

Text: Genesis 5:1-32

Title: And He Died: Adam's Race

Truth: Though death is everywhere, we can still walk with God.

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Introduction

Now that we have studied the initial creation (1:1-2:3), the history of the earth through the fall, curse, and Cain and Abel (2:4-4:26), we are now taken by the author to his third section, the history of Adam's family. While there was some genealogical information in 4:1-2, 16-22, and 25-26, this chapter contains the first detailed genealogy of the Bible.

Structure of the Chapter

There are ten main characters listed in chapter 5, from Adam to Noah. Each person has about 3 verses devoted to them, in this general form:

1. The man lived so many years and had a son.
2. After he had his son, he lived so many more years.
3. During that time, he had more sons and daughters.
4. The length of his life was so many years total.
5. He died.

There are a couple of exceptions to this pattern. The most notable of these is the translation of Enoch. Instead of dying, he was translated directly into God's presence. Enoch is also said to have "walked with God" for 300 years (5:22, 24). This is not mentioned of any of the other men in the list. God, give us more people who walk with you!

Another exception to this pattern is Lamech in 5:29. There he names Noah and gives an explanation given for the name.

The final exception is Noah himself, who is listed as having three sons, who is older than all the other men at the birth of their notable sons, and a who has a large section of the Bible (chapters 6 through 9) focused on his life and times. At the end of that section, #4 and #5 from the above pattern are recorded (9:28-29).

Chronological Genealogy

- A. Despite their reputation as the most boring parts of the Bible, genealogies are quite interesting. There are two basic kinds of genealogies in Scripture. One is a plain ordered list of births: A had child B, who had child C, who had child D, etc.
- B. There is a variant of the first type that is a summary genealogy that is presented in such a way that it is clear that names or generations are skipped for purposes of brevity and to focus on the most important people. The genealogy in Matthew 1, with three groups of 14 generations, is of this sort.
- C. The other basic type of genealogy is a chronological genealogy, or chrono-genealogy. It contains numbers of years that, while perhaps incomplete in some instances, are presented in such a way that the years can be added to find out an exact or near-exact length of time from the first person to the last. The genealogy in Genesis 5 is of this latter type, as is the one in chapter 11. Refer to the spreadsheet “The Genealogy of Genesis 5.”
- D. These genealogies, which are historical documents of utmost reliability, are one of the main reasons that we believe the earth is young. We can calculate that Earth is on the order of 6,000 to 8,000 years old. It is not millions of years, and we know so because humans kept genealogical records that take us all the way back to the first man up to Abraham. Secular historical records then can connect our calendar systems back to Abraham.

Longevity

- A. The extreme longevity of these men is notable. The average lifespan of the first ten generations is 857 years—912 if you do not count Enoch’s abnormally low 365 years. Methuselah lived to longest, at 969 years.
- B. This longevity is likely a cause for ridicule among people who doubt the veracity of God’s word. But it does not seem incredible to me at all. The initial design of the human body was to live forever. It had self-restorative and self-repair capabilities that we see in shadow form today. God’s design included safeguards against

rogue cells being generated in the trillions of cellular reproductions that happen in the human body—and such rogue cellular activity would not even have happened in the first place before the Fall. Those mechanisms have become damaged. There were no genetic mutations to start with. Environmental conditions were perfect in the garden and probably continued to be quite good for some time afterward, certainly in comparison to what we experience today.

- C. The pre-flood condition of the earth is probably a major part of the longevity. I say this because after the flood, you can see that lifespans rapidly drop in the Genesis 11. The average is just under 292 years, falling from the 600s rapidly down into the 200s. Whereas before the flood only Methuselah died after his notable son died,¹ after the flood was a slightly different story. Three men experienced the loss of their offspring before them. Shem died after both his notable son *and* grandson. Eber outlived the following *six* generations of sons listed in the text, including Abram! He could have known Isaac and Jacob. That's how short world history is. But what sorrow this man experienced because with the blessing of longevity came the ability to witness longer periods of the world's degradation.

Image of God, Image of Adam

- A. The words *image* and *likeness* are used in Genesis 1:26-27 and 5:1-3. I remember reading of some theologians who spend a lot of time on these two words, supposing there are distinctions between them that deserve a lot of attention. This is not a profitable use of time because the words are probably paired, like many words are in Hebrew, simply as a way of emphasizing or repeating for clarity what is meant (a *Hebraism*). *Image* and *likeness* are basically synonyms expressing that humans are like God in some respects.
- B. What is the image of God? The definition that I use is that the *image of God* is the personal, spiritual, and moral likeness of man to God. It has to do with what the constitution of man is, that is, what man *is*, not what he does or that he relates to things outside

¹ I do not count Jared because his son Enoch did not die.

of himself. Of course, what he *is* affects how he behaves and how he relates to others, but the image is “underneath” those things, more basic or fundamental than them. We are persons—beings with an intellect, emotion, and will—like God is. We have a spirit, like God is Spirit. We have morality, that is, an ability to discern right from wrong which is built into our conscience by God. We have the ability to communicate and relate to others because God built into us the facility for language.

- C. The “relational” likeness view says that the image of God is the experiencing of a relationship with God. That is not accurate; we can have a relationship because we are made in the image of God—again, the image is what we are, not what we do.
- D. The “functional” likeness view says that the image of God is what man does, that he has dominion over creation. Indeed, he does, and he can do so *because* he is made the image of God. With that ability, God charged our race with a command to steward His creation. The duty is not the image; the underlying “stuff we are made of” allows us to do our assigned duty.
- E. The “physical” image view is that we look like God and God looks like us (Mormon belief). But the image of God is not just physical. It may include physical features, if we suppose that God made man in the form of the perfect humanity that Christ would take upon Himself millennia later when He was incarnated. But the image is not primarily nor only physical. This is true if for no other reason than because God is Spirit (John 4:24); He does not have a material body. The doctrine of the Mormon church believes that God has ears, eyes, and mouth.² They mistake anthropomorphisms in Scripture for literal body parts.
- F. Do we still have the image of God today? In short, yes. Genesis 5:3 says that Adam had a son in his own (Adam’s) image. This speaks of the sin-damaged copy of God’s image from 5:1. Today, we still possess the image of God as part of our constitution, yet it has been marred by the Fall. It is damaged, wrinkled by sin, beclouded

² <https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2016/03/created-in-the-image-of-god?lang=eng>

by moral darkness. What other descriptions can you think of which would fit humanity's present situation?

There are a couple of verses which agree with this assessment. Genesis 9:6 gives the death penalty because man is created in God's image. In murder, an image-bearer is snuffed out, and the only sufficient "equal value" penalty for this is death.

James 3:9 also teaches us that men are made in the likeness of God. That is the reason why it is so out of place to curse men yet bless God, for men are created in God's image. 1 Corinthians 11:7 mentions this truth briefly as well.

Reign of Death

- A. Genesis 5 tells us that each man (except Enoch) died – 8 times it uses this phrase, with the ninth occurrence in 9:29 to complete the account. We know that the wages of sin is death according to Romans 6:23. Romans 5:12 explains this in that it teaches sin entered the world by one man, and that death came on the heels of sin.
- B. This is another reason that we believe in a young earth—because death came *after* the sin of Adam. Evolution teaches that there were millions of years of disease and death and *then* finally mankind came onto the scene. Death came before sin according to evolution; the reality is that sin came before death.
- C. Thus the Word of God in Genesis 2:17 is confirmed. Basically no one escapes the sentence of death except those few translated like Enoch, Elijah, and those alive at the rapture. They are special or "edge" cases, or "singularities" if you prefer. To that subject we next turn.

The Translation of Enoch

- A. The one exception listed in Genesis 5 does provide us with the insight that it is possible, however rare, for some people to avoid death. The general rule is given in Hebrews 9:27, where the Bible says that it is appointed for man to die once, and after that the judgment. Note that it does not say "after that, the reincarnation." There is only one life to live, and one judgment to face—believers

at the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10), all others at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

- B. Hebrews 11:5-6 tells us about Enoch. Why was he translated? First, he had faith. Second, he pleased God. This is the NT rendition of he “walked” with God (Noah also did this, Genesis 6:9). The commentary in 11:6 of Hebrews is that without faith it is impossible to please God. So, faith and pleasing God come together. But you cannot have the second without the first. If you do not trust God, mark it—you are displeasing Him. Everything you do is mired in a bog.
- C. Please note this oddity in the text. Almost every man on this list “lived” for so many years had a son, and then “lived” for so many more years and died. But Enoch lived, had a son, and *walked with God* for 300 years. Enoch did not just live. He walked with God. I want to point this out to you to ask this question: are you just living...or are you **walking with God** as you are living?
- D. One other man who was taken up without dying was Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). It is strange, is it not, that this man wished to die because he thought he alone was left of the servants of God (1 Kings 19:4, 10). Yet it was He who was not destined to ever die!
- E. Enoch and Elijah offer us a prototype for the rapture of the Church. All those who were Christians when they died will be resurrected before the coming 7-year tribulation and will be with Christ forever in their resurrected bodies.³ At the same time as that resurrected, those Christians who are still alive will be “caught up,” like Enoch and Elijah, to join those who preceded in death and be with Christ as well in resurrected bodies. The word for “caught up” literally means “kidnapped, snatched.” It is the *rapture* (from Latin). They will be snatched away from the earth in the twinkling of an eye. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-56 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. If this happens very soon, we will experience this blessed hope.

³ Before that, they are with Christ in some intermediate state or form. Whether they have some kind of “body” is debated by theologians.

Conclusion

The naming of Noah alerts us that something special is coming. He is predicted by his father Lamech to be involved in something regarding comforting humanity in its work, which was imposed upon it by the curse. Chapters 6 through 9 will deal with this.

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