

# THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM (1)

*A Meditation on Genesis 5:1-32*

A woman had a father who was adamantly opposed to Christianity. She had been praying fervently for her father for many years. She had invited him to church on numerous occasions, but he wasn't the least bit interested and he refused to go.

The woman's father was getting older, and the doorway into eternity was fast approaching. Once again the persistent daughter invited her obstinate father to church. When he agreed, the daughter was elated, and her hopes for her dad's salvation were reignited...*until* the pastor announced the text for the sermon...Genesis 5.

"Oh, no," the woman thought, "for years I've been praying for my dad to come to church, and finally after decades he agrees, and the sermon is from one of the dullest chapters in the whole Bible." She didn't verbalize any of this of course, but she was convinced, "He'll be bored to tears, and never darken the door of a church again." The wind was knocked out of her sails.

Unbeknownst to this daughter, her father listened to the "boring" sermon: "Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930, and he died...all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died...all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died..." so on and so forth, blah, blah.

Yet that Sunday morning the Spirit of God convicted this man of his mortality, he called upon the Lord Jesus Christ and became a new creation. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that "*All Scripture* is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." The Word of God is living and active (Heb. 4:12), even when we wrongly presume it to be dead and ineffective. And this includes the most obscure passages.

R.C. Sproul, in an interview with Dick Staub, was asked how he became a Christian (watch for the Scripture God will use). Sproul said, "I had actually gone to a church-related college, but I went on a football scholarship, not because of any interest in the church. And at the end of my first week, which had been spent in freshman orientation, my roommate and I decided to head out to town to hit some of the bars across the border. We came to the parking lot and I realized that I was out of cigarettes. So I went back in the dorm and went to the cigarette machine. I can still remember it was 25 cents for a pack of Luckys. And I got my Luckys and turned around and saw the captain of the football team sitting at a table. And he spoke to me and to my roommate and invited us to come over and chat. And we did. And this was the first person I ever met in my life that talked about Christ as a reality.

"I'd never heard anything like it. And I was just absorbed, sat there for two or three hours, and he was talking. He didn't give a traditional evangelism talk to me, he just kept talking to me about...the wisdom of the Word of God. And he quoted Ecclesiastes 11:3: 'Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie.' I just feel certain I'm the only person in church history that was converted by that verse. God just took that verse and struck my soul with it. I saw myself as a log that was rotting in the woods. And I was going nowhere.

"When I left that guy's table I went up to my room. And into my room by myself, in the dark, and got on my knees and cried out to God to forgive me." Let us never underestimate the transforming power of the Word of God—which includes the so-called obscure, dull passages.

Genesis 5 teaches us about the judgment of God, specifically the judgment of God upon sin, which is death. Romans 6:23 is clear, "For the wages of sin is death..." And it is illustrated graphically in Genesis 5: "Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died" (vs. 5). If Adam *lived* 930 years, do we really need to be told, "and he died"? We don't, *unless* God is trying to make a point, and He is. The point is obvious, but crucial, we will all die. So when God says, Adam died...Seth died...Enosh died...Kenan died, etc., we can't help but think, "And some day, I'll die too."

The young especially live with an air of invincibility and disregard the inevitable, but this is how fools live (see the parable of the rich farmer in Lk. 12:16-21). As Christians we are to live in light of our impending death. "O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!" (Ps. 39:4). Living in light of death and eternity is a way to acquire wisdom: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (90:12).

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# THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM (2)

*A Meditation on Genesis 5:1-32*

Wise men consider the inevitable reality of their death, while fools push the thought aside, pretending that it will never take place—or at least not for a very, very long time. Charles H. Spurgeon quotes Christopher Love, who made these comments about 1 Samuel 10:2: “Samuel, when he had anointed Saul king, and the people had chosen him, what signal doth he give him, to confirm him anointed? It was to go to Rachel’s sepulcher. Now the reason is this, that he might not be glutted with the preferments and honours he was entering upon. The emperors of Constantinople, in their inaugurations, on their coronation days, had a mason come and show them several marble stones, and ask them to choose which of those should be made ready for their grave-stones. And so we read of Joseph of Arimathea, that he had his tomb in his garden, to check the pleasures of the place” (*A Treasury of David*, p. 223).

Consider these two different approaches to death. “Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, commissioned a servant to stand in his presence each day and say, ‘Philip, you will die.’ In contrast, France’s Louis XIV decreed that the word *death* not be uttered in his presence. Most of us are more like Louis than Philip, denying death and avoiding the thought of it except when it’s forced upon us” (Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, p. xxi).

To be sure, death is an enemy, and not a friend. According to 1 Corinthians 15:26, it is the “last enemy,” which Christ will destroy at His Second Coming. At the same time, Christians need not fear death; Christ has delivered us from that. “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

D. L. Moody viewed death as his coronation day. A few hours before Moody died, he caught a glimpse of the glory awaiting him. Awakening from sleep, he said, “Earth recedes, heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go!” His son who was standing by his bedside said, “No, no father, you are dreaming.”

“No,” said Mr. Moody, “I am not dreaming; I have been within the gates; I have seen the children’s faces.” A short time elapsed and then, following what seemed to the family to be the death struggle, he spoke again: “This is my triumph; this my coronation day! It is glorious!” Of course near-death experiences vary from person to person, even among the godly, but one thing is certain: “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Ps. 116:15).

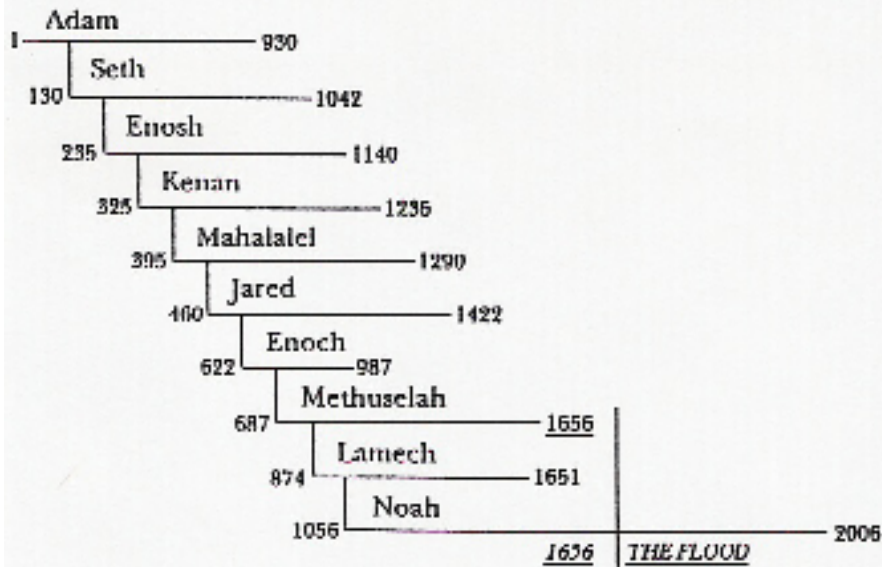
In Genesis 5 we see the judgment of God, but we also see the patience of God. Here’s a good Bible trivia question: “Which person in the Bible lived the longest?” The answer is Methuselah, who according to Genesis 5:27 lived to be 969 years old. There is some debate about the meaning of Methuselah’s name, but many scholars such as Matthew Henry, Henry Morris and others translate Methuselah to mean, some-thing like, “when he dies, judgment.” This name fits the context perfectly, as we’ll see shortly.

Methuselah is whose son? Enoch’s, so Enoch gave his son the name “when he dies, judgment.” According to Genesis 5:22, Enoch began walking with God after he fathered Methuselah (or, maybe he was already walking with God, and after Methuselah’s birth he continued to walk with God for another 300 years). Perhaps God appeared to Enoch around the time of Methuselah’s birth and revealed to Enoch His plan to judge the world. God often reveals His intentions to His people. When we get to Genesis 18, we’ll see God telling Abraham about the judgment He intends to bring upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Amos 3:7 says, “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.”

If you look at the chart provided for you, you’ll see that Methuselah died the same year that the flood came. Thus, you can see why the name “when he dies, judgment” beautifully fits the context. So Methuselah is much more than the answer to a Bible trivia question, he is an illustration of the patience of God. This means God called the people to repent long before Noah preached. For almost a thousand years God warned them, before He finally brought judgment. Methuselah was the oldest living person, because God was being patient with the people on earth at that time, giving them an opportunity to respond to the message that Methuselah embodied.

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## The Genesis 5 Chronology



Methuselah was a sign of patience and judgment, while Enoch being taken up to heaven was a sign of life beyond this world.

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