

Genesis 5

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The Generations of Adam

This chapter carries the significant introductory statement: “This is the book (or record) of the generations of Adam.” We have similar statements throughout Genesis. See chap. 2:4. Up to this point we were dealing with the "generations" or history of the newly created heavens and earth. Now we are dealing more specifically with the “generations” or history of the human race, the descendants of Adam. And we must take note that this is done from the aspect of the covenant seed, the descendants of Seth, out of whom the Christ would be born. Therefore, mention is made of the fact that God created man in His image (see 1:26), in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, to know and serve God in love. This image was lost, but was restored in Christ. And therefore, not at the birth of Cain, but here at the birth of Seth mention is made of the fact that God created both male and female, and blessed them, so that they may produce a seed, out of which the Christ will be born and the church will be gathered. Therefore, it is also mentioned that Seth was born in the likeness of Adam, a rational, moral creature with a mind and will, capable of being restored in the likeness of the image of God, to serve God in love forever. How plainly evolution is denied!

The following chart should aid us in our study of the “generations of Adam.”

Name	Age at Birth of Son	Total Age	Year of Birth (After Creation)	Year of Death (After Creation)
Adam	130	930	1	930
Seth	105	912	130	1042
Enos	90	905	235	1140
Cainan	70	910	325	1235
Mahaleel	65	895	395	1290
Jared	162	962	460	1422
Enoch	65	365	622	(987)
Methuselah	187	969	687	1656
Lamech	182	777	874	1651
Noah	500	950	1056	2006
To the Flood	<u>100</u>			
Total	1656			

We immediately notice some marked differences between the account of Cain’s descendants in chapter four and the account of Seth’s generations in this chapter.

First, the age of each of the descendants of Cain is ignored, while this age is specifically given here. That already suggests that the life of the sons of Cain was vain, while God realized his purpose in the descendants of Seth.

Secondly, there is a marked pattern in the record of the sons of Seth. Each time is mentioned that they begat a firstborn, and also other sons and daughters, and then they died. This repetition of their death clearly reminds us of the fact that also they were conceived and born in sin. “Death reigned from Adam to Moses,” Rom. 5:14. Yet at the same time, all these were under the promise of the coming Christ. “They were sanctified in Christ,” and therefore their children were included in the line of the covenant.

Thirdly, there is a marked difference between the lives of these sons of Seth in contrast to the sons of Cain. This is especially evident if we compare those who bore similar names. Enoch, the son of Cain, represented the carnal ambitions of his father. While the Enoch that was born in the generations of Seth is mentioned as one who “walked with God.” His ambitions were fixed upon a heavenly city. The Lamech who descended from Cain proved the rapid development of sin in a world that was ripening for judgment. The Lamech that was the father of Noah lived by faith and longed for the deliverance that God would send.

But we are especially impressed by the long span of life that extended almost to a thousand years for each of the patriarchs, with the exception of Enoch. This means that Adam was still living when Lamech was born. That brings him almost to the time of Noah. It means that Seth experienced the translation of Enoch and was still living when Noah was born. Moreover, Methuselah lived and witnessed right up to the year of the flood. This has its peculiar significance for those early years before the flood.

1. It means that tradition played an important part in preserving the facts of history. Adam could give an account of paradise from his own experience to all his generations, even up to the time of Lamech. Besides, there were many who could give first-hand information of past events to Noah. It was like receiving information from a father concerning the happenings in the life of a grandfather. Imagine if we could receive direct information of the life and ministry of Christ from those who had been in contact with eye-witnesses. That is not so essential any more in our day, since we have a printed record, but at that time tradition was the only way in which the record of past history was kept.

2. Moreover, this long span of life accounts for the rapid degeneration in the descendants of Cain. A long life meant a lot of time to sin and to develop in wickedness. Besides, there must have been literally millions of people on the earth at the time of the flood. No wonder that the first world was ripe for judgment in such a short time.

3. Finally, throughout the long life of the patriarchs God preserved His church. A long life span of the saints gave them opportunity to instruct the generations in the Word of God. Our attention must still be called to two outstanding individuals.

Of Enoch, we read that he walked *with* God. He was outstanding in his piety. He not only walked “*before* God” in obedience to His word. Nor did he merely walk “*after* God” in childlike trust. But He communed with God as a friend with a friend. And that in an evil day, the day of wicked Lamech. He was also a prophet, for we have his prophecy of God’s impending judgment preserved for us in Jude 14, 15. The world hated him and sought to kill him, but God delivered him out of the midst of all his foes, taking him to heaven. Plainly the Lord shows that the wicked shall never triumph over His church, but that we are always more than conquerors through Him Who loves us. Romans 8.

Lamech speaks of the comfort that is at hand. The curse of God was heavy upon the ground before the flood. Man had but a bare existence, since no rain fell. But Lamech speaks in prophecy of deliverance. When Noah is born, he realizes that God will send comfort through this son. As also happened through the flood and the change in climate and living conditions after the flood. The new world after the flood was a picture of the new creation.

And thus, this chapter closes with the remark that Noah had three sons. These three sons would break forth in three separate generations, each with their own history.

Originally Published in:
Vol. 23 No. 2 March 1963