that some people from the ancient past are the genetic ancestors of many millions of people alive today. The rest of the people from the ancient past are the genetic ancestors of few to none.

This has been clearly demonstrated among the people of Iceland. This little country has genealogical records going back to its founding. They have also been the subject of many genetic studies. What have we learned? The genealogical records tell us that a minority (less than 1/3) of the Icelandic population that lived just over 200 years ago are the ancestors of the majority (about 90%) of living Icelanders today. The numbers are even more extreme when you go back to the people living in the first half of the 1700s. The genealogical details are also seen in Icelandic DNA. For example, we see a rapid loss in mitochondrial lines since the country’s founding. Most of the female lines were quickly lost, meaning the modern population traces back to only a few of the founding women.<sup>16</sup>

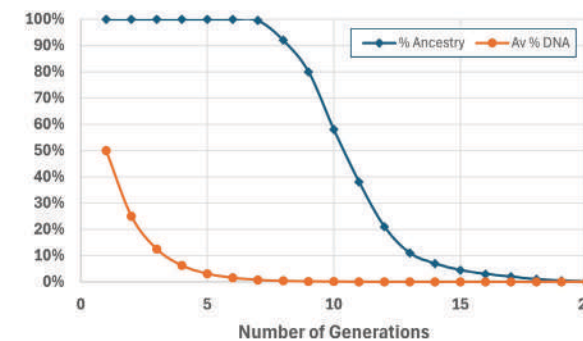
You might be wondering what this has to do with *biblical* genealogy. Consider that, at least in some family lines, it was but six generations between Abraham and the Exodus. Thus, it is almost certain that Abraham’s DNA was within the Exodus population. Also, since so many different people traced back to Abraham, the chance of his DNA staying in the population over time is greatly improved. It is likely that some people of Jewish descent alive today carry Abraham’s DNA, but it is also likely that many do not. Also, many non-Jewish people should also carry some of his DNA. In other words, it will be nearly impossible to identify the specific DNA that comes from the

Patriarchs in modern people, but their DNA is certain to be found in all of us.

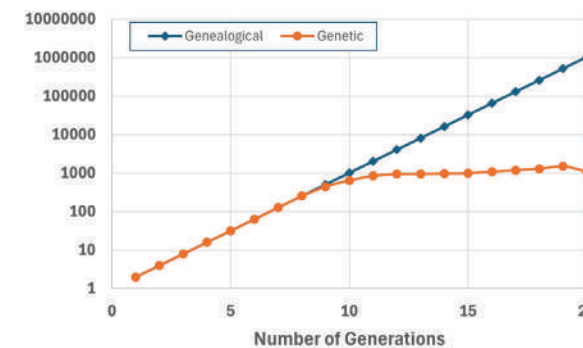
### Genealogies grow faster than genes spread

Even if ancestral DNA can be lost over generations, the family tree still stands. You are the descendant of your parents as much as you are a descendant of your distant ancestors, and ancient people had no knowledge of DNA. Kinship was kinship.

As you go back in time, the number of branches on your family tree grows exponentially. You have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc. At that rate, you would have 1,024 ancestors 10 generations (about 300 years) ago, over one million ancestors 20 generations (about 600 years)



Most people in your family tree gave you no DNA.  
CREATION.COM



You have a limited number of genetic ancestors.  
CREATION.COM

ago, and over one *trillion* ancestors only 30 generations (about 900 years) ago. Clearly, this is impossible, because the population of the world was only in the hundreds of millions around AD 1100. In fact, in all of history combined, a trillion people have never even been born. Worse, you only have six billion letters of DNA. You cannot *possibly* have trillions of genetic ancestors.

The math of genealogies tells us they grow quickly and will soon permeate an entire population. You claim you are descended from Charlemagne? Great, so is everybody else in Europe, as well as most of the other people in the world! This means that Abraham’s genealogy would have quickly taken over the Israelite population, even if his DNA did not.

We can see the difference between genealogy and genetic ancestry in the nearby figures. I made them with a computer program I wrote to model recombination and inheritance of DNA in people across many generations.

You are at generation zero. Your ancestors stretch out to the right. Using a simple model of recombination (one crossover per chromosome arm per generation), we can see what happens as one progresses backward in time. In the first figure, the blue line shows you how much DNA you received, on average, from the ancestors in each generation. You should already know that you got 50% of your father’s and 50% of your mother’s DNA. Likewise, you got 25% of the DNA of each of your four grandparents. This trend gets a little wobbly as the generations proceed, but since the line gets so close to 0%, this cannot be seen here. After about six generations (approximately 200 years), ancestors start to drop out of the ancestral gene pool. Once the ancestral blocks of DNA are smaller than the average distance between recombination events, entire sections of DNA inherited from a single ancestor can be lost. After about only 20 generations, more than 99% of the people in your family tree contributed no DNA to your genome!<sup>17</sup>

The second graph shows another way to see the difference between genealogical and genetic ancestry.

After about 10 generations, the two curves start to decouple. **You only inherited DNA from about 1,000 people.** The rest of your ancestors gave you nothing. Any given individual, therefore, has a limited number of genetic ancestors and an uncountable number of genealogical ancestors.

This has profound implications for human civilization. Consider the closing words of these scientists in their important paper on world genealogy:

But to the extent that ancestry is considered in genealogical rather than genetic terms, our findings suggest a remarkable proposition: no matter the languages we speak or the colour of our skin, we share ancestors who planted rice on the banks of the Yangtze, who first domesticated horses on the steppes of the Ukraine, who hunted giant sloths in the forests of North and South America, and who laboured to build the Great Pyramid of Khufu.<sup>18</sup>

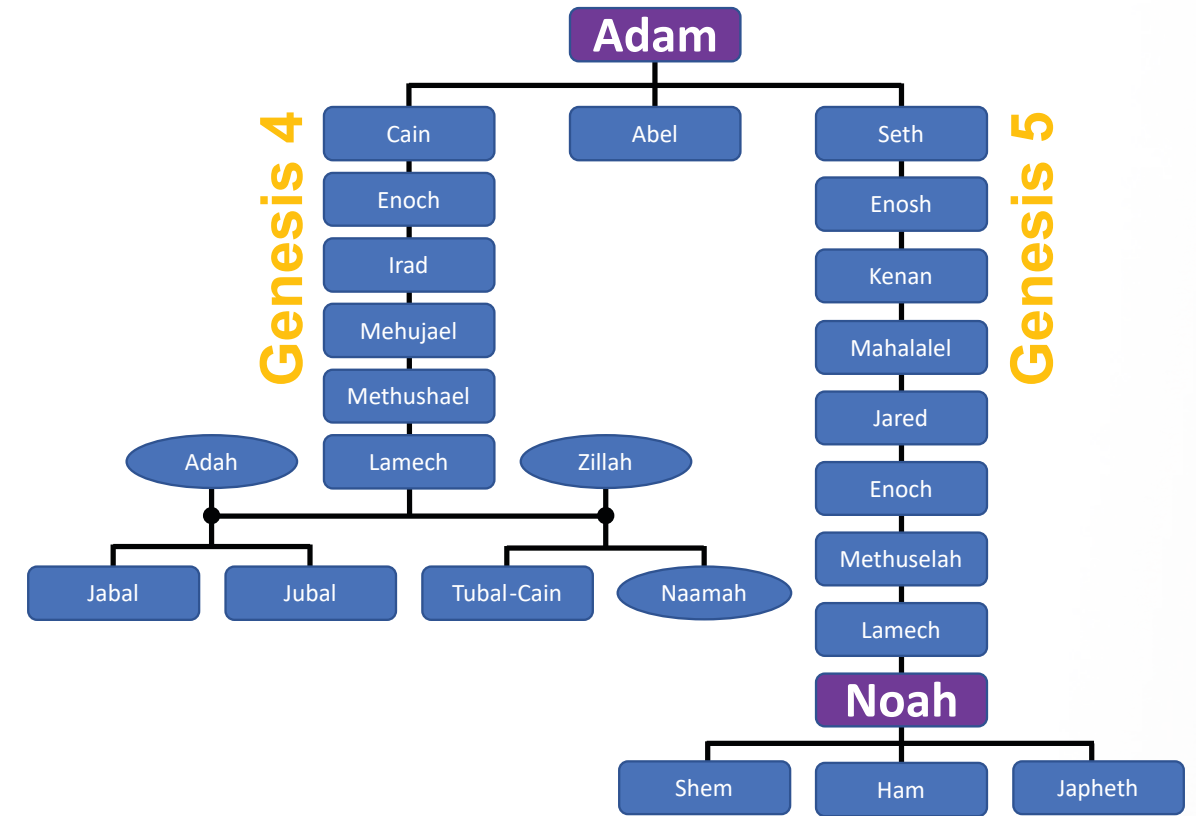
Let's keep those thoughts in mind as we dig into biblical history.

### Ancestor vs descendant trees

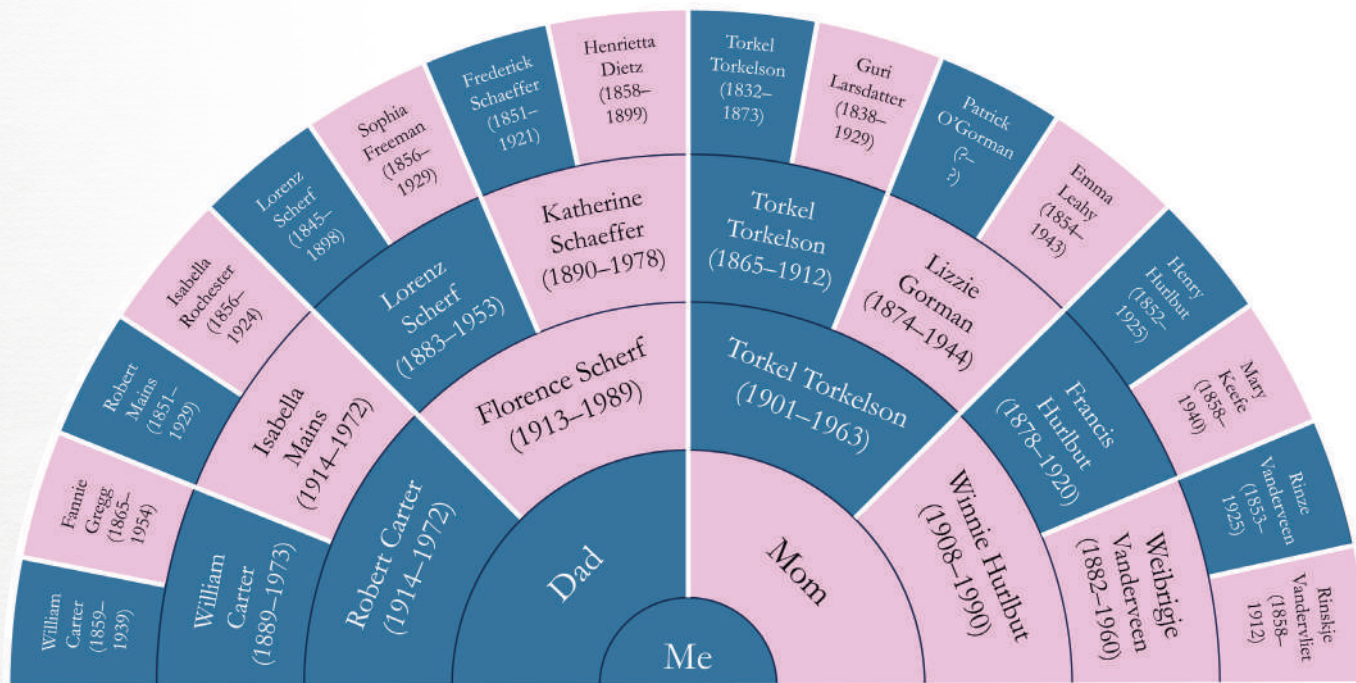
There is something else about genealogy that we need to understand. There are two different types of family tree in the Bible. They look different and they contain different information. Understanding the differences between them will help us tremendously.

The first type is an *ancestor tree*. These are the easy ones. You have two parents, four grandparents, and eight great-grandparents. In fact, the number of people in your family tree is set. If you wanted to draw an ancestor tree, you could easily represent it in a fan-like pattern.

Yet, in history and in much of the Bible, people were only concerned with the strict paternal (i.e., male) lineage. Paternal trees look more like a stick. They are just a list names from father to son to



The first two ancestor trees in the Bible give us the lines of Lamech (through Cain) and Noah (through Seth).  
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The author's ancestor tree.  
CREATION.COM

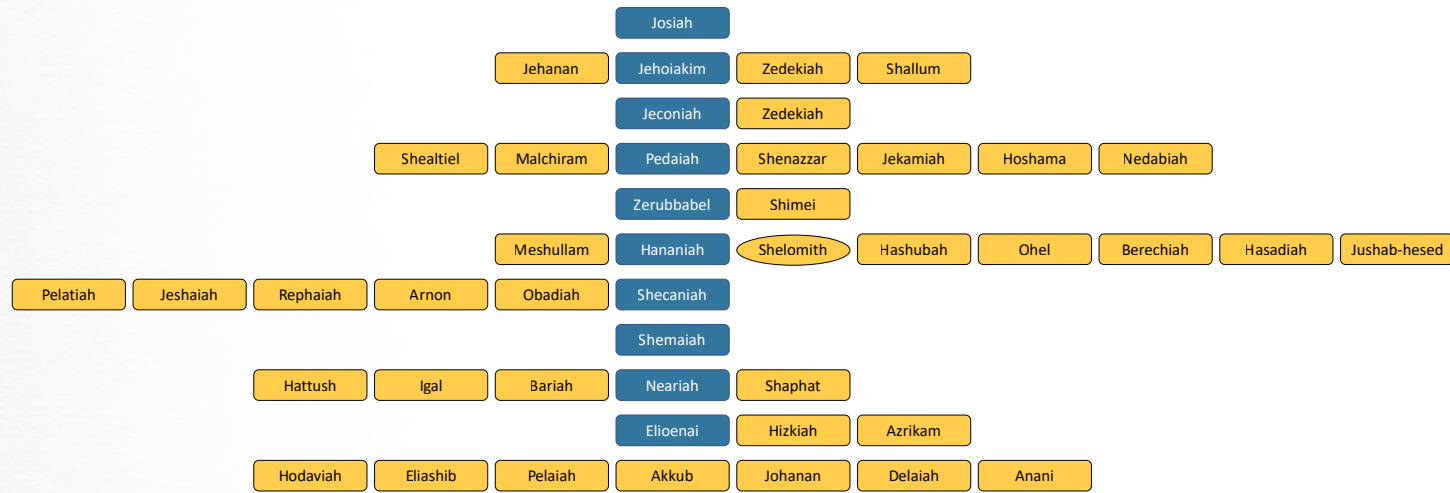
grandson, etc. Those are *really* easy, and, happily, there are many in the Bible.

Can you think of an example of an ancestor tree in the Bible? The lineage of Adam to Noah (Genesis 5) or Noah to Abraham (Genesis 11) may have just popped into your mind, but there are many other examples.

Since the people in prior generations would have no way of knowing who would come after them or how important they would become, when you see an ancestor tree in the Bible, it is almost certainly being written from the perspective of the last person on the list. Thus, in Genesis 5, Adam did not compile his family tree all the way down to Noah. Instead, Noah *must have compiled his family tree back to Adam*.<sup>19</sup> He had some accessory data, like the names of a few descendants of Cain (whose genealogy is the first to appear in the Bible, interestingly), but no other names from the many dif-

ferent families that came from Adam and Eve are recorded, even though they had *at least* five sons and at least two daughters.<sup>20</sup>

Since the only relevant timestamp in this section of Scripture is Adam's age when Seth was born ("130", Genesis 5:3), Cain and Abel could easily have been over 100 years old when the former killed the latter,<sup>21</sup> even though no sons are recorded for Abel. At the same time, six generations of descent are included for Cain. We cannot know why, suddenly, three sons and a daughter (Naamah) appear at the end of Cain's line. Did Adam record Cain's lineage up to the point where he (Adam) died? Why focus on Cain to the exclusion of all others? Or maybe the sons of Lamech were contemporary with Noah and his three sons, so somebody recorded the straight-line descent from them back to Noah? We cannot know the answers to any of these questions! This is the nature of genealogy.



◇ Making sense of 1 Chronicles 3, a combined ancestor-descendant tree.  
◇ CREATION.COM

The second type of family tree is a *descendant tree*. These look like birds' nests. The number of descendants of any given individual is indeterminate, so you can't predict the number or the placement of branches. Worse, the generations overlap. Drawing such trees is hard enough. Remembering the details is practically impossible. Descendant trees also tend to peter out over time. One important line might keep going, but the person who compiled the tree cannot know the name of each of the thousands of descendants of the starting person.

Case in point, if you have ever tried to read through the Bible, you will know that the book of 1 Chronicles is difficult. The genealogical sections are especially troubling, and the genealogy of Zerubbabel (the first governor of Judah after the Jews came back from Babylon) in 1 Chronicles 3 is more difficult than most. It is very hard to make heads or tails of the name list here. It is only after making a chart of the men that things become obvious. This is a *combined* ancestor/descendant tree. There is a clear line of descent from King Josiah, but in each generation all the brothers are also listed.

1 Chronicles 3 starts out with a simple list of fathers and sons. What follows, though, is hard to parse because the grammatical structure changes often. But you can make a chart of it, once you

realize that one man in each generation is the father (blue) of the men (and one woman) in the next generation. One also wonders why the list ends with seven brothers. It might simply be that one of those men, or one of his sons, was among the chroniclers and he was simply writing down all the genealogical information he had on hand. Much of the material in these books seems cobbled together, as if a researcher was trying to gather all the information he had and combine it in one place.

This is one of the most difficult genealogies in the entire Bible. We will revisit it in chapter 9, where we deal with the two New Testament genealogies of Jesus. Both of those lists also include a Shealtiel and a Zerubbabel but there are two problems with this:

1. Matthew and Luke say that Shealtiel is the father of Zerubbabel. The Chronicler says Pedaiiah is the father of Zerubbabel and Shealtiel is only his uncle.
2. Matthew and the Chronicler say that Shealtiel's father was King Jeconiah, a descendant of David through his son Solomon. Luke claims that the father of Shealtiel was an otherwise unknown man named Neri, a descendant of David through another son named Nathan.

The descendant tree of Jesus is the only truly important one in the Bible. It begins in Genesis 5, carries through Genesis 11, and can be pieced together from a multitude of miscellaneous data scattered through the rest of the Bible. The physical descent of Christ relies on a solution to the dilemma I outlined above, but can it be resolved? Happily, the answer is, "Yes." In fact, there is more than one solution (chapter 9). However, there is one more aspect of biblical genealogy I need to cover first.

### 'Missing Generations'

With no intended disrespect to my forebears, I am constrained to reject the idea that there are 'missing generations' that might increase the age of the earth to as much as 10,000 years. This was presented by Whitcomb and Morris in their seminal and otherwise excellent and highly influential book *The Genesis Flood*.<sup>22</sup> Some conservative scholars still support the 'missing generations' argument,<sup>23</sup> so this is not a matter of them not believing the Bible. Still, I am unpersuaded. The biblical wording does not easily support 'missing' people.

There are additional considerations that make the 'missing generations' argument even more problematic.

**First**, even if there were missing generations in Genesis 5 and 11, we are still given specific time-spans. For example, Seth was born 130 years after Adam. It does not matter if Seth is his son or not. The age of the earth does not change.

Some try to get around this by saying that 'Adam was 130 when the *line* that led to Seth arose.' I have heard this several times, but the idea is highly problematic. I described the two types of genealogies above and said one was forward looking the other backward looking. Given that Adam would have no way of knowing which ancestor out of millions was important, and given that he was dead before Noah came along, Genesis 5 is clearly written retrospectively. Noah was tracing his line back to Adam. The same is true of Genesis 11, where Terah's line is traced back to Noah.

Now, imagine what it would be like to trace a lineage backward when you don't know the majority of the names. Nobody does that. Literally, nobody. It would be like trying to trace the lineage of the English monarchs back in time from today, but starting with William I. Using the ages given at the start of Genesis 5, you would get something like this:

When William the Conqueror was 130 years old, Richard I was born.

When Richard I was 105, Edward II was born.

When Edward II was 105, Henry V was born.

When Henry V was 70, Richard III was born.

When Richard III was 65, Edward VI was born.

When Edward VI was 162, George III was born.

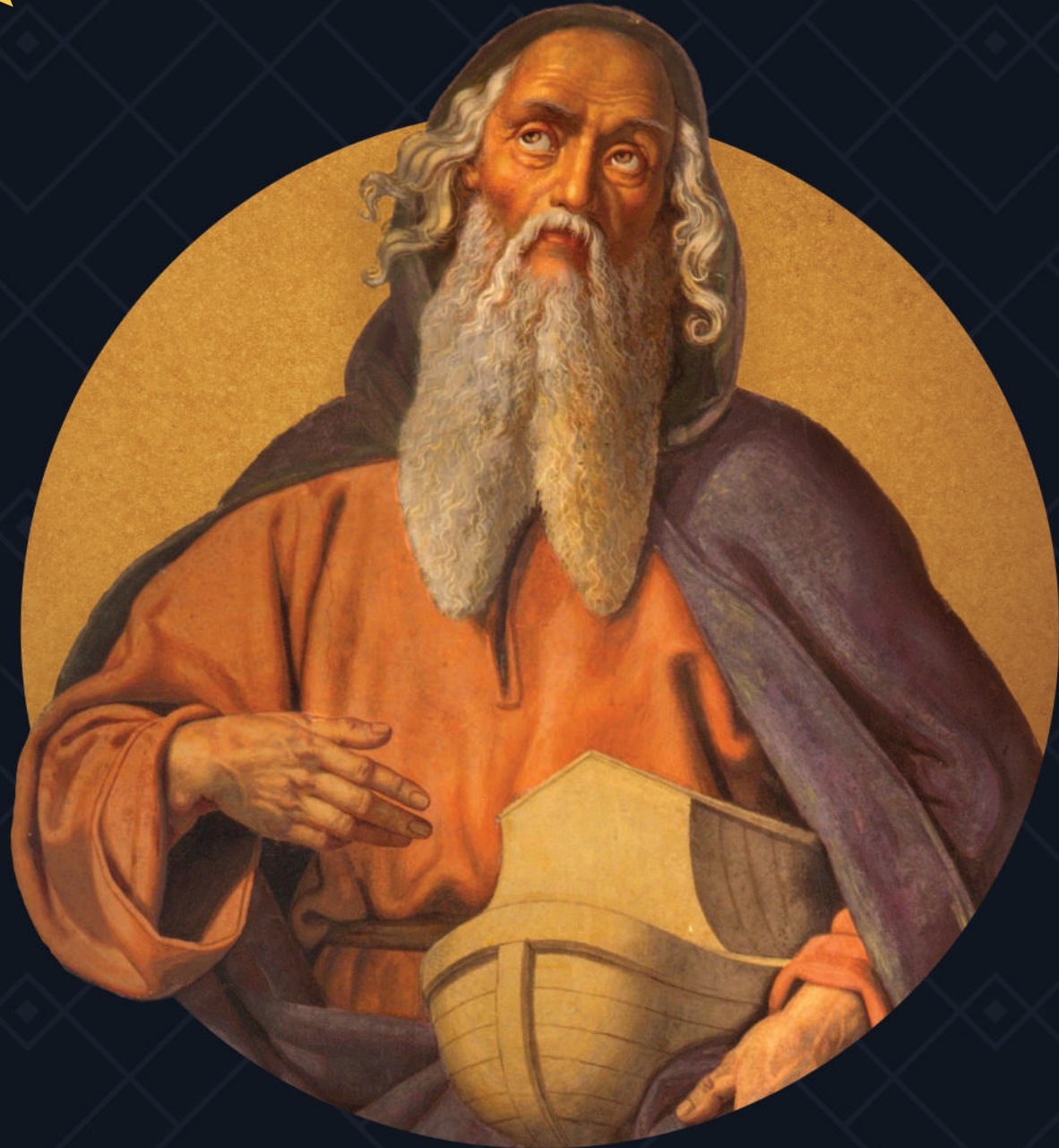
When George III was 65, Victoria was born.

When Victoria was 194, Prince George of Wales was born.

The only person in this list that lived long enough to see the next named person was George III. The wording that a person 'was age X when person Y was born' is simply incorrect because everyone but George III was dead before the next person was born, yet this is exactly what the Bible says:

◇◇◇ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth (Genesis 5:3). ◇◇◇

In another sense, trying to list the *line* of Adam vs. the *line* of Seth is like trying to list *houses* of England instead of specific rulers: William's house of Normandy was replaced by the house of Blois under Stephen I, which was replaced by the Angevin kings under Henry II, which became the House of Plantagenet under Henry III, which was replaced by the House of Lancaster under Henry IV, then



## NOAH

Noah was an incredibly important figure in the Bible. He first appears in the genealogy of Genesis 5, and he is the focal point in the Flood narrative (Genesis 6–9). The post-Flood genealogy starts with him (Genesis 11), and he is referenced multiple times in the Bible (e.g., Isaiah 59:4, Ezekiel 14:14, Matthew 24:37–38, Hebrews 11:7).

York under Edward IV, then Lancaster under Henry VI, then York under Edward IV ... That is also unworkable.

The **second** objection parallels the first. It is a question of practicality. The genealogist in me rebels against the thought of picking and choosing among my ancestors. And if everybody before me was doing this, nobody today would be able to compare family trees. Worse, we must ask how the names we have come down to us. Who chose which names to include and what qualifications were required to get on the list? Adam, Noah, Shem, and Abraham are clearly important, but what about people like Shelah and Arphaxad? We are given no details about their lives that would make them notable. That is strange. It would have taken but a few descriptive words for each, yet nothing distinguishing is given.

**Third**, how many missing generations would be required? From Adam to Abraham, the average age when the Patriarchs fathered their son was 105.5 years. Thus, to stretch the time back, you would need about 10 generations for every 1,000 years. If you wanted to add 6,000 years to get creation back to 10,000 BC, you would have to intersperse 60 extra generations among the 20 known Patriarchs. In other words, most of the names in the lineage of Christ would be unknown.

Worse, some of the people supporting the ‘missing generations’ view do not think Adam lived for 930 years. Instead, they believe he had a normal lifespan and the long ages apply to the *lineage* that led to Seth, etc. Since the average modern generation time is about 30 years, you would need to add 33 generations for every 1,000 years. Thus, if you wanted to stretch the time back to 10,000 BC, you would need about 200 extra generations.

If Adam was the evolutionary Y Chromosome Adam, who lived ~300,000 years ago, we would be missing on the order of 10,000 generations!<sup>24</sup>

One wonders how a person like Noah could have cobbled together a genealogy with dozens, hundreds, or thousands of missing data points. The thought makes a mockery of the genealogical sections of Scripture.

**Fourth:** The ‘missing generations’ argument causes problems downstream. We will cover the growth of the human population since the Flood in a later chapter, but the numbers fit beautifully with normal population growth from Noah’s family. If there were many more years, there would be many more people earlier on and potentially (barring wars and the like) billions more people alive today. We will also cover the lifespans of the Patriarchs in a later chapter. Adding ‘missing generations’ would mean that just about everybody was living for hundreds of years in an extended early post-Flood era. A quickly dropping lifespan better fits what we see in archaeology, as will be explained later.

There are two places in the Bible where we *might* be missing a few generations: the line of Moses that spans their time in Egypt and the line of David through the period of the Judges. We will discuss these at length later. I am going to make the case that there is no reason to assume missing generations in either case. There is one place, however, where generations are *definitely* missing. Matthew skipped over the names of four known kings in his genealogy of Jesus. The entirety of Chapter 9 is dedicated to explaining this, and other interesting features in the lineage of Christ.

We have now established several principles of biblical genealogy:

1. The Bible contains ancestor and descendant trees.
2. The line of Christ has been preserved.
3. Genealogies spread faster than genes.
4. There is no good case for “missing generations”.

Granted, many of the people mentioned in the Bible have little theological importance, but since the biblical authors took the time to write those names down, it behooves us to at least *familiarize* ourselves with the names. The next section will do just that. We are going to learn about the spread of people across the world after Noah’s Flood.

There is a long-standing debate in creationist circles about the nature of the word *toledot* in Genesis. It is usually translated ‘generations’, but people debate if this serves as an introduction (“This is the record of \_\_\_\_”) or a summary (“This was the record of \_\_\_\_”). The latter group argues that Genesis is a collection of eyewitness documents that mirror the structure of many cuneiform tablets, where the ‘metadata’ (i.e., the author information and/or the title) can be found at the bottom of the tablet. This is the position of Malcolm,<sup>25</sup> Wiseman,<sup>26</sup> and others.

The other (more common) view is that the *toledots* should be taken as headings for what follows, and that the people who added chapters (Stephen Langton, AD 1205) and verses (Robert Estienne, AD 1551) to the Bible more or less divided the major sections correctly. This is the position of Sarfati,<sup>27</sup> DeRouchie,<sup>28</sup> and others.

Sarfati’s construction runs like this:

PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Genesis 1:1–2:3	Precursor
Genesis 2:4–4:26	<i>Toledot</i> of the heavens and earth
Genesis 5:1–6:8	<i>Toledot</i> of Adam
Genesis 6:9–9:29	<i>Toledot</i> of Noah
Genesis 10:1–11:9	<i>Toledot</i> of Noah’s three sons
Genesis 11:10–26	<i>Toledot</i> of Shem
Genesis 11:27–25:11	<i>Toledot</i> of Terah
Genesis 25:12–18	<i>Toledot</i> of Ishmael
Genesis 25:19–35:29	<i>Toledot</i> of Isaac
Genesis 36:1–8	<i>Toledot</i> of Esau
Genesis 36:9–37:1	Second <i>Toledot</i> of Esau
Genesis 37:2–50:26	<i>Toledot</i> of Jacob

The alternative, where the *toledot* is generally found at the end of a passage instead of at the beginning, allows for the assignment of authorship of each section by an eyewitness to the events described in that section. Thus, God would have written about creation (Genesis 1:1 through 2:3) but Adam would have written about the things he

witnessed (2:4b through 4:26) and nothing more. Interestingly, this also allows for both Isaac and Jacob to include the story of their brothers within their personal accounts, meaning the *toledots* are nested. Here, the accounts of Ishmael and Esau would use *toledot* as a forward-looking section title within the retrospective-looking *toledot* of their brother. As is the case with so many other Hebrew words, *toledot* can be flexible and context drives the meaning.

The book of Ruth ends with a 10-person genealogy of David (below). It is a *toledot* of Perez and the word is clearly used in this context to indicate what follows from is Perez. Thus, this instance is clearly in favor of the majority view (e.g., the *toledots* are headings for what follows). The question is if that can be generalized to all the other instances.

The arguments cannot be answered in full here. The answer will not change anything in our study of biblical genealogy, but it does put the genealogical details in a context that we need to understand. Hence, I took a little time to explain it.



## ENDNOTES

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- In 2 Kings 22, all indications are that they had found the only copy of the “Book of the Law”.
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- Anna was an elderly widow from the tribe of Asher who gave thanks to God when she saw the infant Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:36–38).
- Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5).
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- For example, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, who are 21, 15, and 13 generations from Levi, respectively.
- Outside the Bible, the high priests do have a lineage that spanned for over 1,000 years. This ended in 175 BC, when Onias III was deposed by the Romans. Later, in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, the High Priests are from the family of Annas. He was appointed in AD 6 by Quirinius (c.f., Luke 2:2) and deposed by Valerius Gratis in AD 15. His son-in-law, Caiphas (John 18:13), replaced him. The office of high priest is supposed to last until the death of the high priest. This explains the statement in Luke 3:2, “During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.” More can be learned about the priestly lineage in Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*, the books of Maccabees, and the Talmud. Several Bible commentaries and dictionaries have details also. For example, see the entry for ‘Annas’ by Edwards in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Bromiley G. (ed.), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979.
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- Parts of this section was adapted from Carter, R. and Sanders, L., The Israelites: forging of a nation, [creation.com/articles/israelites-forging-of-a-nation](https://creation.com/articles/israelites-forging-of-a-nation), 2 Sep 2021.
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- Double that for William Lane Craig’s suggestion that Adam was a *H. heidelbergensis* who lived 750 ka. See Kissling, B., Seeking the First Man, Adam, [creation.com/articles/historical-adam-craig](https://creation.com/articles/historical-adam-craig), 20 Jan 2022.
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