

Osaka International Church

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Series: Beginnings #13

Title: Walk with God

Scripture: Genesis 5:1-6:8

I. Introduction

Good morning! In this Reverend Fun cartoon, Jesus is shown as a boy in school. He has sketched the cross and the empty tomb on the board. And, the caption reads, “Jesus blows some minds on, “What I want to be when I Grow Up” Day.” This cartoon is all about anticipation. The Bible passage we will look at today is also full of anticipation about things to come. There is a lot to talk about, so let’s get started. Let’s begin by reading Genesis 5:1-5.



II. Teaching

Genesis 5:1-5 “[1] This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. [2] He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man." [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 930 years, and then he died.”

These verses introduce a genealogy of the people of God that connects Adam and Noah. In table form, it looks like this. As you can see, most people listed lived more than 900 years. When people look at this, they typically raise two objections. The first issue raised is usually the long life spans. The second is usually the ages of the fathers’ when children are born. These ages reflect a time when conditions on earth were very different than they are today. The life spans drop dramatically after Noah’s flood. But even with very different conditions, could people really have lived over 900 years?

Name	Child Born	Age at Death
Adam (アダム)	130	930
Seth (セト)	105	912
Enosh (エノシュ)	90	905
Kenan (ケナン)	70	910
Mahalalel (マハラルエル)	65	895
Jared (イエレド)	162	962
Enoch (エノク)	65	taken
Methuselah (メトシェラ)	187	969
Lamech (レメク)	182	777
Noah (ノア)	500	950

Last week, I saw in the news that Japan’s oldest person, Kaku Yamanaka, had died at the age of 113. And there is a Dominican woman, Ma Pompo, whose family and friends say is 128 years old, although official records are not available. So some people live a long time, but 900 years? Is a 900 year human lifespan possible?



The Bible indicates that conditions on earth were very different before Noah’s flood. In particular the reference to the, “floodgates of heaven,” in Genesis 7:11 may indicate that there was a lot more water in the atmosphere before the flood. If so, then thick cloud cover might have provided protection from harmful radiation and contributed to long life spans. Some Bible scholars also look to the Tree of Life as a possible explanation for the long life spans. People often assume that Adam could have gained eternal life by eating from the Tree of Life just once. But perhaps the meaning of the Scripture is actually that Adam would live forever as long as he continued to eat from the Tree of Life regularly. If so, Adam and Eve might have eaten from the Tree of Life while in Eden, and residual benefits might last for generations, allowing long life spans for some time even after they left Eden.

These theories are somewhat speculative, but they connect the long life spans to issues of environment and diet. Modern scientists also often look to the environment and to diet, as well as to gene therapy, when they search for ways to extend human life. A few scientists in this field have made very bold predictions about the possibility of dramatically slowing the aging progress, and even conservative scientists believe that progress is being made on finding ways to help people live longer. Is a 900 year human lifespan possible? I believe it is based on the record in the Bible. In future years, as research continues, there may also be some solid science behind the possibility of extremely long life spans.



The second objection that some people raise is easy to answer. If healthy 900 year life spans are possible, then having children in middle age, even at the age of 500, is not unreasonable. I should also point out that the genealogy does not necessarily list firstborn sons. For example, we know for sure that Seth is not the first born. The genealogy does not follow the line of the first born; it follows the line that will eventually lead to Jesus, the Savior who was prophesied in Genesis 3:15.

Regardless of what other issues there are, we should notice that the genealogies, like all of Scripture, teach important theological lessons. When we looked at the genealogy of Cain in Genesis 4, there was a list of descendents, but no ages were given. Cain's descendents probably lived long lives also. But the author of Genesis does not record that. Only the descendents of Seth, those who called on the Name of the Lord, are given ages to show their long life spans. This speaks of God's blessing on those who love Him. The people of God have a hope, a future, and long life, but for the children of Cain who followed his violent ways, there is only uncertainty in this life and no hope for the future.



Even more importantly, the genealogy of the people of God continues throughout the rest of the Old Testament all the way to Jesus, the Messiah who was promised in Genesis 3:15. Despite their long lives, death came to the children of Seth, but they always had the promise that there was a Savior to come who would defeat death. Some people also find theological teaching in the meaning of the names, or even in the numbers in the genealogies. For example, Bible teacher Chuck Missler has translated the ten names in Genesis 5 and put them together in a sentence to form this prophecy about the coming Messiah. "*Man (was) appointed mortal sorrow: (but) the blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring the despairing comfort.*" Such interpretations are controversial, especially since the meaning of some of the names is disputed, but even if we are unsure of the exact meaning, it seems that the genealogies probably do have prophetic meaning.

Adam (アダム), Seth (セト), Enosh (エノシュ), Kenan (ケナン), Mahalalel (マハラルエル), Jared (イエレド), Enoch (エノク), Methuselah (メトシェラ), Lamech(レメク), Noah (ノア)

"Man (was) appointed mortal sorrow: (but) the blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring the despairing comfort."

人間は、死すべきの悲しみを与えられたが、祝福の神は、降りて御自分の死によって絶望者に慰めを与えると教える。

While we are speaking of controversial issues, let's look at Genesis 6:1-2, "**When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.**" The most obvious interpretation of this verse is to understand it as referring to intermarriage between the godly line of the sons of Seth and the daughters of the ungodly line of Cain. But as we will see in a minute, this interpretation leaves us with a difficult question.

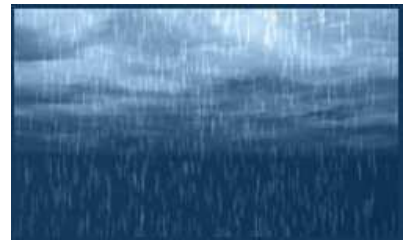
Genesis 6:3, tells us, "**Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."**" This verse has been interpreted in two ways. One way is to understand it as referring to shortening the life spans of individual people to 120 years. The other way is to see it as referring to all of mankind as a whole, in which case it is a prophecy that Noah's flood will come in 120 years. Either way, it speaks of God's judgment of the wicked.

This brings us to **Genesis 6:4**, **“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”** This is a mysterious verse. Who were the Nephilim? And, if the contact between the, “sons of God,” and the, “daughters of men,” just refers to intermarriage between godly men and ungodly women, why would their children become a special category of people? This is a mystery. In trying to solve this mystery, some Bible interpreters have suggested that, “the sons of God,” here might refer to angels. People who suggest this sometimes refer also to another mysterious verse, **2 Peter 2:4-5**. **“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others.”** What was the sin of these angels? We don’t know. But if the, “sons of God,” in Genesis 6:4 and these angels were the same, then that would provide answers to both mysteries. So you may hear this theory sometimes. But we should be cautious, because we don’t even know if this kind of intimate contact between angels and humans is possible. So, it is probably best to let these verses remain mysteries until God reveals the answer.

This brings us to a very severe warning. God did not spare the ancient world. When their sin became too terrible, God judged them and destroyed them in Noah’s flood. **Genesis 6:5-7** tells us.

“[5] The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. [6] The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. [7] So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them.””

The terrible sinfulness of the people caused the Lord great pain and sorrow and the Lord chose to destroy the ancient world in a massive flood. As we will see in a moment, both Enoch and Noah preached and prophesied to the people. But the children of Cain still did not repent, and finally God sent the flood and they drowned. But it would be a mistake for us to assume that all of those people went to hell. On the contrary, the rising flood might have been just the thing to bring them to repentance. Faced with pouring rain and rising water, the people had to make a choice. They could either curse God for sending judgment, or they could at last repent of their sins and cry out to God for mercy. Make no mistake. God will judge the wicked. However, I believe that the whole of Scripture also teaches us that God’s judgment is designed to bring repentance. It may be that the flood was the only thing that had the power to bring those people to repentance. We do not know for sure, but I wonder whether perhaps we may meet many people in heaven who repented only when the flood finally convinced them to take the warnings of the prophets seriously.



But there were a few people who chose to seek the Lord even before disaster came. Genesis 5: 21-24 tells us. **“[21] When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. [22] And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. [23] Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. [24] Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”** Enoch walked with God. That means that Enoch had a close relationship with God, trusting God and obeying Him in all things, and having fellowship with Him. And then one day, God took Enoch away. Notice that Enoch did not die. Enoch is one of only two people in the Bible who go to be with God without dying first. The other one is Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

Enoch warned the wicked people to repent. **Jude 14-15** gives us a sample of his message. **“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.””**

Another person who walked with God was Noah. **Genesis 6:8** tells us that Noah was different than the wicked people around him. It says, **“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”** And next week, in Genesis 6:9, we will see that Noah also walked with God. Enoch and Noah lived in times when they were

surrounded by people who rejected God, but they chose a better way. They chose to walk with God.

III. Closing

Last week we saw that the people had a choice. They could head for the city of Cain, or they could join Seth's family in calling on the Name of the Lord. Cain's city probably had thick walls for defense, and advanced music and technology. It represents a way of thinking that values money, pleasure, and personal security, protected by violence. On the other hand, the children of Seth had very different values; they called upon the Name of the Lord. Today, we are faced with a similar choice. The crowds chase after money, entertainment, and earthly security. Unless we slow down and think carefully, we will be deceived into following them. But if we love God, then we need to turn off the wide road that leads to judgment, and unto the narrow path that leads to life. The crowd is often wrong. Following the crowd will not lead us to a loving relationship with the Lord. We have to take a different road if we want fellowship with God. We need to walk with God, like Enoch and Noah.



What was the basic difference between Enoch and Noah and the ungodly people around them? It was faith. They walked with God and preached righteousness because they had faith in God and in His love.

Hebrews 11:5-7 praises them for their faith. **“By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. [6] And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. [7] By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”** Enoch and Noah had faith. What about us? Do we have faith? Have we made the choice to trust in God and in His love? Let's make the choice of faith today and every day.

Today's Bible passage is full of anticipation about the coming Messiah, and also about the coming judgment of the flood. Some things in the passage are difficult to understand, but the big message of the passage is very clear. Regardless of what the people around them do, because of their faith, the righteous walk with God. Let's pray

IV. Closing Prayer