

## **CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS by Textual Tradition**

Adam to Jacob

(According to the MT, SP, LXX, Josephus and the Book of Jubilees)

Anyone who has tried to read any of the literature about biblical chronology has encountered the bewildering references to the dates, ages, et cetera, of the Hebrew text, the LXX (Septuagint), Josephus' "Jewish Antiquities", the Samaritan Pentateuch and sometimes even the Book of Jubilees.

"What," you may ask, "are these books or texts, and what chronological information did they actually have in them?" Well, this is your lucky day as I have compiled these tables to answer exactly those questions!

The Pentateuch was probably standardized about 400-500 BCE. Later on, textual "families" developed, each with peculiarities as to people's ages and details about events that circulated in Palestine, Egypt and Babylon, according to F. M. Cross and other modern scholars. Recognizing, much less understanding, that these differences exist is absolutely ESSENTIAL to understanding the problems involved in any chronological study of the story of Genesis.

Jewish and Christian chronographers have wrestled with these problems for over 2,000 years and each one comes up with vastly different totals or systems to try to make sense out of it. Those who are not attempting to support any particular religious dogma about these things can derive the most benefit from these tables, but whatever text form you consider "sacred" you will learn things about it that you never realized before. It will also raise questions that you may not want to think about, too!

The dating system that I used is based on an Era with year 1 equaling the first year of Adam's life. This is the standard system used by Jewish chronographers. The year, given in decimal format like we are used to, is followed by the abbreviation "AM" meaning "Anno Mundi." This means "Year of the World," since it corresponds to the time evolved since the world was supposed to have been formed by God.

Since MT, SP, LXX and Josephus all give the age at the birth of each Patriarch's heir, as well as his age at death, the dates of birth and death can be calculated. Alternately Jubilees uses dates instead of ages (there are a few cases where an age is given as well as a date, etc.), so the ages of birth and death are calculated.

Those who are familiar with the chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel, or of the period in which Daniel was written (2nd Century BCE), or Jesus lived, will know that calculated dates or ages are at best approximations. For instance, the statement that Adam lived 930 years can mean he lived 930 full years and some remainder, or 929 full years and a remainder that was counted as a full year. Those remainders or adjustments will all add up over time!

Please use these tables at your own discretion. My intent is to let the curious reader discover the complexities, and uncertainties, that come with any serious attempt at analyzing or understanding the biblical text.

In this revision I have made some corrections based on the input of readers, and I hope that I have discovered all the errors, but I must add the disclaimer that I can not guarantee there will be no errors in these tables! Have fun, and don't lose any sleep over this!!

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## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS

**The Masoretic Text** (or Received Text) is the standard text for the Hebrew bible among Jews (and Christians) today. It was standardized, probably from a textual family circulating in Babylon, in the 1st or early 2nd Century AD. A translation of the MT is what you will find in most modern Christian bibles, especially those intended for Protestant use.

Text:	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT
Name:	Calculated year of birth (Anno Mundi)	Age at birth of son per text	Calculated year of birth of son (Anno Mundi)	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi)
ADAM	0	130	130	930	930
SETH	130	105	235	912	1042
ENOSH	235	90	325	905	1140
KENAN I	325	70	395	910	1235
MAHALALEL	395	65	460	890	1285
JARED	460	162	622	862	1322
ENOCH	622	65	687	365	987
METHUSELAH	687	187	874	969	1656
LAMECH	874	182	1056	777	1651
NOAH	1056	500	1556	950	2006
SHEM	1556	100*	1656	600	2156
ARPACHSHAD	1656	35	1691	438	2094
KENNAN II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SHELAH	1691	30	1721	433	2124
EBER	1721	34	1755	464	2185
PELEG	1755	30	1785	239	1994
REU	1785	32	1817	239	2024
SERUG	1817	30	1847	230	2047
NAHOR	1847	29	1876	149	1996
TERAH	1876	70	1946	205	2081
ABRA(HA)M	1946	100	2046	175	2121
ISAAC	2046	60	2106	180	2226
JACOB	2106			147	2253

There is a famous problem with the chronology of the flood. Genesis clearly says that Shem was born in Noah's 500th year, and that the flood took place in his 600th year (1656 AM), and that Shem had Arpachshad when he was 100 years old. However, another verse says Arpachshad was born 2 years *after* the flood! So, was Shem 100 or 102 at Arpachshad's birth? A mystery...

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS

**The LXX**, or “Seventy (Two)” version, was a collection of Greek translations of the books of the Hebrew bible. It also is known as the Septuagint. The books of the Pentateuch were probably translated in the mid 3rd century BCE in Egypt from a textual family similar to some fragments found among the “Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947. This was the text used by most Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, and the Mediterranean Diaspora. It was also the “standard” bible of the gentiles who later constituted the Christian church. It was the source of many contentions between Christians and Jews, partly because it differs in many ways from the textual family (the basis of the MT) used by Jews in the first few centuries CE. It was the text from which many of the older Catholic bible translations were derived. I used the 1851 English translation of Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton for my dates (1990 Regency reprint), and he used Codex Vaticanus, corrected by Codex Alexandrinus when necessary. The following table shows Vaticanus/Alexandrinus where necessary.

Text:	LXX Vaticanus	LXX Vaticanus	LXX Vaticanus	LXX Vaticanus	LXX Vaticanus
Name:	Calculated year of birth (Anno Mundi)	Age at birth of son per text	Calculated year of birth of son (Anno Mundi)	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi)
ADAM	0	230	230	930	930
SETH	230	205	435	912	1142
ENOS	435	190	625	905	1340
CAINAN I	625	170	795	910	1535
MALELEEL	795	165	960	895	1690
JARED	960	162	1122	962	1922
ENOCH	1122	165	1287	365	1487
MATHUSALA*	1287	<b>167</b>	<b>1454</b>	969	2256
LAMECH	<b>1454</b>	188	<b>1642</b>	753	2207
NOE	<b>1642</b>	500	<b>2142</b>	950	2592
SEM	<b>2142</b>	100	<b>2242</b>	600	2742
ARPHAXAD**	<b>2242</b>	135	<b>2377</b>	<b>535</b>	2777
CAINAN II	<b>2377</b>	130	<b>2507</b>	460	2837
SALA	<b>2507</b>	130	<b>2637</b>	460	2967
HEBER***	<b>2637</b>	134	<b>2771</b>	<b>404</b>	3041
PHALEG	<b>2771</b>	130	<b>2901</b>	339	3110
RAGAU	<b>2901</b>	132	<b>3033</b>	339	3240
SERUCH	<b>3033</b>	130	<b>3163</b>	330	3363
NACHOR****	<b>3163</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>3342</b>	304	3467
THARRHA	<b>3342</b>	70	<b>3412</b>	205	3547
ABR(A)AM	<b>3412</b>	100	<b>3512</b>	175	3587
ISAAC	<b>3512</b>	60	<b>3572</b>	180	3692
JACOB	<b>3572</b>			147	3719

\* Matusala bore Lamech at age 187 per Alexandrinus, and dies 782 years later at 969.

\*\* Arphaxad lived 430 years after the birth of Cainan II per Alexandrinus, and dies at age 565.

\*\*\* Heber lived 370 years after the birth of Phaleg per Alexandrinus, and dies at age 504.

\*\*\*\* Nachor bore Tharrha at age 79 per Alexandrinus, and dies 129 years later at 304.

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Text:	LXX Alexandrinus	LXX Alexandrinus	LXX Alexandrinus	LXX Alexandrinus	LXX Alexandrinus
Name:	Calculated year of birth (Anno Mundi)	Age at birth of son per text	Calculated year of birth of son (Anno Mundi)	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi)
ADAM	0	230	230	930	930
SETH	230	205	435	912	1142
ENOS	435	190	625	905	1340
CAINAN I	625	170	795	910	1535
MALELEEL	795	165	960	895	1690
JARED	960	162	1122	962	1922
ENOCH	1122	165	1287	365	1487
MATHUSALA*	1287	<b>187</b>	<b>1474</b>	969	2256
LAMECH	<b>1474</b>	188	<b>1662</b>	753	2227
NOE	<b>1662</b>	500	<b>2162</b>	950	2612
SEM	<b>2162</b>	100	<b>2262</b>	600	2762
ARPHAXAD**	<b>2262</b>	135	<b>2397</b>	<b>565</b>	2827
CAINAN II	<b>2397</b>	130	<b>2527</b>	460	2857
SALA	<b>2527</b>	130	<b>2657</b>	460	2987
HEBER***	<b>2657</b>	134	<b>2791</b>	<b>504</b>	3161
PHALEG	<b>2791</b>	130	<b>2921</b>	339	3130
RAGAU	<b>2921</b>	132	<b>3053</b>	339	3260
SERUCH	<b>3053</b>	130	<b>3183</b>	330	3383
NACHOR****	<b>3183</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>3262</b>	304	3487
THARRHA	<b>3262</b>	70	<b>3332</b>	205	3467
ABR(A)AM	<b>3332</b>	100	<b>3432</b>	175	3507
ISAAC	<b>3432</b>	60	<b>3492</b>	180	3612
JACOB	<b>3492</b>			147	3639

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS

**The Samaritan Pentateuch** is a version of the Pentateuch, in Hebrew, preserved by the Samaritans (an off-shoot of Judaism). It expands the information contained in the Masoretic Text used by Jews and contains data that seems to relate to a family of Pentateuch texts that were found among the “Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947. The Samaritan text was probably revised from the Jewish Pentateuch in the 2nd century BCE. The dates I am using are second hand (try finding anything about the chronology of the SP in your local library) from Dissertation V of Wm. Whiston’s translation of the works of Josephus (see below). I cannot vouch for their accuracy, since Mr. Whiston seems to have made arbitrary corrections where he felt the data was “corrupted”. The data also does not extend as far as that for the other sources I deal with above and below. The current copies of the SP have the dates below, and these are confirmed by Eusebius (4th Century CE) in his “Chronicle”. Alternatively, Jerome (late 4th to early 5th Century CE) gives a couple different dates, which are given in the notes below.

Text:	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Name:	Calculated year of birth (Anno Mundi)	Age at birth of son per text	Calculated year of birth of son (Anno Mundi)	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi)
ADAM	0	130	130	930	930
SETH	130	105	235	912	1042
ENOSH	235	90	325	905	1140
KENAN I	325	70	395	910	1235
MAHALALEL	395	65	460	895	1290
JARED	460	62	522	847	1307
ENOCH	522	65	587	365	887
METHUSELAH	587	67*	654	720	1307
LAMECH	654	53**	707	653	1307
NOAH	707	500	1207	950	1657
SHEM	1207	100	1307	600	1807
ARPACHSHAD	1307	135	1442	438	1745
KENNAN II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SHELAH	1442	130	1572	433	1875
EBER	1572	134	1706	404	1976
PELEG	1706	130	1836	239	1945
REU	1836	132	1968	239	2075
SERUG	1968	130	2098	230	2198
NAHOR	2098	79	2177	148	2246
TERAH	2177	70	2247	145	2322
ABRA(HA)M	2247	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
ISAAC	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
JACOB	Not Available			Not Available	Not Available

\* According to Jerome, the Samaritans held that Methuselah was 187 at the birth of Lamech.

\*\* According to Jerome, the Samaritans held that Lamech was 182 at the birth of Noah.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS

**Josephus** was a Jewish writer of the latter half of the 1st Century CE. He was the son of an aristocratic family who got involved in the great war of the Jews against Rome between 66 & 73 CE. He was captured early in the war and defected to the Romans. Part of the deal was he had to write about the Jewish War (as the Romans called it) in an effort to dissuade his fellow Jews from attempting such a rebellion again. In the process, he also wrote an account of Hebrew history called the "Antiquities of the Jews". It is from Dissertation V in the back of the 1982 reprint of the 1960 Kregal edition of Wm. Whiston's 1737 English translation that I got my dates. This edition combined the 1867 edition of Wm P. Nimmo (Edinburgh, Scotland) with an undated "standard edition" published by Porter & Coates (Philadelphia, PA, ca 1870 to 1890). I took the numbers I used directly from the text where it was not missing (see below).

Text:	Josephus	Josephus	Josephus	Josephus	Josephus
Name:	Calculated year of birth (Anno Mundi)	Age at birth of son per text	Calculated year of birth of son (Anno Mundi)	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi)
ADAM	0	230	230	930	930
SETH	230	205	435	912	1142
ENOS	435	190	625	905	1340
CAINAN I	625	170	795	910	1535
MALELEEL	795	165	960	895	1690
JARED	960	162	1122	962	1922
ENOCH	1122	165	1287	365	1487
MATHUSELA	1287	187	1474	969	2256
LAMECH	1474	182	1656	777	2251
NOAH	1656	500	2156	950	2606
SEM	2156	112*	2268	Not Given	
ARPHAXAD	2268	<u>135</u>	2403	Not Given	
CAINAN II	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Given	
SALA	2403	<u>130</u>	2533	Not Given	
EBER	2533	<u>134</u>	2667	Not Given	
PHALEG	2667	<u>130</u>	2797	Not Given	
RAGAU	2797	<u>130</u>	2927	Not Given	
SARUG	2927	<u>132</u>	3059	Not Given	
NAHOR	3059	79**	3138	Not Given	
TERAH	3138	<u>70</u>	3208	<u>205</u>	3343
ABRA(A)M	3208	100	3308	175	3383
ISAAC	3308			185	3493
JACOB					

\* Josephus does not give Sem's age at the birth of Arphaxad, but says that it was 12 years after the flood. If the flood was 100 years after Sem's birth, that would make Shem 112 at Arphaxad's birth. However, the age of 112 must be considered approximate due to the problem with the 2 year discrepancy mentioned in the notes on the MT.

\*\* I could not find a place where Whiston's text gives the age of Nahor at the birth of Terah. In Dissertation V, Whiston has 79 as the age in the standard text (with 28 or 29 as variants) but his translation omits any mention of Nahor's birth of Terah, and seems to confuse Terah's father Nahor with Terah's son Nahor (brother of Abram). This may have been accidentally omitted from the edition of his translation that I consulted. Also, through alternate reading I realized that when Whiston favors a variant reading over the one most editors prefer he may pass it off as the "standard text" and then calls the actual reading a variant. Take that into consideration above. If you can, refer to H. St. John Thackeray's translation in the Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1926). I was not in a position to do so myself at the time this was composed.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS

**The Book of Jubilees** was a composition made by sectarian Jews somewhere in Palestine, probably in the 1st or late 2nd century BCE. The dates here are from R. H. Charles' English translation of the Ethiopian translation (in APOT, vol. 2, 1913). Until the finding of fragments of Hebrew scrolls of Jubilees among the "Dead Sea Scrolls" in 1947, the Ethiopian was the only version available. A re-interpretation of the book of Genesis in story form as though relayed directly from God to Moses via an angel. The name is from its characteristic of dating events by Jubilees (49 yr periods), Weeks (of 7 yrs each), and (single) Years. The era that of the creation of the world (same as Anno Mundi). An Example: 5th Year, 2nd Week, 40th Jubilee = 1923 AM.

Text:	Jubilees	Jubilees	Jubilees	Jubilees	Jubilees	Jubilees
Name:	Year of birth (Anno Mundi) per text	Calculated age at birth of son	Year of birth of son (Anno Mundi) per text	Age at death per text	Calculated year of death (Anno Mundi) = Y.O.B. + age at death	Year of death (Anno Mundi) per text
ADAM	0	130	130	930	930	930
SETH	130	105	235	Not Stated		N/S
ENOS	235	90	325	Not Stated		N/S
KENAN I	325	70	395	Not Stated		N/S
MAHALALEL	395	66	461	Not Stated		N/S
JARED	461	61	522	Not Stated		N/S
ENOCH	522	65	587	Not Stated		N/S
METHUSELAH	587	65	652	Not Stated		N/S
LAMECH*	652	55	707	Not Stated		N/S
NOAH*	707	500	1207	950	1657	1659
SHEM**	1207	103	1310	Not Stated		N/S
ARPACHSHAD	1310	65	1375	Not Stated		N/S
KAINAM (II)	1375	57	1432	Not Stated		N/S
SHELAH	1432	71	1503	Not Stated		N/S
EBER	1503	64	1567	Not Stated		N/S
PELEG***	1567	12 / 61	1579 / 1628	Not Stated		N/S
REU***	1579 / 1628	108 / 59	1687	Not Stated		N/S
SEROH	1687	57	1744	Not Stated		N/S
NAHOR	1744	62	1806	Not Stated		N/S
TERAH	1806	70	1876	Not Stated		N/S
ABRA(HA)M	1876	104	1980	175	2051	2051
ISAAC	1980	66	2046	180	2160	2162
JACOB	2046			Not Stated		N/S

\* Noah's date of birth is only given as in the 3rd Week of the 15th Jubilee. Lamech could have been anywhere between 49 & 55 years old at the time (701-707 AM). The date Noah had Shem is given as 3rd Year of the 5th Week of the 25th Jubilee (1207 AM). If Noah is taken to have been 500 years old at the birth of Shem (per the MT, SP and LXX) then we can calculate backwards to obtain 55 as Lamech's age at Noah's birth (in the year 707 AM).

\*\* The age of Shem at Arpachshad's birth is not dated, perhaps to avoid the 2 year discrepancy discussed in the notes to the MT and Josephus. It does say it was 2 years after the flood, and the start of the flood is clearly dated to the 6th Year of the 5th Week of the 27th Jubilee (1308 AM), so this makes Shem 103 at his son's birth.

\*\*\* 12 years of age is a little young for Peleg to father Reu, and 108 a little old for Reu to father Seroh. The date for the former is given as 4th Year of the 2nd Week of the 33rd Jubilee (1579 AM) but this is probably an error for the 34th Jubilee (making the date 1628 AM). Then Peleg would be 61 yrs old at Reu's birth and Reu 59 years old at Seroh's birth.

**Note: I have calculated the dates one would expect Adam, Noah, Abraham and Isaac to have died based on their ages at death, and found some to be at variance by 2 years. This may be connected to the flood dating problem, or adjustments for partial years, or to scribal errors and emendations during translation into the Ethiopian language. I have not had an opportunity to check the DSS fragments of Jubilees for variant dates or ages.**