

Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church
10 Downing Street, Oakleigh, Vic. 3166

DHW

Bible Study Class

BOOK OF GENESIS

Lesson 4

Genesis 5

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians do not think much about the records of biblical genealogies. In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, there are three genealogical records: 4:17-5:32; 10:1-32; 11:10-32. But contrary to general thoughts about genealogies, biblical genealogies teach important things which are relevant to the whole message of the Word of God.

In Genesis 4:17-26, the genealogy of Cain, the ungodly line, is given in contrast to the godly line of Seth from Adam. The contribution of the ungodly line of Cain was cultural and technological culminating in the wickedness of Lamech. On the other hand, the contribution of the godly line of Seth is theological, describing *then began men to call upon the name of the LORD* (4:26).

A common feature of these two parallel genealogical accounts is that each genealogy ends with the names of three sons. The line of Cain ends with the three sons of Lamech, namely,

Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-cain; the line of Seth ends with three sons of Noah, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

The right approach to a proper understanding of the genealogies is to take the text as it is. There is no valid reason to resort to any hypothetical documentary gymnastics to try to explain them. The accounts were written by holy men chosen and superintended by God. There is no question of its reliability and trustworthiness.

STUDY THE WORD

Genealogies

Reading through Genesis 5, one cannot help but be reminded of the solemn and sure fact that all men die, some earlier than others. God is true to His Word that the penalty of sin is death. However, the overriding purpose of the chapter is the evidence of the development of the human race from the first man on earth to Noah. These people are not mythological or imaginary figures. These people were referred to as historic figures by the writer of 1 Chronicles 1:1-4, and by Luke in his Gospel (3:36-38)

The idea that there may be gaps in these genealogies, that is, if the text says, *And Seth . . . begat Enos*, it may mean that there were other children born to Seth before Enos, cannot be conclusively proven. On the other hand, the assumption that there are no gaps in these genealogies cannot be completely dismissed. If that is so, the

total number of years from the Creation to the Flood is 1,656. It is computed as follows:

Patriarch	Year Born	Year of Death
Adam	1	930
Seth	130	1042
Enos	235	1140
Cainan	325	1275
Mahalaleel	395	1290
Zared	469	1422
Enoch	622	987
Methuselah	687	1656
Lamech	874	1651
Noah	1056	
Shem	1556	

The Flood occurred when Noah was 600 years old (7:11) and in that same year, Methuselah died.

The longevity of life for the patriarchs may seem strange. Some tried to explain the “years” as “months” then in that case Seth begat Enos when the former was about 9 years old! The best comment on this is Leupold’s: *He . . . who is duly impressed by the excellence of man’s original estate, will have no difficulty in accepting the common explanation that even under the curse of sin man’s constitution displayed such vitality that it did not at first submit to the ravages of time until after many centuries had passed.*”¹

¹ H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, vol. I, 234.

This is indeed a reflection of divine grace and the blessings of God.

The Generations of Adam

The opening paragraph of this chapter (vv.1-4) is of no small import. Adam, the first man, had no parents. His birth began with God, who created him. The declarative statement is simple and plain and it leaves no shadow of a doubt concerning the origin of man on earth. Man is created by God; full grown and not through the process of evolution based on Darwinian Theory.

It is repeated here that man is made in the image or likeness of God. These two words “image” and “likeness” are used interchangeably (v.2). The constitution of man is more than just flesh and blood. Man is a living soul or spirit. That makes the human race special and apart from the rest of creation.

In verse 3, the phrase, *in his likeness, after his image*, is mentioned here in contrast to the earlier declaration that Adam was created in the image of God. Adam fell by disobeying God, and he passed on his fallen nature to all his posterity without any exception. So death reigns from Adam to Moses and to the present day.²

² Romans 5:13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

It is quite clear that the intent of the writer here is to trace the godly line of Adam's children through Seth, as opposed to the ungodly line of Adam through Cain (4:17-24). God, who is true to His promise, began to trace the development of the godly line to its ultimate descendant in the person of Jesus Christ, the one whose heel would be bruised by Satan but He would crush the head of Satan. Matthew used the same expression: *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham* (1:1). Abraham is traced to the line of Seth, the godly line. Two seeds and two genealogy lines war against each other (Genesis 3:15; 4:17-24; 5:3-32). And only in Christ Jesus is paradise - before the Fall - regained!

The Structural Format

The account of the genealogy takes a consistent pattern:

1. The age of the father – *Adam* – given at the time of the firstborn son.
2. The name of the firstborn son given—*Seth*.
3. The remaining years of the father after the firstborn son—*eight hundred years*.
4. The mention of subsequent children born to him—*and he begat sons and daughters*.
5. The total age of the patriarch—*all the days of that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years*.

6. His death—and he died.

From Adam to Noah, there were ten generations.

The Format Interrupted

But for Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, this pattern of death was broken. All the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five days, and Enoch *was not; for God took him* (v. 24). He disappeared from the earth. In fact, he was translated into the presence of God. There was a similar incident later in the Old Testament. Elijah also did not die. He was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire.³ The final word is from the inspired pages of Hebrew 11:5: *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

It is not clearly explained why Enoch did not die, and was taken away by God. The only clue is the expression that *he walked with God*. This expression is mentioned twice (vv.22, 24). What does it mean? It cannot mean that he walked with God in the physical sense. God walked with man even before he sinned in the Garden of Eden. However, Malachi 2:6 throws some light to its meaning: *The law of truth was in his mouth, and*

³ 2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

The reference here was to Levi, the priestly tribe. Levi's ministry of preaching and teaching the will of God to turn Israel away from her iniquity was described by God as walking with Him. The action speaks of upholding God's holiness and of devotion to His will. Thus Enoch did this. The book of Jude in the New Testament describes that Enoch, the *seventh from Adam* was a prophet of righteousness in his time. He preached to the generations in his time. The text in Genesis states that Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah (v.22). One bible scholar suggested that Enoch's life changed after Methuselah was born—*the baby turned him to God . . . sometimes God puts a baby in a family just for that purpose.*⁴

Another theological truth concerning the translation of Enoch to the presence of God is that life continues after death, or that there is life beyond the grave. There is the hope of a glorified body that is incorruptible with God. This translation of Enoch as well as of Elijah is a precursor of the rapture of the Church in the last days.⁵

⁴ J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible: Genesis through Deuteronomy, vol.1, 34.

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the

Noah

Noah was born to Lamech when the latter was 182 years old. After that Lamech lived for another 595 years before he died. He was the only one who gave an explanation why He named his son Noah. Noah was the first man recorded in the genealogy list to have been born after the demise of Adam. Adam had been dead for about 126 years when Noah was born.

At the birth of Noah, Lamech said, *This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed* (v.29). What did Lamech mean by this? Various answers have been given to explain why Lamech said those words about his son Noah. Was he prophesying or was he expressing a wish or hope in his son? Did Lamech express this hope because the curse which was spoken to Adam would come to an end with his death? It is very difficult to come to a definite answer. It is better, however, to view Lamech's words as an expression of his hope that Noah would be able to lift his own toil and pain. Lamech exercised this hope by faith that some day the curse would come to an end. Lamech

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

In some theological circles it is believed Enoch is identified as one of the two witnesses who are mentioned in the book of Revelation 11:3-12. The other witness is Elijah.

would have recalled the promise of Genesis 3:15.⁶

Noah was five hundred years old when he begat three sons, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The following are the two genealogies of Cain and Seth:

4:17-22	5:1-32
1. Adam	1. Adam
2. Cain	2. Seth
3. Enoch	3. Enos
4. Irad	4. Kenan
5. Mehujael	5. Mahalalel
6. Methushael	6. Jared
7. Lamech	7. Enoch
_____	8. Methuselah
Jabal Jubal Tubal-cain	9. Lamech
	10. Noah

	Shem Ham Japheth

These two parallel genealogies are distinguished by Scriptures. On the one hand, the line of Cainites was portrayed as increasingly godless, and on the other, the line of Sethites as godly. Thus the two divisions between the *seed of the serpent* and the *seed of the woman* are clearly delineated. And so the divine comment states that Enoch proclaimed to the godless in his time the repentance, righteousness and divine judgment. The wickedness of the godless culminated in the time of Noah.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The refrain “and he died” which echoes throughout the chapter captures our attention. It should unmistakably remind us that man must surely die even though he may live for a long time on earth. This is the truth as God had declared that the man who sinned against Him must surely die. This fact in itself tells us that God exists. He is there whether we like it or not, or whether we believe it or not. One day, all people (the unbelieving) have to stand before Him at the Judgment of the Great White Throne which is prophesied in the book of Revelation 20:11-12. And if anyone’s name is not found in the Book of Life, would be cast into the Lake of fire to be tormented forever and ever. In view of this sobering truth, we ought to heed God’s Word and order our lives accordingly.

This brings us to the next practical value of this chapter. How

⁶ G.Ch. Aalders, Genesis, vol. 1, 143-144.

can we order our lives in a manner that pleases God? Enoch sets the example. He walked with God. Enoch walked by faith in God believing that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:5-6). Enoch maintained a close and intimate relationship with God, obeying Him and worshipping Him. And rewarded him by translating him into His presence and delivered him from experiencing decay, corruption and death. Like Enoch, we can please God when we walk by faith believing what God declares in His Word and that He will reward us when we obey and walk in His ways. Indeed, all who repent and believe in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God says, are saved from the impending eternal judgment in the Lake of fire, and dwell in paradise where God is! Have we been walking by faith in the Lord?

There is another practical aspect for our learning from this chapter. In contrast to Cain whose descendants were ungodly, is Seth, whose descendants were godly. Lamech the seventh mentioned in Cain's line declared that if Cain his forefather would avenge his enemy seven-fold, his enemy would be avenged *seventy and sevenfold*. He speaks of greater violence, and is it not true that men today resort to killing their fellow human kind in resolving their troubles with one another. Unlike Seth, his descendants walk in the path of righteousness with God. Let us be like Seth to teach and admonish our

children in the fear of God, and to love and obey Him. It is important that we teach our children at a very early age to believe and know God, love and obey Him so that they might be saved.

Today, men live for about one hundred and twenty years unlike those men in this chapter who lived for hundreds of years.⁷ If men today could live for hundreds of years like those men of old, imagine what kind of world it would have been! This writer believes that the world would be over populated, and there would be more intolerable violence which brings pain and sorrow and premature deaths. It would be a very cruel and wicked world! As the world is today, it is already a cruel and wicked world. How many times worse if men were to live many more years on earth! It is God's mercy that men live for one hundred and twenty years at most. GOD BLESS YOU!

⁷ **Genesis 6:3** And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.