

Kenan

Kenan, the great-grandson of Adam, the grandson of Seth and the son of Enosh, appears on genealogical lists of the antediluvial heroes (Gen 5:9–14; 1 Chr 1:2). Kenan was born when Enosh was ninety years old. Kenan begot Mahalel at the age of seventy. Kenan lived for 910 years.

Kenan is often paralleled to Cain for the following reasons: the names are etymologically related, both figures are linked to fathers with nearly identical names meaning “man, humanity” (Adam and Enosh), and the genealogy of Cain and Kenan contains similar names, but in a slightly altered sequence (Gen 4:17–22 vs. Gen 5:9–14).

The etymology of Kenan and Cain is disputed. Whereas Gen 4:1 derives Cain explicitly from the

stem *q-n-y* (“to acquire”), both names probably originate from a stem *q-y-n* (“to form, shape, forge.” The suffix *-ān* is mostly interpreted as a diminutive ending. Therefore, Kenan might be a “little Cain.” Maybe Kenan is a short form of a nominal sentence, namely the predicate with omission of the theophoric element: “Smith is (X).” However, Kenan could also be linked to Arabic *qīn* “servant.” In that respect it could be a short form with the hypocoristic ending “servant (of X)” like the Safatenic full form *qn'l* (“servant of El”). A similar short form of the same name might be Safatenic *qnn*. Jerome translates *Cainan* with “lament or their possession” relating *Cainan* to the Hebrew noun *qinā* or the root *q-n-y* (Jerome, *Nom. hebr.* 4.2–3).

Furthermore, Kenan (*Qaynān*) is the name of a deity attested in Sabaeen inscriptions. *Qaynān* might have been a patron deity for metalworkers worshipped mainly by the *Ḥasa' um* tribe, though the texts do not provide an indication for a proper interpretation. This deity is often simply called “God of the *Ḥasa' um* (tribe).”

Kenan appears twice in the NT as Cainan (Gk. Καϊνάμ) in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus: as the son of Enosh (Luke 3:37–38) and as the son of Arphaxad (Luke 3:36). The second Kenan is part of the genealogy of Shem according to the LXX version of Gen 10:24; 11:12. This postdiluvian Kenan lived in the time between Noah and Abraham.

The book of *Jubilees* adds the name of both the mother (Noam, sister of Enosh) and the wife of the antediluvian Kenan (Mualeleth, sister of Kenan; *Jub.* 4:13–15). The postdiluvian Kenan married Melka, daughter of Madai, and became father of Shelah. He has found an inscription with the secrets of astronomy and astrology (*Jub.* 8:1–5).

Bibliography: ■ Becking, B., “Kenan,” DDD (Leiden 1995) 902. ■ Hess, R. S., “Kenan (Person),” ABD 4 (New York 1992) 16. ■ Hess, R. S., *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11* (AOAT 234; Kevelaer 1993). ■ Höfner, M., “Die vorislamischen Religionen Arabiens,” in *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer* (ed. H. Gese et al.; Stuttgart 1970) 233–402. ■ Jacobus, H. R., “The Curse of Cainan (*Jub.* 8.1–5): Genealogies in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 and a Mathematical Pattern,” *JSP* 18.3 (2009) 207–32. ■ Rechenmacher, H., *Althebräische Personennamen* (LOS 2/1; Münster 2012). ■ Ryckmans, G., *Les noms propres sud-sémitiques* (Le Muséon 2/1; Leuven 1934).

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