

CONCERNING THE WAY

February 7, 2008

LESSON 11: GENESIS 4-5



Introduction - Rebellion on the increase - the first murder

In these chapters we see evidence that Genesis 3:15 was a prophecy of the coming redeemer. Satan knows what this prophecy is about, because when he has concluded that the redeemer will come through the second son's line (Abel), he makes his first attempt to block that prophecy by convincing Cain to kill Abel. In this chapter you can see that sin is on the increase, but God preserves a line from which He will eventually bring the Messiah.

- Dusty Rhodes

Outline of Genesis 4-5:

1. 1st murder - verse 15
2. Ungodly line of Cain - verses 16-24
3. Godly line of Seth - verse 25 thru Chapter 5

Part 1 - The First Murder

Genesis 4:1-2 *Now the man had marital relations with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. Then she said, "I have created a man just as the LORD did!" Then she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel took care of the flocks, while Cain cultivated the ground.*

- Did Eve think she had given birth to the messiah when Cain was born? Some translations seem to indicate that Eve thought she had given birth to the one that God said would crush the serpent's head!

Genesis 4:3-5 *At the designated time Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground for an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought some of the firstborn of his flock - even the fattest of them. And the LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but with Cain and his offering he was not pleased. So Cain became very angry, and his expression was downcast.*

- It is clear that there was a prescribed time given for the bringing of an offering. The phrase which in our version is translated, "At the designated time," is, in the Hebrew, "At the end of days." This is a strong suggestion that there was a definitely prescribed period. Perhaps it was once a year, at the end of days--i.e., at the end of the winter season, just before spring.
- It is also clear from this account that a place existed for this offering. They were to bring it "before the Lord," to a definite place. There they were to appear in the presence of the Lord.
- We can make much of the fact that Cain ought to have known better than to bring an offering of fruit to God. He surely knew from his father that God had cursed the ground, and to offer the fruit of a cursed ground to God was obviously to insult him. Also I think we can say that Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel unquestionably knew the most basic truth which the Word of God labors to get across to us, and which runs through the entire length of Scripture. It is given to us in Hebrews: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22).

- Why is that so important? Primarily because it is designed to teach us something crucial. All these symbols of Old Testament are designed to teach us important things, so what is it that this teaches us-"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."? It teaches that the problem of sin is no light matter. It cannot be handled by a good resolution or an earnest resolve. It is not settled by simply deciding to turn over a new leaf, or to change one's attitude. Sin is something that is embedded in the race of men. It can only be solved by death. That, of course, is what ultimately explains the cross of Jesus Christ. In his coming, he could not merely teach us good things; in order to deal with the problem of sin, he had to die.
- The account says that Cain was angry at God's rejection of his offering and his expression was downcast. Obviously, he came expecting God to accept his offering. Perhaps he was very pleased with himself. Perhaps he felt that his offering of fruit and grain was much more beautiful, much more aesthetically pleasant than the bloody, dirty thing that Abel put on the altar. But when the smoke rose from Abel's offering and his own remained untouched, Cain's smile changed to a frown. He was angry and resentful, and the whole appearance of his face altered. How well we know this feeling! And for the same reason-jealousy! Cain was jealous because his brother was accepted and he was rejected.
- What bothered him was simply that God did not conform to his idea of rightness. When God presumes to go against our expectations, we are all offended, aren't we? We are quick with the question, How can God do a thing like this? Why does God permit this? It is all because we want our thoughts to be the program on which God operates. When he presumes to do anything else, we get angry with him.
- It was becoming obvious that the messianic line would be through Abel because of their sacrifices, Satan probably also saw this
- Younger man is selected over the older by God - this is against tradition and culture, but is a pattern that occurs over and over in the OT, He is showing that He is in control

Genesis 4:3-5 *Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it." Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.*

- The account here of Cain and Abel is obviously very condensed. This story undoubtedly covers a span of many years--perhaps more than thirty or forty years, or even as many as a hundred. We are not told how old the two were when Cain slew Abel, but undoubtedly they had grown into manhood and most likely were in their early thirties.
- Notice God's grace. He does not flare back at Cain with thunderbolts of judgment. He simply asks him a question, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?" That is the best question to ask a jealous, resentful individual. When men and women ask "Why does this have to happen to me? What have I done that I should have to go through this thing?" The only proper answer is: Why shouldn't you? These things happen to everyone and to anyone; why shouldn't it happen to you? Why should you escape? Why should you resent it? Why should you assume that you have special privilege or an

immunity to the normal problems, injustices, and trials of life?

- Notice that God goes on to warn Cain. He says, "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" What does he mean here by "doing well"? He is certainly not saying, "Well, Cain, just do your best. Try hard to please me and everything will be all right." It has a specific meaning here. It means, "If you bring the acceptable offering; if you will go to your brother and trade some of your grain for one of his lambs and bring that lamb, whose blood is to be shed for the remission of sins, indicating that you understand at least something of the problem of sin, then you too will be accepted. It is not too late. I'm not going to judge you now. You can go back and repent, you can change, and if you do well in this way, you will be accepted just like Abel. It is truth that I deal with," says God, "and I don't care what kind of a past a person has; I will accept anyone who determines to act in truth and honesty."
- "But if not, then look out! Beware! If you let this moment pass," says God to Cain, watch out! Now that it has all been made clear to you, if you refuse to repent, to go back and bring the right offering, watch out. Sin is crouching at the door of your life like a lion, ready to jump on you, to seize you, and to destroy you. God is saying to Cain and to us: Don't treat jealousy or resentment lightly, because it is not a light thing. If you let it fester, you will soon find yourself in the grip of a power greater than, you can handle, and you will do things that you didn't ever think you would do.
- Matthew 5:21-24 Jesus tells us that if we hate our brother, we have murdered him in God's sight. Do you see how far removed our thoughts are from those of God? What we regard as trivialities, he sees as monstrous, terrible things threatening our peace, our health, and life itself. So he tries to warn Cain: "Cain, you don't know what you are doing. If you let this thing rankle in your heart, before you know it you will have killed your brother." In the letter to the Ephesians the apostle Paul says, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and [thus] give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27).
- 1 John 3:12 - Cain did not act on his own, he was catering to his anger, but Satan was influencing him.
- This is the first "striking of the heel"

Genesis 4: 9-15 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he replied, "I don't know! Am I my brother's guardian?" But the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! So now, you are banished from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you try to cultivate the ground it will no longer yield its best for you. You will be a homeless wanderer on the earth." Then Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great to endure! Look! You are driving me off the land today, and I must hide from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth; whoever finds me will kill me." But the LORD said to him, "All right then, if anyone kills Cain, Cain will be avenged seven times as much." Then the LORD put a special mark on Cain so that no one who found him would strike him down.

- What then does God do? He assigns a punishment to Cain, and the nature of it is very significant. Notice, there are no thunderbolts of wrath here. God does not seize hold of Cain and take his life in vengeance. What happens is what writers sometimes call "poetic justice," i.e., a strangely fitting result. Cain was a man of the soil, a tiller of the ground,

and in this work he took pride and found joy. Cain was a farmer who delighted in producing beautiful crops of fruit and grain. But now he has poured the blood of his brother upon the ground. So now the ground, the source of his pride, will be cursed. He will find, in his attempts to work the ground, nothing but frustration, sweat, tears, and toil. Cain, in other words, has lost his "green thumb." He will therefore be forced to wander from place to place, as the crops fail wherever he goes. He will find himself unable to make a living anywhere, so he will become a wanderer on the face of the earth.

- It is obvious from this account that Cain fears the vengeance of his other brothers. Cain knows that his life is in danger wherever he goes. Wherever he is, he will run into relatives (can you imagine anything worse?) who will be motivated either by fear or vengeance to take his life.
- I do not know what the mark of Cain was. It is impossible to tell whether it was some physical mark, some sign in his body which indicated that he was God's property, or something else. Perhaps it was a hopeless, pathetic look that would stir pity in people's hearts, so that Cain became an object of universal pity to those who saw him. The point is that even the guilty man is still God's property! God throws a circle of protective love about Cain and says, "Yes, he is guilty. He's a murderer-but he is still my property, and don't forget it in your dealings with him."
- The mark of Cain, then, is not a mark of shame, as we usually interpret it. It is not a mark to brand him in the eyes of others as a terrible murderer to be shunned and treated as a pariah. It is, rather, a mark of grace by which God is saying, "This man is still my property. Hands off!" The heart of God is always ready to show mercy. There can only be one reason why God protected Cain. It was in order to give him time to think and to repent. This is ever the way of God. In 2 Peter we are admonished not to make the mistake of regarding the longsuffering of God as weakness. There are those who seem to feel that since twenty centuries of Christian life have gone by and nothing has happened that God will never do anything to right wrongs. Don't make the mistake of thinking that God is impotent. Rather, Peter says that it is his mercy; it is his grace, giving men time to repent in order that none may perish but that all may come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). So God gives even Cain a moment of grace, space to repent.
- Parallels between Chap. 3 & 4
 - God says "Where are you?" to Cain, just as He did with Adam
 - God gives Cain a curse, as He did with Adam & Eve in chap. 3
 - He gives divine protection (grace even though cursed) to Cain, just as He did with A&E in chap. 3
 - Still see transgressor's showing no remorse, just as in chap. 3
 - The transgressors leave God's presence in both chapters
- Differences between Chaps. 3 & 4
 - Sin is starting to increase with intensity - compare chap 3 and 4
 - Sin present at the beginning of Chap. 4, not present at the beginning of Chap. 3
 - In Chap. 3 Eve had to be persuaded to sin, no persuasion necessary for Cain, pride and jealousy was already in his heart
 - Chap. 3 involves eating from the tree of Knowledge, chap. 4 involves murder
 - Chap. 3 - A&E don't protest their punishment, but Cain does in Chap. 4 - human heart becoming more callous

- Cain is driven further from the presence of God than A&E were
- You can see why Israel would need to know these things as they enter the Promised Land - they were supposed to bring the gospel to the rest of the world, this helps them understand why the rest of the world needs it. There's no help for the world without God's messianic blessings
- Sin will continue to snowball - the human heart is not getting better, human race is not improving

Genesis 4:16-24 *So Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain had marital relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was building a city, and he named the city after his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael. Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech. Lamech took two wives for himself; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jubal; he was the first of those who live in tents and keep livestock. The name of his brother was Jubal; he was the first of all who play the harp and the flute. Now Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-Cain, who heated metal and shaped all kinds of tools made of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah! Listen to me! You wives of Lamech, hear my words! I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for hurting me. If Cain is to be avenged seven times as much, then Lamech seventy-seven times!"*

- Why does Moses write about this? He is giving us some information about Cain's line - trying to show that this line is wicked and depraved, and the messiah will not come from it
- We know today that this city actually existed, for archeologists have found the word, Enoch, is the earliest word for city in any human language. In the ancient area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers the oldest inhabited cities known to man were called "Enoch." In much the same way, people who live near big cities like New York or San Francisco refer to them as "the city." It is very suggestive that the first city was built by a condemned murderer!
- It is clear from Revelation 21 that it was ultimately God's intention for men to live in a city. The dream of the city which God intended for man runs throughout the whole of Scripture. We are told in the book of Hebrews that Abraham "looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). So, from the earliest dawn of history, men were looking to the coming of a city. You will find references to it in the Psalms and other places. But everywhere in Scripture a contrast is drawn between the city of God and the cities of men. God withholds his city and it has not come even yet. He withholds it for a very good reason: he is waiting until men are ready to live in a city. God first goes about solving the fundamental problem of humanity - its self-will and defiance of authority - and then he puts men together in the close life of a city. But we have reversed that.
- Man, in his arrogance, has assumed that he is quite able to live in intimate relationship with his fellow man and has clustered together in cities throughout history. The result has been the violence, social injustice, and unending bloodshed which history records. The supreme mark of fallen man is clearly evident in this passage: he wants everything NOW. That is the trouble with man as he is today; he wants everything right now. Instant luxury. Instant comfort. Instant relief. Everything, now! To accomplish it, man ignores the problem of evil. He treats it as though it were nonexistent, dismissing it with a wave of his hand--and goes

ahead to build his city on ground that is already red with the blood of his brother. That is the story of history.

- These names are very significant. Irad, for instance, means "the city of witness," i.e., (in this context) witness to the glory of man. Already the idea of the exaltation of man is coming in and it will culminate soon in the tower of Babel, erected to the glory of man. Mehujael means "smitten of God," which perhaps suggests a rather defiant attitude: "God has smitten, yes, but we're going to make a success of this anyway." Methushael is most contemporary; it means "the death of God." You can see how far back into history that idea goes! Lamech means "strong" or "powerful," and again reflects clearly the boasting of man in his fallen state. Jabal means "traveler"; Jubal, "trumpeter"; and Tubalcain, "metalworker"--especially with regard to jewelry and ornamentation.
- This line was technologically advanced but spiritually bankrupt - much like our culture today - our technology grows by leaps and bounds, but our spiritual sensitivity is growing very weak.
- We point boastfully at our great skyscrapers, our manicured gardens, our beautiful public avenues and parks, and say all this is the mark of human ingenuity, human ability. But we cover up and ignore the tragic areas of abuse and privation, of darkness and injustice, of violence and intrigue that go along with man's accomplishment.
- There is a picture of civilization: Technical brilliance, producing comforts and luxuries; the substitution of the state for the family; the trend toward urban over rural life; the increasing toleration of sexual excess; and the passionate vindication of violence on the grounds of the protection of rights. Sound familiar? Human nature has not changed one iota in the ten thousand years of history recorded since Cain. Listen to this plaint from a fed-up adult:

"Our youth now loves luxuries. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders and they love to chatter instead of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants, of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food, and tyrannize their teachers."

So said Socrates, 425 B.C.! Well, what is the problem? It all comes down to this cry of the human heart to have everything now. Men do not want to wait for anything. They do not want to face the fact that perhaps they are not ready yet, that certain changes need to take place in themselves first before they are ready to move into close companionship with one another and live together. It is a refusal to acknowledge the basic problem of human life--the self-centered heart.

- The line of Cain continues to be prone to violence - also polygamy
- The line is interested in music, technology, etc., but not interested in God
- Where did Cain get his wife? Logically, he married one of his sisters, nieces, or cousins
 - Adam & Eve lived very long, and they had many children. By the time Adam died, it is estimated there would have been more than 100,000 people already
 - The members of the first generation of Adam & Eve had to marry their siblings or there never would have been a 2nd generation

- Incest not an issue because there were no chromosome issues, no chance of retardation yet, the line was pure (“very good”)
- This presumably continued even up to the time of Abraham, who married his half-sister
- It was a totally different world - can't compare to our current world
- Mosaic laws against incest would not come for another 2600 years - Lev. 18-20
- This is not a contradiction, not an issue! It is obvious for anyone who cares to read the text carefully!

Genesis 4:25-26 - *And Adam had marital relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Seth, saying, "God has given me another child in place of Abel because Cain killed him." And a son was also born to Seth, whom he named Enosh. At that time people began to worship the LORD.*

- This is how God kept the messianic line going, despite the death of Abel
- The Messiah will come through Seth's descendants - the head of the serpent is progressively being crushed
- We learn that Seth's line was a good line (vs. 26) this is a godly line
- In the next chapter you have a long genealogy, connecting Seth to Noah - God is showing that this line is important

Genesis 5 - genealogy from Seth to Noah

Name	Years when son born	Years til death	Total years lived
Adam	130	800	930
Seth	105	807	912
Enosh	90	815	905
Kenan	70	840	910
Mahalalel	65	830	895
Jared	162	800	962
Enoch	65	300	365
Methuselah	187	782	969
Lamech	182	595	777
Noah	500	450	950

- This passage indicates that conditions on earth were widely different before the flood. Earlier chapters in Genesis have suggested the same. It was doubtless true that men lived much longer before the flood than they do today. There have been a number of interesting scientific suggestions made as to why this is true, such as the presence of a canopy of ice or vapor that would shield the earth from harmful rays and create hothouse conditions even at the poles. Of course, all this was changed by the flood.
- The phrase “and he died” repeats - why are they dying? The curse of A&E applies to everyone, and that's why we need the Messiah
- Verse 24 - what happened with Enoch? The book of Hebrews, in the eleventh chapter, recounts the story of Enoch and tells us that this phrase, "and he was not, for God took him," means that he was "taken up (or translated) so that he should not see death." In other words, here is one of only two men in all history who never died. Enoch is one; Elijah is the other. Enoch did not see death but he was taken up.

- Enoch was a prophet of God as Jude tells us in the NT, foreseeing not only the flood of Noah, but also the second coming of Messiah at the close of the age in which we all now live. (Jude vs. 14,15)
- This line is giving hope to future generations that God will someday remove the curse
- Lamech appears to mistakenly believe that Noah is the Messiah
 - This confirms that Gen. 3:15 is a Messianic prophecy - more evidence that godly men and women expected a redeemer to come that would end the curse
- Methuselah - oldest man in the Bible - name means “when he dies it shall come.” (the flood)
- God postponed the flood for many years, attaching this promise to the oldest man - this shows the patience and forbearance of God with mankind (1 Pet. 3:20?)
- This line is very different than Cain’s line, this is a blessed line
- Genealogical gaps (accommodation approach) or stretching - tries to insert many more years here to account for old earth
 - This strategy has no credibility any more - science has continually increased their estimate of the age of the earth from millions of years to billions of years
 - Can you see gaps here?
 - Reasons there are no gaps
 - Can’t be a gap between Seth and A&E because of what Eve says
 - No gap between Seth and Enosh because 4:26 says that Seth named Enosh
 - Same reason no gap between Lamech and Noah
 - Jude vs. 14 - says that Enoch was the 7th generation from Adam - no gaps here
 - Matt. 1:17 - there are obvious gaps in this genealogy, but if you compare the genealogies they are different
 - Matthew is summarizing a larger section of history
 - Gen. 5 one has more information - age when son was born, years lived after son was born, and total years lived - very specific information
 - You don’t get that in Matt. 1
 - Matthew is emphasizing the three groups of 14 generations - a mnemonic device to make it easier to remember, this is something he does elsewhere in Matthew
 - Matthew is intentionally trying to show is that Jesus is a descendant of David
 - We see the gaps clearly by comparing the Matthew 1 genealogy to book of Chronicles - nothing else to compare to in Genesis

We’ll close this lesson with some insights about chapter 5 from Pastor Ray Stedman. Next week – God’s patience finally runs out after giving mankind over a thousand years to repent. Chapter 6 begins the story of Noah, the one chosen by God to carry on the human race after the judgment of the flood. We’ll show how this story is historical, how reasonable it is when you look at the details and the evidence. *Dusty Rhodes*

Too Far to Go Back

Twice this account says that before he was taken up Enoch walked with God. I love the story of the little girl who was telling her mother the story of Enoch. She said, "Enoch used to take long walks with God. One day he walked so far God said, 'It's too far to go back; come on home with me.'" That is what happened to Enoch. Obviously, the intent of this passage is to focus our attention on this phrase, "he walked with God." What does it mean to walk with God? Here is a man who, in the midst of a brilliant but godless generation, walked with God. What does it mean? Well, it is exactly the same today as it was then. To walk with God is accomplished now in exactly the same way. Enoch did not literally walk with God; this is unquestionably a figurative expression, but a figurative walk involves the same thing today as it did then.

First, it means he went in the same direction God went. He was moving the way God was going. God is forever moving in human history. He is moving right now to accomplish certain things in human life, and he has been doing so for centuries. The man who walks with God is the man who knows which way God is going and goes the same way. What way is that? What direction is God moving? Perhaps we cannot indicate it positively, but negatively we can say that God moves always in unswerving hostility against sin. He is opposed to that which destroys and wrecks human life. No matter how good it looks, no matter how attractive it seems or how luridly it is painted, God is against it. And the man who walks with God is the man who walks in unswerving hostility toward sin in his own life and refuses to make up with it or permit it to rule or to reign. That is the first thing in a walk with God.

Second, to walk with someone means to keep in step. You cannot walk with another if you do not keep in step with him. Sooner or later there comes an imbalance, and you will bump into him, or he bumps into you. Therefore, you must keep in step. It is most interesting that in the New Testament a walk is described in just this way. It is a series of steps. A walk is not like moving on one of those endless belts. It is not smooth; it is a repetition of almost falling. Have you ever analyzed your walk? Every time you take a step you almost fall. You allow your body to go off balance and then you catch yourself with your other leg. Then you shift to that and you almost fall again, only to catch yourself. The man or woman who walks with God lives all the time on the verge of a fall.

That is an adventurous life. It means if God is not there to support and strengthen you, down you go. You are counting on him, depending on him to come through and to keep you steady. That is what a walk with God involves--venturing out, never being satisfied with the status quo, never being content to remain in a quiet state and doing nothing. It is forever moving at the same pace God moves. It means taking a step when God insists. I have discovered in my own life (and see it reflected in many others) a tendency to want to sit down after I have taken a step and rest awhile. We all have felt God pressuring us to do something--take a new step, stop this, start that, or venture out in a new direction--and after God pushes us awhile, we do it. Perhaps we have been resisting for quite awhile before, but then we take the step and we feel good. We have accomplished something. Then God comes along and says, "Now I want you to take another step." And we say, "Oh, no, Lord. I had a hard enough time taking this one. Just leave me alone now for awhile. You walk on for a bit and then come back." But the worst thing that can happen to us is for God to walk on ahead.

He did exactly that with the children of Israel when they came to the edge of the Promised Land. He said, "I want you to walk with me into the land." But they said, "No, not us. You go by yourself, but we're not going." So God said, "All right, then you will wander for forty years in the wilderness until you come back to this same place. I'll leave you alone. If you don't want to go in, you don't have to go in." The terrible thing about God is that he gives us what we want. If we want it badly enough, he will let us have it, and it will be the worst thing that ever happened to us. Enoch was a man who learned to move as God moved, to walk in step with him. The third thing about a walk is that there was no controversy between them. They were in agreement. "Except two be in agreement, how can they walk together?" asks the Scriptures. There must be no controversy between us if we are going to walk with God, but we must agree with the way he sees things. What changes this makes in our lives! Sometimes there are real struggles as we are corrected in our view of things by the Word of God. But if you want to walk with God, you must see things as he sees them, as Enoch did. For three hundred years he walked with God. This is the same activity to which we are called. We are to "walk as children of light." We are to walk "in the Spirit" We are to walk "worthy of God," through the midst of a godless generation exactly as Enoch did.

No Social Security

But notice that Enoch did not always walk with God. The first sixty-five years of his life was quite another story. Evidently he reflected for sixty-five years the same godless attitude as those around him. You ask, "Well, what started him walking with God, then?" And the answer is given to us here. It was not receiving his Social Security payments when he reached sixty-five, but it was the birth of a son, a boy whom he named Methuselah. The account says so: "Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years." So it was the birth of this baby that started him walking with God.

Surely there is more to this than simply the fact that he became a father, although I have noticed that becoming a father has a profound effect upon a young man. It makes him more thoughtful, more serious, gives him a more sober outlook

on life. It does have a very beneficial effect. But there is more to it than that, and here it is revealed by the name Enoch gave to his son. Methuselah, is a very interesting name. It means, literally, "His death shall bring it," or, loosely translated, "When he dies, it will come." What will come? The flood! Enoch, we are told in another passage of Scripture, was given a revelation from God. He saw the direction of the divine movement, looked on to the end of the culture, the comforts, and the mechanical marvels of his own day, to the fact that there must come an inevitable judgment on the principle of evil in human life. He saw the certainty of destruction of a world living only to please itself. When he saw it, his baby was born, so, in obedience, evidently to God's word, he named the baby, "When he dies, it will come."

This revelation to Enoch is given in the next-to-the-last book of the Bible. If you want to see what a unit the Bible is, notice how Jude and Revelation tie in with Genesis. In the fourteenth verse of Jude we read, concerning certain godless men who would be present in any age, but especially in the last age:

It was of these also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own passions, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage (Jude 14-16).

That was the world of Enoch's day, and Enoch saw the end of it. He saw that the Lord was coming to execute judgment on it. Now I know there are those who take that passage in Jude to refer to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in a secondary way it does refer to that. But its primary reference is to the judgment of the Enoch saw the coming of the flood, and he named his child, "When he dies, it will come." If you figure out the chronology of this from the life of Noah who was six hundred years old when the flood came, you will find that the very year that Methuselah died, the flood came. It happened exactly as God had predicted.

969 Years of Grace

But the grace of God is revealed here in the fact that this boy lived longer than any man ever lived, nine hundred and sixty-nine years! That is how long God waited before he fulfilled the threat implied in the boy's name. Can you imagine what a fascination this boy must have been to his family? How they watched him every time he went out? "When he dies, it will come." But God let him live longer than anybody else to reveal the heart and compassion of a God who dislikes to bring judgment but does so because of the moral demands made upon his nature of truth.

Now we see the reason for this table of genealogy. First, it is given to highlight the supreme purpose of revelation, to teach us the possibility and importance of a walk with God. That is what men are called to do, to walk with God. It is the greatest glory that can come to any human being, to learn to walk with and be a friend to God. Enoch was the friend of God. Second, this genealogical table is given to warn us of the day when evil shall ultimately be stopped. God cannot allow human evil to increase endlessly. He restrains it, but when it reaches a certain limit, he judges it. That is the repeated story of history. This is the message of the book of Jude. It happens again and again in history. But, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10, there is always a way of escape provided.

That way of escape is indicated again in a most fascinating way in this chapter by the meaning of the names listed. There is some difference among authorities as to the meaning of these names, depending upon the root from which they are judged to be taken. But one authority gives an interesting sequence of meanings. The list begins with Seth, which means "Appointed." Enosh, his son, means "Mortal"; and his son, Kenan, means "Sorrow." His son, Mahalalel, means "The Blessed God." He named his boy Jared, which means "Came Down," and his boy, Enoch, means "Teaching." Methuselah, as we saw, means "His death shall bring"; Lamech means "Strength," and Noah, "Comfort." Now put that all together.

***God has Appointed
that Mortal man shall Sorrow;
but The Blessed God Came Down,
Teaching that His Death Shall
Bring Strength and Comfort.***

Ray Stedman