

The Generations of Adam

What is the purpose of Bible chronology? According to Philip Mauro, in *Wonders of Bible Chronology*, “its *basis* is the Bible itself; its *plan* is the genealogical or life line that stretches from the first Adam to the last Adam ... and its *purpose* is to bring those who follow its progress to revelations of vital truth pertaining to God’s mighty work of redemption.”

Genesis 5 reveals the time span between Adam and the worldwide flood of Noah’s time. The following table summarizes this time line:

| | Age at: | Anno Hominis |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Adam created | | 0 |
| Adam's | birth of Seth (130) | 130 |
| Seth's | birth of Enosh (105) | 235 |
| Enosh's | birth of Kenan (90) | 325 |
| Kenan's | birth of Mahalalel (70) | 395 |
| Mahalalel's | birth of Jared (65) | 460 |
| Jared's | birth of Enoch (162) | 622 |
| Enoch's | birth of Methuselah (65) | 687 |
| Methuselah's | birth of Lamech (187) | 874 |
| Lamech's | birth of Noah (182) | 1056 |
| Noah's | time of worldwide flood (600) | 1656 |

Before we analyze Genesis 5 further, a few general points must be made. First, the Bible *is the only reliable source book* that gives history with an *exact* chronology for the first 4000 years of the human race. It has been about 6000 years since the creation of man. For the first 3/5ths of this period, there is no chronological information whatever *except in the Bible*. The histories of other peoples give an account of their beginning vaguely and in the context of myths and fables. In contrast, the Bible is a very accurate historical document. The discoveries made by archaeologists have proven the Bible flawless at every point.

Second, why does modern culture ridicule and reject the Bible, especially the early chapters of

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Genesis? The Bible reveals God as the Creator who governs every aspect of history. Man, in his rebellion, does not want to be reminded of his Creator. In fact, he concocts all kinds of lies and deceptions (e.g., the theory of evolution) in his flight from the light and truth of God. These godless philosophies cannot answer the basic questions of life: (1) Who is man? (2) Where did he come from? (3) Where is he going? Only the Bible gives meaning, purpose, and direction to man's life and his place in the flow of history.

Third, why did the antediluvian people live so long? Physicist D. Russell Humphreys, in *Starlight and Time*, has documented that the amount of carbon dioxide in the pre-flood atmosphere was many times greater than today. Also, there is evidence suggesting that the earth's magnetic field was at least ten times greater before the flood than now. What conclusions can we draw from this about the pre-flood world? The composition of the atmosphere would produce a strong greenhouse effect and an ensuing universal warm climate. The earth's magnetic field, being stronger, would shield off cosmic rays, making the pre-flood world a healthier place to live in. This would account for the longer life spans revealed in Genesis 5. Think, for a moment, about the implications of this longevity. What would it be like to live for nine *centuries*? Imagine being born in the year 1000 AD and still be living today! Man living to such great ages would develop abilities in the arts and sciences that would be beyond our comprehension. This would explain how the ancient postdiluvian civilizations sprang into existence out of nowhere, with a massive grandeur that still leaves modern historians mystified. Noah and his sons would have bequeathed such knowledge and skills to their descendants.

Genesis 5 traces the line of Seth, Adam's third son after Cain and Abel. We meet these names again in Luke 3:36-38 as part of a list that traces the ancestry of Jesus all the way back to Adam.

The line of Seth shows us that, within the vast antediluvian civilization, there existed an ongoing company of people who clung to the promise given by God earlier to Adam and Eve, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Genesis 3:15). Note Eve's initial reaction to the birth of Cain, her first child, "I have gotten a man, the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). Eve understood the promise as meaning the Deliverer, though born in the womb, would be the Lord God Himself! She understood the promise correctly, but her timing was off. The Lord Jesus Christ would be that ultimate "man, the Lord." After the birth of Seth, according to Genesis 4:26, men began to "call upon the name of the Lord," or as another translation might read, "be called by the name of the Lord." In Genesis 5:29, Lamech named his son Noah, which means "to settle, rest, or remain." Such a rest could come only after the curse had ceased and Lamech saw his son as the curse-lifting one. We will shortly see that Noah was a prototype of Jesus, the ultimate curse-lifting One.

In the Bible, the meanings of names are significant. Examine the following table carefully

| Name | Meaning |
|------|-----------|
| Adam | man |
| Seth | appointed |

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| | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| Enosh | mortal, weak, frail, sickly |
| Kenan | fixed |
| Mahalalel | praise of God |
| Jared | descent, to come |
| Enoch | to teach |
| Methuselah | when he dies, it shall be sent |
| Lamech | conqueror |
| Noah | rest |

Take special notice of the meaning of Methuselah's name, "when he dies, it shall be sent." Methuselah was 187 years old when Lamech was born (Genesis 5:25). Lamech was 182 years old when Noah was born (Genesis 5:28). Noah was 600 years old when the flood came (Genesis 7:6). Methuselah died at age 969 (Genesis 5:27). Let's do some simple arithmetic: $187 + 182 + 600 = 969$! True to his name, Methuselah *died in the same year that the flood came!*

Methuselah has more to teach us. In Genesis 5:22, we note that Enoch began walking with God *after* Methuselah was born. Could it be possible that a knowledge of impending judgment made Enoch get close to God? Also note that Methuselah was Noah's grandfather. Could it be possible that Noah pointed to his grandfather when he preached to his contemporaries about God's coming judgment? And finally, the great patience of God is demonstrated in the life of Methuselah, the man who holds the *longevity record* (I Peter 3:20-21).

In conclusion, the message of Genesis 5 points to the coming of Christ, the greater Noah. As noted in I Peter above, the ark is linked to the resurrection of Christ. At the baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a *dove* (cf. Luke 3:21-22 with Genesis 8:8-12). In Genesis 8:4, we read that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat on the 17th day of the seventh month (the Hebrew month of Nisan, our April) -- the *exact* day that Christ rose from the dead centuries later. Please review the table of Genesis 5 names and meanings again.

Because of sin, *man's appointment is fixed* in terms of *mortality, weakness, frailty, and sickness*.

But, *praise be to God*, He has *descended* from heaven. He has *come down* in the person of Jesus

Christ to *teach* us that *when He dies, judgment shall be sent* on sin and its effects. Jesus rose again as Lord and *conqueror* of death and He will introduce man into an age of *rest*, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. By the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, Christ will reverse the effects of the fall. He will redeem and restore this sin cursed world for "as far as the curse is found, He makes His blessings flow."