

Genesis 5

This chapter follows the lineage of Seth, the son of Adam, just as the last part of chapter 4 presented the lineage of Cain. The chapter ends with the family of Noah who is going to save humanity through the ark in the next chapter. If we line up the lives of the patriarchs on a timeline, we would learn that Adam to Noah covers 1,656 years. The genealogy is given in order to show the connection between Noah and Seth, the son of Adam. These are not necessarily the firstborn sons of the men listed; indeed, Seth was not. It is simply showing through whom the line passes from Adam to Noah.

We do not know why God saw it appropriate to give the ages of Seth's descendants as opposed to Cain's descendants, nor why the phrase "and he died" is repeated here, in Seth's family, in contrast to Cain's. Clearly, it emphasizes the nature of God's warning to Adam and Eve relative to disobedience: death has passed on all men, for all have sinned (cf. Rom. 5:12, 14).

We also note that the Hebrew text (MT), which we are translating, is slightly different regarding the ages of the patriarchs, than the Septuagint (LXX), or the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP).¹ For example, the MT has Adam 130 years old at the birth of Seth, then he lived another 800 years, and died at 930. The SP is consistent with those numbers, while the LXX has 230 years at the birth of the firstborn and 700 additional years, to arrive at a total of 930 years. Just as we see with manuscripts of the Greek NT, there are some discrepancies; the Hebrew text underlying each of these three is slightly different. Yet, there is no reason to take one over the other necessarily, so we'll stay with the MT since that is the basic textual basis for our OT.

Enoch and Lamech are names shared by men in Cain's lineage (4:17-18) as well as Seth (Gen. 5:18-25). There is no reason to believe, as some do, that these are the same men and that we have different traditions that have been "mixed." It is not unusual for individuals to share names, even within the same family!

Let us also introduce a new term, perhaps, to you: antediluvian. "Ante" is a Latin prefix which means "before." "Diluvian" refers to a washing; in biblical contexts, it refers to the flood of Noah. Therefore, "antediluvian" refers to the people who lived before the flood. Genesis 1-5 are antediluvian history.

TRANSLATION - 5:1-2:

1 This [is] the book of the genealogies of Adam in the day God created mankind, in His image God made him. **2** Male and female He created them and He blessed them and called their name man in the day of their creating.

WORDS:

"Book" is a self-contained source of information. We do not know if this "book" was self-contained when it arrived in the hands of Moses or if Moses uses the word in a generic way to mean "story" or something similar. "Adam" and "man" are the same word in Hebrew. The verb "to bless" is found 327x; 65x in Genesis alone. This is the fourth time Moses writes that God "blessed."

COMMENTS:

"Genealogies" is used here for the second time; the first referred to the "genealogies" of the heavens and the earth (2:4). This "genealogy" simply records the life of Adam and his descendants, through Seth, until Noah, where the next "genealogy" picks up in 6:9. We translate the first *adam* with the proper name, "Adam," since Moses is giving Adam's lineage. But we translate the second *adam*, "mankind," in the generic sense, because all mankind came from Adam and Eve. Verse 2 points this out; God made "male and female." They are both "man" in the general sense of "mankind." God called *their* name "man." We also point out that

¹ See the introduction for a brief description of these documents.

the Hebrew verbs for “created” (*bara*) and “made” (*‘asah*) are used here interchangeably. We do not know all the ways in which God “blessed” on this occasion but chapter 5 records the births of sons and daughters as well as longevity. Both are considered blessings in later parts of Scripture.

APPLICATION:

Later Hebrew writers - The historian summarizes this whole chapter in 1 Chronicles 1:1-4.

NT writers - In recording the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Luke traces His history through Shem and Noah, all the way through Seth and Adam, who was the “son of God” (3:36-38).

TRANSLATION - 5:3-5:

3 When Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, then there was born to him in his image, as his likeness, and he called his name Seth. **4** So the days of Adam were, after there was born to him Seth, eight hundred years and there were born sons and daughters. **5** And all the days of Adam which he lived, were nine hundred and thirty years and he died.

WORDS:

“Image” and “likeness” are the same two words in which man, in general, was created in 1:26. The statement “and he died” (all one word in Hebrew) is found throughout the text (5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).

GRAMMAR:

“Was born” (5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30, 32) is a *hiphil*, the causative stem of the verb.

COMMENTS:

The ages of these patriarchs are hard to accept by some people. Since other ANE literature has even more advanced ages, some think these numbers are, somehow, symbolic. Before the flood, among the king list in Sumer, the kings’ reigns ranged from 18,600 to 43,200 years per reign. Yet, there are two factors to keep in mind when considering these ages. First, we live in a world that is created and governed by an all-powerful God (Gen. 1:1). If He wished for men to live 500-900 years, it was certainly possible. Secondly, considering the changes that occurred during the flood of Noah’s day, it is entirely possible that genetic deviations were not occurring before the flood so that the whole aging process was considerably slower than it is today.

Following the flood, the ages of men started shrinking drastically. Abraham lived only 175 years (Gen. 25:7). Isaac died at 180 years old (Gen. 35:28). Jacob died at 147 years old (Gen. 47:28). Joseph lived 110 years (Gen. 50:26). Moses, who lived to be 120 years (Deut. 34:7), acknowledged 70-80 years as the norm (Psa. 90:10), which is roughly the norm today. In fact, in the years after the flood, the average ages of the patriarchs is reduced by half. *Before* the flood, the average age of the dad when he fathered the son listed, was 156 years and the total length of life was 858 years. After the flood (chapter 11), the average age of the dad was 43 years, and 333 years when he died.

The words “image” and “likeness” in which Adam bore Seth are the same words, if not the same ideas, as God’s creation of man in 1:26. Certainly, Seth would bear a physical likeness to his earthly father as humans bear a spiritual resemblance to our spiritual Father. Since Adam’s son, Seth, was after Adam’s image and likeness, Adam, being made in the image and likeness of God (1:26-27) could be considered a “son of God.” That is how Luke interprets the relationship (Luke 3:38).

APPLICATION:

Moses' Contemporaries - Moses has already mentioned the godly influence Seth has had on his family (4:25-26).

Later Hebrew writers - We have already mentioned that Seth is found in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1:1.

NT writers - Seth is found in the ancestry of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:38).

TRANSLATION - 5:6-17:

6 Seth lived one hundred and five years and there was born Enosh. **7** Then Seth lived, after there was born Enosh, eight hundred seven years and there were born sons and daughters. **8** And all the days of Seth, were nine hundred and twelve years and he died.

9 And Enosh lived ninety years and there was born Cainan. **10** And Enosh lived, after there was born Cainan, eight hundred and fifteen years and there were born sons and daughters. **11** And all the days of Enosh, were nine hundred and five years and he died.

12 And Cainan lived seventy years and there was born Mahalalel. **13** Then Cainan lived, after there was born Mahalalel, eight hundred forty years and there were born sons and daughters. **14** And all the days of Cainan, were nine hundred and ten years and he died.

15 And Mahalalel lived sixty-five years and there was born Jered. **16** Then Mahalalel was, after there was born Jered, eight hundred thirty years and there were born sons and daughters. **17** And all the days of Mahalalel, were eight hundred and ninety-five years and he died.

APPLICATION:

Later Hebrew writers - These men, as noted above, are found in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1:2. There is another man named Mahalalel in Nehemiah 11:4.

TRANSLATION - 5:18-27:

18 And Jered lived one hundred and sixty-two years and there was born Enoch. **19** Then Jered lived, after there was born Enoch, eight hundred years and there were born sons and daughters. **20** And all the days of Jered, were nine hundred and sixty-two years and he died.

21 And Enoch lived sixty-five years and there was born Methushelah. **22** And Enoch walked with God after there was born Methushelah, three hundred years and there were born sons and daughters. **23** And all the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty-five years. **24** And Enoch walked with God and was not since God took him.

25 Then Methushelah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years and there was born Lamech. **26** Then Methushelah was, after there was born Lamech, seven hundred eighty-two years and there were born sons and daughters. **27** And all the days of Methushelah, were nine hundred and sixty-nine years and he died.

WORDS:

Enoch "was not" is a phrase used to refer to death (Job 7:21; 8:22; Psa. 39:13; 103:15-16). In this context, we are being told that Enoch did *not* die. The phrase is set in contrast to "and he died" and it is contrasted with "since God took him."

GRAMMAR:

"Walked" (vs 22, 24) is a *hithpael*, illustrating a manner of life.

COMMENTS:

For those who like to find symbolism in every "nook and cranny," Enoch's 365 years reflect the 365 days in a solar year. Somehow, that is supposed to be a reflection of a "complete life." We prefer to see the 365 years as reflecting reality, just as the other's ages reflect reality and are not symbolic.

If we are able to understand these lifespans in a chronological way, then Methushelah died the year the flood came, if not in the flood. He lived an extremely long time and saw many children and more generations come and go. It is interesting that the man who had the shortest lifespan in this chapter (Enoch) had the son who lived the longest.

Enoch “walked with God.” That was his manner of life, the cumulative choices he made on a daily basis. There is implied in that statement that God communicated, in some way, His expectations of Enoch and Enoch met those expectations. We are not suggesting that Enoch was sinless, but God chose to take Enoch straight to heaven for a reason. Perhaps it was a great blessing on Enoch for living a godly life in an ungodly environment (cf. Jude 14-15); perhaps it was to show later generations that death is not going to touch every single person as the text suggests. Indeed, Elijah (2 Kings 2:3, 10-11) will not taste death either and there will be some alive when the Son of Man returns, so that they will not taste death (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17). It seems clear to us from this text and we believe it would have been clear to Moses’ contemporaries that there is life after death.

Stories of Enoch will grow up and inspire later generations of Jews, so much so that three literary works in the years between the OT and the NT will be named after Enoch. The NT writers will not treat any of those works as written with the aid of the Holy Spirit and authoritative.

APPLICATION:

Moses’ Contemporaries - Again, there is an Enoch in Cain’s family (Gen. 4:17-18) but the texts are clear that these are two different men. Just as Enoch walked with God, so Noah is said to have walked with God (Gen. 6:9). Jehovah God will call on Abraham to walk before Him and “be perfect” (17:1). Abraham will summarize his life as walking with Jehovah (24:40) and Jacob will, on his deathbed, comment that both Abraham and Isaac walked before God (48:15). In the Law, God will promise to walk among Israel (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14), predicated on their faithful obedience to His law (cf. Deut. 5:33; 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 13:5; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16).

Later Hebrew writers - Enoch and Methushelah are found in the genealogy list in 1 Chronicles 1:3. Later writers will also challenge Israel to walk with God (Joshua 22:5; Judges 2:17; 1 Sam. 2:30; 1 Kings 2:3; 8:23, 25, 61; 11:33; 2 Kings 10:31; 17:19; 21:22; 2 Chron. 6:14, 16; Neh. 10:29; Psa. 56:13; 78:10; 84:11). The prophets call on Israel to walk before God, walking in His paths (Isa. 2:3; Jer. 7:23; 42:3; Ezek. 5:7; 11:20; 18:9; 20:19; Dan. 9:10; Micah 4:2, 5; 6:8). God will describe His ideal disciple in terms of one who walks with Him in peace and uprightness, turning his back from iniquity (Mal. 2:6). The verb “to take” is used in other passages to indicate life after death (Psa. 49:15; 73:24).

NT writers - Luke presents Enoch in the ancestry of Jesus (Luke 3:37). Jude (ver. 14-15) informs us that Enoch was the “seventh from Adam” (consistent with Gen. 5) and that he preached the coming judgment of God. It sounds like Enoch was on Noah’s side, in trying to get their violent contemporaries to change their behavior. Enoch had no success. The flood was the next step in God’s plans. The Hebrew writer holds up Enoch as an example of faith, by which he pleased God (Heb. 11:5).

The NT writers also use the “walking” metaphor to refer to one’s relationship with God (Luke 1:6; 1 Cor. 7:17; Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:10; 5:2; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:1).

TRANSLATION - 5:28-32:

28 And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years and there was born a son. **29** Then he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will bring us rest from our work and from our drudgery of our hands from the land which God cursed.” **30** Then Lamech lived, after was born Noah, five hundred and ninety-five years and there were born sons and daughters. **31** And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years and he died. **32** And Noah was the son of five hundred years and there was born [for] Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

WORDS:

The name “Noah” (*nh*) is a play on the verb “to bring rest” (*nhm*). The verb is found 108x. The word translated “work” is a cognate word for the verb “to make.” The word translated “drudgery” carries the idea of hard work, pain, distress (see its first use in 3:16). “Cursed” is repeated from the earlier passages in Genesis (3:14, 17).

GRAMMAR:

“Bring us rest” is a *piel*, translating a verb which carries the idea of providing relief. It can mean “regret, be sorry, comfort, and console.” It will be used in the account of the flood in 6:6-7. We translate “son of” literally in verse 32. It is an idiom in Hebrew to express the possession of a quality.

COMMENTS:

We would have to create a chart to compare the lives and date of deaths of the patriarchs to get a view of the big picture. In doing so, we would learn that, taking the genealogies seriously, Noah is the first individual born *after* the death of Adam. In some way, we do not know how, Lamech thought Noah would bring rest from the curse God set on the land due to Adam’s disobedience. Verse 29 recalls that curse from Genesis 3:16-17.

Shem is listed first among Noah’s sons but he is not the firstborn, which is suggested by comparing Gen. 7:6, 8:13; 11:10. The “seed,” which will run through Abraham, comes through Shem; thus, his name is likely mentioned first.

APPLICATION:

Moses’ Contemporaries - A “Noah” will be mentioned by name 58x in the Bible. Most of those references are to *this* Noah. An Israelite by the name of Zelophehad had a daughter by the name of Noah (Num. 26:33; 27:1; 36:11; cf. Joshua 17:3).

Later Hebrew writers - Noah’s genealogy is repeated in 1 Chronicles 1:4. Noah is mentioned by Isaiah (54:9) and Ezekiel (14:14, 20), arguing for his historicity.

NT writers - Noah will take center stage in the history of mankind in the next three chapters of Genesis. Jesus will make reference to Noah and the flood (Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:26-27). Noah will build the ark “by faith” (Heb. 11:7) and baptism saves man under the New Covenant just as Noah was saved in the ark from the flood waters in his day (1 Peter 3:20-21). In discussing the flood, Peter tells us that Noah was a “herald of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5).