

Genesis: *Adam's Family*
Genesis 5:1-32

Our journey through the book of Genesis continues, though you will find that our pace moving forward will be a bit more aggressive than in the past. Case in point, I intend to cover the entire fifth chapter of Genesis this morning! So, with no further ado, let us stand and read Genesis 5:1-32:

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands." ³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now, I suspect that many of you are already working out a plan to exit early. Maybe you can text someone to call you and pretend there is an emergency in the family, or maybe it's the trip to the bathroom that somehow results in you "missing" the sermon (my son Caleb had that trick down to a science when he was younger!). I get it. For some of us, reading the fifth chapter of Genesis feels something like reading the privacy policy on a bank statement. But listen: believe it or not, this is still the authoritative Word of God, and there is a lot more here than meets the eye. In fact, if you will stick with me for a few minutes, I think you may be amazed at how important and insightful this chapter is in light of God's promises and our place in His great story. That said, if you get up to "use the bathroom," we won't judge you.

My message will fall under four subheadings: 1) The Book of the Generations; 2) Promise Through Procreation; 3) The Seventh Son; and 4) The Son of Lamech.

I. The Book of the Generations

My first point is very brief, but it's worth noting. In vs. 1 we read, "This is the book (or the writings) of the generations of Adam." For the first time, the author of Genesis (who we assume is Moses) draws upon a document that has been handed down for generations. Moses is not claiming that this information was revealed to him in the tabernacle by God in one of their frequent meetings. Instead, the author of Genesis reveals that the information that follows is taken from "the writings" that chronicle the generations of Adam. Why is this noteworthy? Well, first of all, we should not be surprised that there are documents among the Hebrew speaking people that record the lineage of families. Such documents are still common today, and with the tools now available for DNA testing, tracing genealogies has become a massive industry throughout the world. There's nothing new about keeping genealogies. Since the dawn of time people have recorded and valued their family heritage because that's how we remember and honor our history.

Secondly, given the regular insertion of genealogies throughout the Old and New Testament, it is important to note that God's self-revelation and God's redeeming work in the world is consistently rooted in actual, historical people and events. Were you to read ancient myths and legends, you would be hard pressed to find long genealogies that feature a myriad of names and families. You might find an occasional myth or legend featuring fantastic tales of royal dynasties and royal families, but you will note that the names listed here in Genesis 5 are not royal figures, nor do we learn much about them at all. So why include this long genealogy in the first place? That question leads to our second subheading:

II. Promise Through Procreation

We will never properly understand the history of our faith apart from the promise God made in Genesis 3:15. Immediately after the creation of the first couple and the Fall, God makes a promise that establishes the premier context for the entire Old and New Testament. In Genesis 3:15, God promises that the seed of the first woman will one day crush the head of Deceiver. From that moment on, throughout the rest of the Old Testament, we are awaiting a descendant of Adam and Eve who will come as a Redeemer.

Now, note the nature of God's promise: the Redeemer will come through the line of Adam and Eve. The promise will come through procreation. So, who are the children of Adam and Eve? Well, we've already read of the first two sons named Cain and Abel. We know that the firstborn, Cain, murdered his younger brother Abel, and we learned that Cain departed from the presence of the Lord and established his family in the land of Nod, east of Eden. We later learned that the generations of Cain's family, all the way down to the infamous murderer named Lamech and his famous children, remained separated from the presence of God, and that is the last that we will hear of Cain and his descendants. Then, at the very end of chapter four, we learn that Adam and Eve bear a third son whom they name Seth. We are then left to assume that it will be Seth, or some descendant of Seth, who will serve as the fulfillment of God's promise, right? Abel is dead, Cain has abandoned the faith, so only Seth remains. Keep that in mind as we now look to the generations of Adam's family.

The genealogy begins with a prologue that reminds us of Adam's beginning. We read in vss. 1-2: This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the

likeness of God. 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. Note that those things in the Bible that are repeated are those things which are emphasized. 1) God created man—man did not evolve as a product of blind chance over billions of years. 2) God created man in God's image—it is God's image in every person ever conceived that accounts for the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings on planet earth. 3) God created humanity consisting of two genders: male and female—there are no other gender categories according to a biblical worldview. 4) God blessed His image bearers—God's blessing is experienced as the common grace of God's provision for all who bear His image; and 5) God named His image-bearers, "Adam," which is essentially the word, "Man."

Now, we know that the word "Adam" represents not only the general category of "man" or "mankind," but Adam is also the personal name given to the first man, the husband of Eve, and the father of Cain, Abel and Seth. Note however, that when we begin to read the generations of Adam, the only son named is Seth: 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Why would the book of the generations of Adam list Seth as the son of Adam and neglect to mention Cain and Abel? Our first inclination is to think that it would be redundant to mention the first two sons of Adam and Eve since Cain and Abel were already written about in chapter four...but then so was Seth. Seth was introduced previously at the end of chapter four as well, so why not mention all three sons in the generations of Adam?

The answer lies in understanding the particular kind of genealogy that is employed here in chapter 5. There are essentially two kinds of genealogies that we find in scripture: one is what scholars refer to as a *linear genealogy*, and the second is referred to as a *segmented genealogy*. I promise I won't drag this out, but it is actually important to note the difference.

A linear genealogy typically begins with an end in mind and provides only the descendants necessary to connect two parties. Imagine for a moment that I wanted to convince you that I am of royal bloodline. The only way I could prove my claim would be to trace my lineage back to some German nobleman, and to that end I would employ a linear genealogy. I would attempt to track how I am particularly linked to that nobleman by recounting one parent after another in order to draw the straightest line possible from that royal leader to me, or from me to that royal leader. I would not attempt, nor would it even be relevant, to list every child ever born into my extended family in order to support my claim. In fact, if my claim to royalty only required me to trace the fathers of my mother, I would not even include the fathers of my father because his family only traces back to famous fisherman...naturally.

If you were with us last Sunday, you might recall that the brief genealogy of Cain at the end of chapter four moved very quickly from one person to the next in order to link us to the infamous murderer, Lamech. Once we get to the famous Lamech, the nature of the genealogy changes into a segmented genealogy that documents the lives and contributions of Lamech's four famous children.

In the case of Adam's genealogy here in chapter five, the generations of Adam are first recounted in a linear manner for the sole purpose of tracing the line of Adam directly to the famous righteous man of God, Noah. To that end, we only learn of the descendants of Adam that directly link Adam to Noah, which is why Cain and Abel are not mentioned. You will note that once we get to Noah, the nature of the genealogy once again changes, and we are provided a segmented genealogy of Noah's three sons. In fact, the segmented genealogy slows way down and tells a long story about Noah and his sons that will take up several chapters, all of which will eventually explain how the line of Adam, through Seth, through Noah, ultimately connects us to "the father of the faith," Father Abraham! More on that later!

Now, there may have been greater detail in that ancient book of Adam's generations that included Cain and Abel along with the names of other children born to Adam and Eve. We learn in vs. 4 that Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters, but this linear account of Adam's lineage is not devoted to recounting the names and stories of Adam's descendants. This genealogy is included for the sole purpose of tracing God's faithful transfer of the promise through the line of Seth and his descendants until we get to Noah, the man of Adam's lineage with whom God will establish a covenant.

OK, before we move on to my next subheading, I do want us to revisit vs. 3 for just a moment. In vs. 3 we read: When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named his Seth.

The language Moses uses to describe the birth of Seth deserves some consideration. Remember that according to Genesis 1-2, God created Adam in His own image and likeness and then commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. That was all before the Fall and the introduction of sin into the world. That leaves us to wonder what procreation would have entailed had the Fall never happened—in other words, we could only assume that prior to the Fall, the image of God would have been *perfectly* transferred from Adam to his descendants without blemish. However, following the Fall of humanity, it may be significant that Adam's son Seth is said to bear the likeness and image of Adam...not God. The language and construction here is exactly the same as we find in Genesis 1-2, but Seth is said to be born in the image and likeness of his father, Adam.

I will admit that there are many ways we might interpret vs. 3, and you will find a great many interpretations from scholars who do not necessarily agree. For instance, we might conclude that because Seth is presented as the carrier of the promise that God made in Genesis 3:15 and his heritage leads us to many faithful men, including Noah, this description of Seth being born in the likeness and image of Adam may be a positive statement. Like his brother Abel, Seth represents the faithful image-bearing lineage of Adam and Eve, as opposed to Cain, who defiled and dishonored the image of God by killing his younger brother. Or, it could mean that Seth just looked a lot like his Dad!

On the other hand, this emphasis on Seth bearing the image and likeness of Adam may be a sad recognition that the image of God is now hidden due to the effects of the Fall, and the descendants of Adam will forever after be image bearers of their sin-sick fathers as opposed to

inheriting the glory of God's uncorrupted image as Adam once did. Clearly sin had an effect on how we bear the image of God as those born on this side of the Fall, yet we know that all men and women are made in the image of God, even if that image is veiled for a time. Now, before we get to Noah, we must pause to consider "the seventh son."

III. The Seventh Son

For the most part, the linear genealogy of Adam moves very quickly and follows a very specific pattern. The patriarch of Adam's line fathers a son at a particular age. We then learn how long the patriarch lived after the birth of that son and that the patriarch had other sons and daughters. We learn the total number of years that the patriarch lived, and then we learn that the patriarch died. For example, we read in vss. 6-8: 6 When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. 7 Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. 8 Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

Then, in vss. 9-11, we read: 9 When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. 10 Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. 11 Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

This pattern is used six times from Adam to Seth to Enosh to Kenan to Mahalel to Jared. The information is important, and it's helping us move quickly to the connection between Seth, the son of Adam, and Noah, the righteous man of God. But note the consistent reminder that all of these men, as faithful as they were, even as those who called upon the name of the LORD...they all died. Death is now the sad and inevitable end of life due to the effects of the Fall.

That is...with one notable exception.

When we get to the seventh generation of men born on planet earth, we learn in vs. 19 that Jared fathered Enoch; but Enoch is an exception to the pattern of his fathers. Look at vss. 21-24: When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. 22 Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Enoch, among all those who came before him, is uniquely remembered as a man who "walked with God." In fact, Enoch walked so closely with God that, unlike every other descendant of Adam, Enoch is remembered as one who did not experience death. This is a remarkable claim. According to the text, God took Enoch. The language is similar to the way God "took" the great prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 2:1 in a whirlwind.

Now, one might wonder if Enoch got consumed by a lion or fell into a deep hole, and because he disappeared and was never seen again, people *assumed* God fetched him up to heaven. When we read, "and he was not" in vs. 24, it leads us to conclude that Enoch literally vanished from existence. One day Enoch was there, walking closely with God, working his job, shepherding his family, and the next day he was gone...never to be seen again. The truth is, unless there was a

witness to Enoch's departure from earth like Elisha witnessed the departure of Elijah, the descendants of Enoch could not know for certain what happened to the patriarch. But note: the emphasis here is not on Enoch being taken up by God. The emphasis here is that Enoch walked so closely with God that his sudden disappearance led his family to conclude that God took him. That is certainly the way Enoch is remembered by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 11:5-6: By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

Enoch walked with God. For 300 years, Enoch walked with God. That is a powerful testimony.

Let me ask you a question: At the end of your days, who in your family will remember that you walked closely with God? And what does that even mean?

Many wonderful pastors and scholars have written beautifully on Enoch's walk with God throughout the centuries, but one particular quote captures this picture with beautiful clarity. The 19th century Scottish theologian, Marcus Dods, writes: Enoch walked with God because He was his friend and liked His company, because he was going in the same direction as God, and had no desire for anything but what lay in God's path. We walk with God when He is in all our thoughts; not because we consciously think of Him at all times, but because He is naturally suggested to us by all we think of....so with the godly man everything has a connection with God.¹

I love that quote, and it inspires me to remember that no matter what is happening in life, no matter who walks into my office or sets beside me at the restaurant, no matter the weather or the status of my health, no matter my finances or the challenges that lie before me, everything on planet earth...everything every day...should cause me to remember my Creator and give thanks to Him, to talk to Him, to recognize Him as I walk with Him through all the days of my life.

When my time on earth has come to an end, beyond being remembered as a fine fisherman, or a decent preacher, or even the father of my children or the husband to my wife, I would be so grateful to be remembered as one who walked closely with God. Sadly, I'm not there yet, and I suspect many of us are not there yet. Many of us only think of God when we are in a crisis, or when we set down to eat a meal, or when we lay down to go to bed, or perhaps only when we walk in the doors of the church. The one who walks with God, however, is the one who finds that everything, all day, every day, naturally makes one think of God. The one who walks with God is one who thinks of God as a friend and enjoys His company. The one who walks with God finds himself walking in the same direction of God's will for years and years because you no longer desire anything but what lay in God's path.

You might recall that the descendants of Cain were famous for many things...business prowess, excellence in the arts, weapon manufacturing, physical beauty. But note that the descendants of Seth, and particularly this descendant of Seth, was remembered as one who walked with God!

¹ Marcus Dods, *Book of Genesis*, 51-53.

We cannot miss the tension created in the text: there are always two groups of people in the world: those who walk with God and call upon the name of the LORD, and those who don't. There are the children of Cain, and there are the children of Seth. But we should not think the difference is hereditary or somehow bound to our lineage. The difference is in the heart, and God will make a way through the atoning work of Christ for those who are far off, those from any tribe, tongue or language, to walk closely with Him as Enoch once did. To walk closely with our God is purpose for our existence. I'll come back to that in a minute.

One final note: it was often believed in the ancient Jewish mindset that if you were favored by God, one sign of God's favor was a long life. But note, Enoch lived a comparatively short life in light of his fathers and even his own son. Enoch lived the shortest life of all the primeval patriarchs...he only made it a measly 365 years! Enoch's son, Methuselah, however, lived the longest recorded life ever—a staggering 969 years! One commentator wryly suggested that Methuselah represents the patron saint of geriatrics!

We should note that the story of Enoch dispels the notion that to be blessed and favored by God means that you live a long life. Enoch alone is remembered as walking closely with God, so much so that he was spared death—and he departed planet earth having lived a comparatively short life. No doubt this observation inspired the great theologian, Billy Joel, to write his famous song, “Only the Good Die Young.” Never mind.

Let us now conclude with our fourth subheading...

IV. The Son of Lamech

As we get to the end of chapter five, we have arrived at our destination, and note the irony: it is another descendant of Adam named Lamech. The first Lamech that we read about in Genesis 4, the descendant of Cain, was a braggadocious murderer who had two wives and four famous and beautiful children.

This time, however, as we arrive at the descendant of Seth who is also named Lamech, we learn: 28 When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son 29 and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” 30 Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. 31 Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

Lamech, the son of Methusaleh, the son of Enoch, the great, great, great, great grandson of Seth, will bear a son whose name will become famous at a whole different level than the children of Lamech, the descendant of Cain. This son of Lamech, the descendant of Seth...a son named Noah, will be one set apart to father nations. When Noah was born, Lamech named him with a conviction that Noah, as a descendant of Adam who was formed from the ground that was later cursed...this son will bring relief to God's people. Lamech believed that God had a destiny for Noah, though he could have never imagined how that would play out hundreds of years later.

Church, don't miss the irony and the tension that is here in the text. Cain walked away from the presence of the LORD, and his descendants, though wealthy, successful and beautiful, will

continue to grow in corruption. That point is captured in the description of Lamech, son of Cain, and his children. Yet at the same time, God's providence is working through the line of Seth to bring both judgment and mercy upon the earth for the sake of fulfilling God's promise spoken to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. This son of Lamech, the son named Noah, will be a righteous man and a deliverer of the elect who will then father the nations following the devastating flood to come.

We might assume that for most of his days, the world did not evaluate Noah and his ministry and his efforts as anything more than eccentric and zealous, while the children of Cain's descent were admired as beautiful and successful.

But God knew...God knew what was coming, and God chose His leader and His people who will carry the promise forward in the worst of times to come. We'll spend a lot of time with Noah in the weeks to come, but for now, as we close, let's take a moment to reflect.

There is a lot to think about here, and particularly if you think about your own family. Let me leave you with a few things to consider as you step back into the world and all that awaits you.

First of all, remember that God knows your name. Names matter to God. There has never been an unimportant person to our Creator, and God has a plan for your life and for the lives of your children and your children's children. And let us not forget about the names that came before us. We build on a foundation we did not lay, and though our fathers and mothers before us were far from perfect, God knew that one day, through all their ups and downs, sins and all, the lives of our forefathers and mothers would produce *us*. We are not an accident, and our time in this life is not unimportant--we would do well to make the most of the time that has been given us.

To that end, please remember that this life has been given to us so that we might walk with God all day, every day. Those who walk with God are those who live by faith, and it is impossible to please God without faith. No amount of good works, success, or beauty will compare to the eternal impact of one soul who walks with God by faith. I pray we all seek to prioritize our lives around our relationship and our walk with God, amen?

Finally, never forget that God DID finally fulfill the promise He made to our first parents in Genesis 3:15. Everything that we read in the Old Testament in the Law and the Prophets is pointing to the fulfillment of God's promise through His only Son, Jesus of Nazareth. As Enoch walked with God for 300 years and was taken by God, so Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father and was taken up and seated at the right hand of the Father. As Noah was named as one would give us rest from the curse, so Jesus came and became the curse that we might find our rest in Him!

Give thanks to God this day that we are no longer those who await the fulfillment of God's promise; instead, we are those who have been forgiven, saved, redeemed, and reborn through the Messiah of God who is Christ our Lord! That doesn't mean our lives are perfect or painless, nor does it mean our families are without struggle or sadness—it does mean that God keeps His

promises, and come what may in the flood of this life, our souls will remain secure within the ark of God's Deliverer...the One who died for us and rose again on the third day, amen?

We'll launch into Genesis 6 next Sunday and tackle the mystery of the Nephilim...and that will be interesting! Will you pray with me?