

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 5

LAST WEEK WE CONCLUDED GENESIS 4 WITH THE GENEALOGY OF CAIN, ADAM'S FIRST BORN. THERE WASN'T MUCH SPIRITUAL GOOD THAT CAME OUT OF THE LINE OF CAIN IN SPITE OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIETAL ADVANCEMENTS THAT WERE NOTED. IN FACT, THE LAST SON OF CAIN LISTED, LAMECH ENDED UP KILLING A MAN AND THINKING IT WAS IN LINE WITH GOD'S PURPOSES. GENESIS 5 WILL TAKE US THROUGH THE LINE OF ADAM AND EVE'S THIRD BORN, SETH.

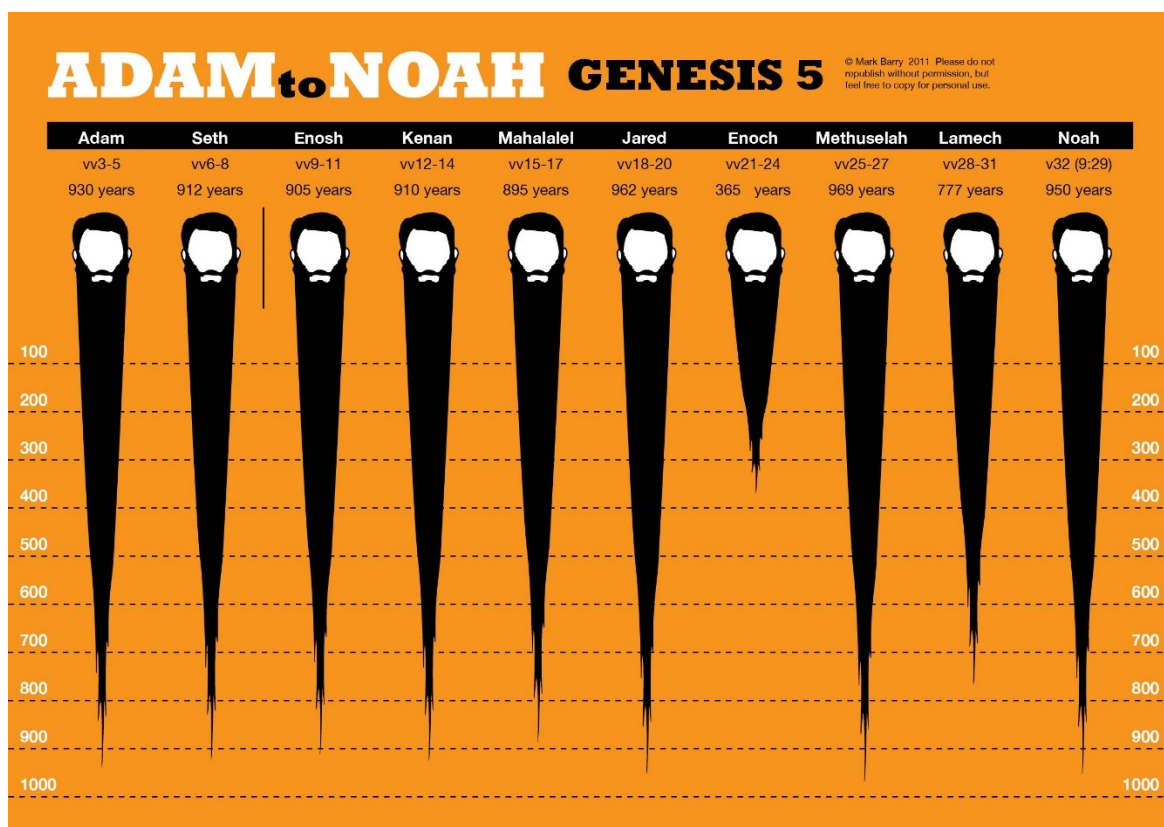
GENESIS 5:1-5 - ADAM'S LIFE & DEATH

ADAM HAD SETH WHEN HE WAS 130 YEARS OLD. ADAM LIVED 930 YEARS! LET'S NOT FORGET THOUGH HE WAS SUPPOSED TO LIVE FOREVER. GENESIS 5 WILL GIVE US A PATTERN OF SOMEONE'S BIRTH, WHEN THEY HAD THEIR CHILDREN, HOW LONG THEY LIVED AFTER THAT AND HOW OLD THEY WERE WHEN THEY DIED.

DID THEY REALLY LIVE THAT LONG? ESV STUDY BIBLE: "SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE FIGURES SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS SYMBOLIC (E.G., THAT THEY MAY BE RELATED TO VARIOUS ASTRONOMICAL PERIODS); OR THAT THE NUMBERS ARE ENCODED WITH SOME UNKNOWN HONORARY SIGNIFICANCE; OR THAT THE FIGURES WERE CALCULATED BY A DIFFERENT NUMERIC METHOD (E.G., THAT THEY SHOULD BE DIVIDED BY A FACTOR OF 5, PLUS, IN SOME CASES, THE ADDITION OF THE NUMBER 7 OR 14). NO WRITER, HOWEVER, HAS OFFERED A CONVINCING ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION, AND NONE OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES CAN BE SUBSTANTIATED WITH ANY CERTAINTY.

THE TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE NUMBERS SHOULD BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, OFTEN ASSUMING THAT SOMETHING CHANGED IN THE COSMOLOGY OF THE EARTH OR IN THE PHYSIOLOGY OF HUMANS (OR IN BOTH) AFTER THE FLOOD, RESULTING IN A RAPID DECLINE IN LONGEVITY, FINALLY STABILIZING AT A "NORMAL" LIFE SPAN IN THE RANGE OF 70 YEARS OR 80 YEARS (SEE PS. 90:10). IN ANY CASE, ONE CLEAR IMPLICATION OF THESE GENEALOGIES IS THAT THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY LIVED (REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG), AND THAT THEY ACTUALLY DIED."

AND THAT IS A MAJOR THEME OF GENESIS 5. THE PHRASE "AND HE DIED" IS MENTIONED 8 TIMES IN THESE VERSES. THERE IS NO STORY OF MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER INSTEAD EACH OF THESE MEN, STARTING WITH THE FIRST MAN, ADAM WILL DIE.



GENESIS 5:6-11 - SETH & ENOSH

GENESIS 5:12-18 - KENAN, MAHALALEL, & JARED

GENESIS 5:18-24 - ENOCH

THE 7TH GENERATION OF HUMANS THROUGH CAIN FATHERED LAMECH, THE PRIDE FILLED MURDERER. THE 7TH GENERATION OF HUMANS THROUGH SETH FATHERED ENOCH, A MAN WHO "WALKED WITH GOD."

"ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD" - THIS PHRASE APPEARS BOTH IN VERSE 22 & 24. "WALKED" IS THE SAME HEBREW WORD USED OF THE LORD WHEN HE "WALKED" IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WITH ADAM AND EVE. THIS LANGUAGE IMPLIES A CLOSENESS AND FRIENDSHIP-LIKE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENOCH AND GOD. THIS PHRASE WILL BE USED OF OTHER GREAT FIGURES IN GENESIS.

AND THAT RELATIONSHIP BRINGS US TO A UNIQUE ELEMENT TO THE STORY OF ENOCH, AND GENESIS 5'S LITERARY PATTERN. AS WE MENTIONED BEFORE, "AND HE DIED" IS THE REPEATED PHRASE FOR EACH GENERATION. THAT PHRASE IS ABSENT FROM ENOCH'S RECORD. INSTEAD WE FIND THE CURIOUS PHRASE "AND HE WAS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM (V. 24)."

A FEW QUICK THINGS ARE RAISED FROM THIS STORY. FIRST, THE WAY ENOCH'S STORY ENDS (*GOD TOOK HIM*) SHOULD NOT OVERSHADOW HOW IT BEGAN (*HE WALKED WITH GOD*). THE REPETITION OF THAT PHRASE IS INTENTIONAL. THAT'S THE MAIN TAKEAWAY FROM ENOCH'S LIFE. IN FACT, ENOCH, WHO WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT FROM THE WHOLE OF SCRIPTURE IS LISTED IN THE "HALL OF FAME OF FAITH" HEBREWS 11!. SECONDLY IT IS INTERESTING THAT ENOCH ONLY LIVED FOR 365 YEARS. APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP ENOCH HAD WITH GOD, GOD BROUGHT HIM SOMEWHERE ("TOOK HIM") AND AS A RESULT OF THIS EVENT HE WAS NOT HEARD FROM AGAIN (THUS THE PHRASE "*HE WAS NOT*"). WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ENOCH, HE WOULD EVENTUALLY DIE (ALSO REMEMBER THE TEXT TELLS US ABOUT ALL OF HIS DAYS BEING 365.). WE KNOW THIS BECAUSE OF HEBREWS 11:13:

HEBREWS 11:13 - ALL THESE DIED IN FAITH, WITHOUT RECEIVING THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AND HAVING WELCOMED THEM FROM A DISTANCE, AND HAVING CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND EXILES ON THE EARTH.

WITH ENOCH MENTIONED IN HEBREWS 11:5, CERTAINLY THOSE WHO "DIED IN FAITH" INCLUDES HIM. THERE'S MUCH THAT MANY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT ENOCH AND WHILE SPECULATION ABOUNDS, FOR TODAY WE'LL LEAVE IT WITH THESE BASICS.

GENESIS 5:25-27 - METHUSELAH

METHUSELAH, ENOCH'S SON, IS FAMOUS FOR BEING THE OLDEST RECORDED HUMAN - 969 YEARS OLD!

"ACCORDING TO THE DATES GIVEN, IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONCLUDE THAT METHUSELAH DIED IN THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS 5:27)

GENESIS 5:28-32 - LAMECH & NOAH

THIS IS A DIFFERENT LAMECH THAN THE DESCENDANT OF CAIN FROM GENESIS 4

V. 29 - NOAH - THE NAME "NOAH" MEANS "REST". LAMECH LONGS FOR NOAH TO BRING A REST TO THE TOIL THAT HE EXPERIENCES AND THAT HUMANITY IS FACING AT LARGE. NOAH WILL INDEED BE A CRITICAL FIGURE AS WE WILL READ.

THOUGH IT HAS BEEN A THEME OF THIS CHAPTER, GENESIS 5 DOES NOT END WITH THE PHRASE "AND HE DIED" BUT INSTEAD TURNS TO THE FAMILY OF NOAH (AND HIS SONS: SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH). THIS LITERARY TURN LEAVES US WITH EXPECTATION FOR THE LIFE OF NOAH, THE POTENTIAL REST GIVER. AND NOAH'S STORY WILL BE THE NEXT GREAT NARRATIVE OF GENESIS.

"GENESIS 4 HAS SHOWN US THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING THROUGH CAIN'S LINE (THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC, TECHNOLOGY, AND POETRY) WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE, EVEN IF IT WAS MISUSED. IT TRANSPIRES THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGH SETH'S LINE SOMETHING ELSE WAS HAPPENING, SOMETHING OUTWARDLY LESS IMPRESSIVE BUT IN THE END MORE IMPORTANT. AT A PINCH THE WORLD COULD DO WITHOUT WHAT CAME FROM CAIN'S LINE AND COULD THUS DO WITHOUT MUSIC, TECHNOLOGY AND POETRY, ALTHOUGH IT HURTS ME TO SAY SO. IT COULD NOT DO WITHOUT WHAT WAS TO COME FROM SETH'S LINE." (JOHN GOLDINGAY, "GENESIS FOR EVERYONE: PART 1", PAGE 85)

SETH'S LINE IMPRESSES TWO IMPORTANT THINGS TO US. FIRST, DEATH IS REAL AND APPROACHING. WHETHER YOU LIVE 975 YEARS OR 75 YEARS, DEATH IS KNOCKING. THAT SHOULD SOBER US UP. IT SHOULD GET OUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE TEMPORAL, THOUGH PERHAPS TEMPTING, ELEMENTS OF THIS AGE AND TURN THEM TO ETERNAL MATTERS. WHICH IS THE SECOND THEME OF SETH'S LINE.

CAIN'S LINE IS BUSY BUILDING AND INVENTING AND AUTHORIZING AND WANDERING THIS WORLD AND KILLING PEOPLE. SETH'S LINE DOES NOT HAVE A LENGTHY LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACCOLADES. INSTEAD, STARTING IN GENESIS 4:26, DURING THE TIME OF SETH'S SON ENOSH, "MEN BEGAN TO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD." AND GENESIS 5 HIGHLIGHT BROTHER ENOCH, WHO "WALKED WITH GOD."

BEFORE YOU READ GENESIS 4, IT WAS UNLIKELY YOU KNEW THAT TUBAL-CAIN WAS THE "FORGER OF IMPLEMENTS OF BRONZE AND IRON," YET FOR IT'S TIME THAT WAS A MONUMENTAL MOMENT. BUT HIS NAME AND HIS ACTS FADED FROM MEMORY. TODAY WE USE IRON AND DON'T THINK MUCH ABOUT THE MAN WHOSE TRIAL AND ERROR AND SWEAT AND TEARS LED TO THAT CRITICAL TRADE.

YET FOR A MAN OR WOMAN WHO "CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD" AND "WALKS WITH GOD" THERE IS NO FADE TO THAT ACHIEVEMENT. FEW MAY PRAISE YOUR LIFE AND PURPOSE BUT THE CHOICE TO LIVE FOR GOD AND WALK WITH HIM IS WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

IT IS CLEARLY A WISER CHOICE, BUT IT AT TIMES IS A HARDER CHOICE. YOU CANNOT SEE WITH YOUR EYES THE WORK AND FRUIT THAT RESULTS IN WALKING WITH GOD LIKE YOU CAN SEE WHEN JABAL MADE THE FIRST TENT (GEN 4:20) OR WHEN HIS BROTHER JUBAL PLAYED WITH FIRST LYRE OR PIPE (GEN. 4:21). SO THIS DAILY DECISION IS NOT ONE BASED ON SIGHT, BUT BASED ON FAITH.

AND THOUGH THE WORD HAS YET TO BE MENTIONED, "FAITH" HAS BECOME A THEME OF GENESIS SO FAR. FAITH IS THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN WHAT GOD HAS SAID AND WHO GOD IS THAT LEADS ONE TO LIVE IN A CORRESPONDING WAY. ENOSH COULDN'T SEE GOD, YET HE CALLED UPON HIS NAME - BY FAITH. ENOCH COULDN'T SEE GOD, BUT HE WALKED WITH GOD - BY FAITH.

THIS IS A GOOD AND NEEDED REMINDER FOR US. THE PULL OF PHYSICAL AND TEMPORAL GOALS IS FIERCE - WE ARE CONSTANTLY INUNDATED WITH THE NOISE OF THIS WORLD TO HAVE OTHER THINGS CONSUME OUR DAYS - WORK, PLEASURE, POLITICS, SPORTS, HOBBIES, TASKS, BUSYNESS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SCHOOL, JOBS, RETIREMENT, BLAH BLAH BLAH.

WE HAVE TO, IN LIGHT OF THE EVER PRESENT REALITY OF LIFE AND DEATH, CHOOSE TO LIVE BY FAITH AND WALK WITH GOD. IN THE END, IT WILL BE CLEAR THAT WE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

HEBREWS 10:35-39 (NIV) - 35 SO DO NOT THROW AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE; IT WILL BE RICHLY REWARDED. 36 YOU NEED TO PERSEVERE SO THAT WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THE WILL OF GOD, YOU WILL RECEIVE WHAT HE HAS PROMISED. 37 FOR, "IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME AND WILL NOT DELAY." 38 AND, "BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH. AND I TAKE NO PLEASURE IN THE ONE WHO SHRINKS BACK." 39 BUT WE DO NOT BELONG TO THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK AND ARE DESTROYED, BUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH AND ARE SAVED.