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gnificant differences between the Hebrew and Greek genealogies of [Genesis 5](#) and [11](#). Do these differences really matter?

“I want you understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return”—[Philippians 1:9](#) NLT

The Bibles that we use today are generally based on a Hebrew Refined Master Text, usually the Biblica Hebraica. A comparison of the genealogies in [Genesis 5:1-32](#) and [Genesis 11:10-26](#) in the Old Testament in our modern Bibles, which are translated from the Hebrew Text, with the Greek Septuagint Version (LXX), reveals that the Greek version has more years between the time of Adam’s creation and Abraham, because: (1) The listed mens’ ages when their son is born are generally higher, often by 100 years; and (2) Cainan is included in the Greek Septuagint text, but not in the Hebrew text. However, the overall length of their lives remains the same, in the both the Hebrew and the Greek texts.

Below are listed the names of the men in the genealogies of [Genesis 5](#) and **11**, where the

Hebrew and the Greek texts differ, and the ages at the birth of their son, first in the Hebrew, next in the Greek, and then the differences in these two ages.

Genesis 5:3—Adam, 130 . . . 230 . . . 100

Genesis 5:6—Seth, 105 . . . 205 . . . 100

Genesis 5:9—Enosh, 90 . . . 190 . . . 100

Genesis 5:12—Kenan, 70 . . . 170 . . . 100

Genesis 5:15—Mahalalel, 65 . . . 165 . . . 100

Genesis 5:21—Enoch, 65 . . . 165 . . . 100

Genesis 5:25—Methusaleh, 187 . . . 167 . . . -20

Genesis 5:28—Lamech, 182 . . . 188 . . . 6

Genesis 11:12—Arpachshad, 35 . . . 135 . . . 100

Genesis 11:13—Caianan (not listed in Hebrew text) . . . 130 . . . 130

Genesis 11:14—Shelah, 30 . . . 130 . . . 100

Genesis 11:16—Eber, 34 . . . 134 . . . 100

Genesis 11:18—Peleg, 30 . . . 130 . . . 100

Genesis 11:20—Reu, 32 . . . 132 . . . 100

Genesis 11:22—Serug, 30 . . . 130 . . . 100

Genesis 11:24—Nahor, 29 . . . 79 . . . 100

The following three articles by Henry B. Smith, which are available on the internet, document the case for using the Septuagint genealogies in [Genesis 5](#) and [11](#), in preference to the genealogies in the standard Hebrew text that all of our Bible translations have:

- (1) “MT, SP, or LXX? Deciphering a Chronological and Textual conundrum in [Genesis 5](#)”
- (2) “Methuselah’s Begetting Age in [Genesis 5:25](#) and the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Closer Look at the Textual and Historical Evidence”
- (3) “From Adam to Abraham: An Update on the [Genesis 5](#) and [11](#) Research Project: Dec 16, 2017”

The fact that Luke’s genealogy includes “Cainan” ([Luke 3:36](#)), gives some credence to the case that the Septuagint genealogies in [Genesis 5](#) and [11](#) may be more accurate than the Hebrew text’s genealogies. If true, this would have the net effect of adding at least [1,250](#) years to the time from Adam’s creation to Abraham. Expressed slightly differently, it would mean that Adam was created at least [1,250](#) years earlier, meaning that humans have been on earth for about 7,300 years, rather than just over 6,000 years.

However, as strong as the case may be for the Septuagint’s genealogies, it is wise not to be dogmatic. Why? The very fact that the inclusion of “Cainan” in the genealogy of [Luke 3](#) differs by comparison with the standard Hebrew text of [Genesis 11](#), should also give us pause. If God allowed valid copies of his Word, the Bible, to have such differences indicates that using genealogies to create a rigid chronological timetable, or timeline, is likely not what God wants us to do! This is one area where there is enough doubt as to which genealogical table regarding the men’s ages at their son’s birth is correct — the Hebrew or the Greek —

that we can conclude it is not really important, especially since the overall length of their lives remains the same.

We know that Genesis is a very accurate historical document, including the genealogies. **Romans 5:12** refers to **“the first man Adam.”** **Jude 14** refers to **“Enoch, of the seventh generation from Adam” (NAB)**. Jesus and Peter both referred to **“Noah”** as a real person (**Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:26; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5**). The genealogy of **Luke 3:34-38** lists the exact same men as the genealogies in **Genesis 5 & 11**, except for the fact that **“Cainan”** is not in the Hebrew manuscripts of **Genesis 11:12,13**, but is included in the Greek (LXX) manuscripts, and is in **Luke 3:35,36**.

We know from the genealogical ages documented **Genesis 5 & 11**, and other Bible facts, combined with secular history, that humans have been on earth for at least **6,000** years, and perhaps as long as 7,300 years. This approximate difference of 1,250 is not really significant because our faith is not in any way dependent on exactly how long humans have lived on earth. We do know that God **“made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth” (Acts 17:26 NAB)**.