

Exegetical Notes – Genesis 5:1-32

“Adam’s Side”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

As the population of the world increased, the answer to the third question Genesis asks and answers, “How do we live in God’s world God’s way with other people, particularly the members of my own family,” became even more important. Two groups of people emerged, those who sought YHWH and those who did not. The first group trusted God and obeyed God to some extent. The second group did not seek God’s counsel at all. The members of both groups are descendants of Adam. Those who disregarded God are traced through Adam’s son Cain who killed his brother, Abel (see Genesis 4:17-24). In this chapter, those who sought to trust God and obey Him are traced through Adam’s son, Seth.

Verses 1-2

This is the written account of Adam’s family line.

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God.² He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created.

- This is the account of the portion of Adam’s family that stayed close to Adam and to each other. Those born to Adam’s son, Cain, though Adam’s descendants moved out of Adam’s sphere of influence. Cain’s descendants did not seek to follow God (see Genesis 4).
- This chapter starts by stating the first basic truth. This is God’s world because He made. It is His by right of creation. It declares that God made humans. He made them of two kinds, male & female. Together, male & female, are like God (see Exegetical Notes of Genesis 1 & 2).
- God named them “mankind.” The act of naming is an act of authority and dominion over something. In naming the first humans, God declared His lordship over them. They are His by right of creation like everything else.

Verses 3-5

³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. ⁴ After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died.

- When Seth was born, Adam was 130 years old. After Seth was born, Adam lived an additional 800 years. Adam died when he was 930 years old. Many “scholars” think that the “years” mentioned here are symbolic and not “years” in the literally sense. However, the word is the word which means years. The general rule of translation is to translate each word literally unless the text says the word is used figuratively. Since no such indication is given here, the word “years” should be understood literally. Adam lived 930 years.
- Adam had other sons and daughters besides Cain, Abel, and Seth whose names are unknown to us. We do not know how many children Adam had in total.

Verses 6-8

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. ⁷ After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Altogether, Seth lived a total of 912 years, and then he died.

- Adam’s son Seth lived 105 years and then gave birth to Enosh. He lived 807 years after Enosh was born. Seth died when he was 912 years old.

Verses 9-11

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years, and then he died.

- Enosh, Adam’s grandson, had a son whom he named Kenan, when he was 90 years old. After Kenan’s birth, Enosh lived 815 years. He died when he was 905 years old.

Verses 12-14

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Altogether, Kenan lived a total of 910 years, and then he died.

- Kenan, Adam's great grandson, had a son whom he named Mahalalel when he was 70 years old. Kenan lived 840 years after Mahalalel was born. Kenan died when he was 910 years old.

Verses 15-17

¹⁵ *When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared.* ¹⁶ *After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters.* ¹⁷ *Altogether, Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, and then he died.*

- Mahalalel, Adam's great great grandson, had a son whom he named Jared when he was 65 years old. Mahalalel lived 830 years after Jared's birth. Mahalalel died when he was 895 years old.

Verses 18-20

¹⁸ *When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch.* ¹⁹ *After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.* ²⁰ *Altogether, Jared lived a total of 962 years, and then he died.*

- Jared, Adam's great great grandson, was 162 years old, when he had a son whom he named Enoch. Jared lived 800 years after the birth of Enoch. He died when he was 962 years old.

Verses 21-24

²¹ *When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.* ²² *After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.* ²³ *Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years.* ²⁴ *Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*

- Enoch, Adam's great great great grandson, was 65 years old when he had a son whom he named Methuselah.
- Enoch "walked faithfully with God" for 300 years after Methuselah was born. The change of language here indicates that Enoch was an unusual person. He was a godly man; more so than his ancestors. He was known for his trust in YHWH. Enoch trusted God!
- Enoch lived 365 years. The text says, "then he was no more, because God took him away." Again, the language change is interesting. Enoch did not simply die as had all those who had gone before him. He was "taken away by God." What does this mean? Is it just another way of saying that he died? It could be read that way. However, the change in the language

indicates that there was something different about Enoch's going. Because he was exceptionally faithful to God, it seems as though his passing from this world was also exceptional. Many "scholars" believe that he was assumed into heaven, taken into heaven, without experiencing physical death.

- The Enoch mentioned here is not to be confused with the Enoch mentioned in Genesis 4:17-18.

Verses 25-27

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ After he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

- Methuselah, Adam's 5-times grandson, was 187 years old when his son, Lamech, was born. Methuselah lived 782 years after Lamech was born. He died when he was 969 years old.
- Methuselah lived longer than anyone else in the Bible.

Verses 28-31

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. ²⁹ He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." ³⁰ After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died.

- When Lamech, Adam's 6-times grandson, was 182 years old, he had a son whom he named Noah. After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. He died when he was 777 years old.
- At his birth, Noah was given a special blessing by Lamech. The special blessing indicates that Noah would have a unique role to play in God's plan for creation.
- The Lamech mentioned here is not to be confused with the Lamech mentioned in Genesis 4:19-24.

Verse 32

³² After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

- AFTER, not when, Noah, the 7-times grandson of Adam, was 500 years old he had three sons named, Shen, Ham, and Japheth. The story will continue through the family of Noah.

General Principles:

- There are several principles at work behind the telling of Adam's family line.
- Notice that there is no mention of any of Adam's line having more than one wife. This principle is immediately ignored in Cain's family (see Genesis 4:19).
- Notice that murder is not mentioned among any of Adam's line. But it is mentioned twice in Cain's family (see Genesis 4).
- The text shows that those of Adam's line seek to trust God and obey him, but Cain's family grows farther away from the Lord. This is how things work. As these generations overlap, Adam's descendants learn about God from those who are their fathers. Their fathers lead them in their faith walk. However, Cain's children wander away from God because they are not guided by faithful fathers. Each generation in Cain's family is less concerned about following God.

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