

Genesis 5:1–32

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[0 : 00] The scripture text is Genesis 5, 1 through 32. Please stand for the reading of God's word. This is the book of the generations of Adam.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female, he created them, and he blessed them and named them man when they were created.

When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness. After his image, he named him Seth. The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years, and had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died. When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years, and had other sons and daughters.

[1 : 09] Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died. When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years, and had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died. When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years, and had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died. When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years, and had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years, and had other sons and daughters.

Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech.

[2 : 26] Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.

Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good morning.

It's a joy to be together on this Lord's Day. And as we turn to the word of the Lord, let's pause and turn to the Lord of the word. Father, we are reminded of Moses' words to your people.

- [3 : 53] These are not idle words, as if they are to be discarded, but they are our very life. And so, Father, this morning may we find life in a passage that is overwhelmingly filled with death.
- So help us to this end, we pray. We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Genesis 5. It is certainly one of the most sobering passages in our Bibles.
- Humanity has set out in Genesis chapter 4 to be autonomous. They were world makers of great capacity. Co-creators of sorts.
- A city constructed. Culture crafted. Music blossoming. Civilization established. They were able to give themselves meaning by what they did and what they declared.
- As much as they were able to make meaning, they failed to make morals. The chapter introduces, this chapter introduces to us the first deaths in the Bible that come from natural expiration.
- [5 : 05] Not from violent causes as in chapter 4. Chapter 4 has given us the rage of Cain and the revenge of Lamech. And the result was the same.
- Cold corpses and lifeless bodies. And this is the trajectory of all humanity. The words are haunting. And the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.
- Death was not instantaneous. We saw it, but it was imminent. They were destined to die. Adam could not have known what he unleashed that day.
- And even today, we're crushed by it still. Myanmar. Yemen. Syria. Maybe distant.
- I can also say Boulder. Atlanta. Chicago. Amidst a global pandemic, humanity has still found a way to accelerate the loss of life.
- [6 : 10] This morning, the tenor is a sobering one. And I want to assert a reality that you may not want to come to believe. And here it is. Sin always wins.
- Sin always wins. Oh, Bing, you're a pessimist. Your glass is half empty. You're a defeatist. How can you say such a thing?
- If chapter 4 is not enough to convince you, then chapter 5 will reiterate that reality. This reality. That the Bible asserts that the wages of our sin is death.
- The cost of sin is death and therefore all die. Then sin always wins. Death is, has an 100% conversion rate.
- It reminds us that sin brings death. Death to our relationship with God and death to the bodies which clothe our souls. Eight times we are told in this text, and he died.
- [7 : 13] And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died.
- The writer goes to extraordinary, laborious amounts of repetition to settle in our minds that death is inescapable. It is inevitable.
- As far as I'm aware, if you go through every genealogy of the Bible, this refrain does not exist. You turn to chapter 11. You'll see the exact same structure of a genealogy.
- Genesis 11, 10. These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered so-and-so. And Shem lived 500 years and had sons and daughters. And after that, nothing.
- The writer did not need to tell us from that point on that people were dying. Genealogies give you names, sons and daughters, family lineage.
- [8 : 11] But none need to tell you that they died, except for this one. It's redundant and unnecessary, really. But the writer has gone out of his way to enunciate that death now reigns.
- Sin always wins. Whether it comes violently or naturally, mercilessly or mercifully, swift or slow, you and I are destined to die.

You are dust, and to dust we will return. Your biography will end just like mine. Despite all your accomplishments, attainments, achievements, the outcome will be, and he died.

Or, and she died. As sophisticated as we are, the crown of creation, we are certainly impressive.

But we are not invincible. And if these opening chapters in Genesis have shown us anything, we have great enemies. We have a serpent that is relentless to tempt us.

[9 : 15] We have sin that crouches at our door, waiting for us to leave, to devour us. And we now have an enemy called death that is inescapable.

From the outset of the Bible, our enemies and our foes are very apparent. And we have to figure out how to deal with not just one, not just two, but all three.

People succumb to the serpent to sin. And to death. However, what I want to argue this morning is the one great exception in the Bible.

God defeats death for those who walk with him. God defeats death for those who walk with him.

God can deliver from death. From the moment we're born, death is at work. That's the great irony of it. Death comes for us all. Yet God can deliver from death.

[10 : 16] Those that walk with God shall not die. And this morning, I want to impress upon you two points from this passage. The first is this. I will reiterate the weight of death.

You're like, Bing, you've already talked about it a lot. Well, there's a lot more. I want to reiterate the weight of death. And then, I want to hold before you the wonder of deliverance.

The wonder of deliverance. The weight of death. We are in the opening book of the Bible. And there are certain assertions that we can make, having made our way through the first four chapters.

As God had created the heavens and the earth and saw that it was good, wonderful, only to watch it descend into ruin. And we may overlook another reality that accompanies these opening chapters, which is the prevailing power of death.

Chapter 4 documents fratricide and rage and revenge. Sibling rivalry that ended in violent death.

[11 : 25] Chapter 5 lays out before us natural death. And even in the next few chapters, you'll see it again. Death is present through divine judgment mediated through nature.

Death would be inescapable. And there would be channels by which it would come. There would be all sorts of channels. Death by violence. Death in sleep. Death through the created order. Death is merciless, relentless, and unforgiving.

It will take life in any manner it pleases. In this way, we are all victims of its cruelty and consumption. And this is what these opening chapters of Genesis tell us.

That as a family tree traces lineage, descendancy, and relationship, we are all reminded that it traces to finality. That is what these people had to do. That is what these people had to do.

[13 : 39] others will say these are symbolic yielding some sort of secret it's been said that prior to the flood uh... the earth had uh... an environment that was conducive to long life it's been said that these numbers are just very large to show us show israel that these were people of the distant far distant path past there are a lot of articles claiming that this biblical text is trying to rival uh...

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I thought of this phrase that I really like our depravity is our death set death is at work in us upon each of our shoulders is the weight of death well there is also the wonder of deliverance the wonder of deliverance death is the drumbeat of this chapter but on few occasions you will hear the crash of symbols to interrupt this death march the chapter opens up with this literary transition this introductory formula these are the generations of Adam we've seen it in chapter 2 verse 4 we'll see it again in chapter 6 verse 9 and you'll see it many other times throughout the book of Genesis one of the intents of the book of Genesis is to give the nation of Israel traces her ethnic lineage to remind God's people that they occupied a special concern in God's heart they not only bore the image of Adam transmitted through Seth verse 3 but they also bore the image of God and chapter 5 provides for us this interesting reality that humans are double image bearers we bear the image of God and we bear the image of Adam one would be at work preserving life and the other would be at work bringing death and the opening verses of this chapter present to you and I this reality that you and I have these two images that are at odds with one another you'll see the heightening tension the competing values throughout the rest of the Bible on the one hand the text affirms God's blessings introduced in chapter 1 they're certainly fruitful and multiplying as each of them are as each of the named are bearing sons and daughters without a specified number it seems like if you could count your age to 962 you could count how many kids you have but apparently you can't because humanity is procreating flourishing and prospering yet on the other hand humanity is perishing and suffering with new life there is impending death death and suffering are now feverishly at work but life is trying to counter it and the text gives us this glimmer of hope this glimmer of hope that humanity though desiring to be autonomous has yet to be abandoned by God this is the contribution of Genesis chapter 5 humanity has not been abandoned and left exclusively to its own devices

God would not discard his image bearers so the divine project goes on God is not done with humanity though humanity may be done with him our rejection is actually met by his resilience our malignant behavior is met by his mercy and this is the wonder of the heart of God it is his pleasure to pursue those who spurn him it is God's pleasure to pursue those who spurn him and there are these two literary divergences in this chapter that I want to highlight these are the crashing symbols that interrupt death the first you may have noticed is Enoch found in verse 21 the second is Lamech found in verse 28 Enoch was taken by God and Lamech was heard by God and I want to address the Lamech episode first because it's going to be brief because the next few weeks will be expanding his prophetic desire but Lamech was heard by God he lived 182 years he fathered a son and he called his name deliberately

Noah saying out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands human existence eight generations in and the curse had not diminished humanity's existence required toil and work but the adjective the writer leaves or includes is telling it's painful toil Lamech desire his desire was relief for rest for deliverance from the weight that the curse had brought the naming of his son expressed the father's hope I would argue that this is the only instance in the immediate text where the writer shows us what it may look like to actually call upon the name of the Lord that's how chapter 4 ended and you presume that hey what well you're going to tell us what it looks like to call upon the name of the Lord I think it's most visible here that out of human suffering the cry for deliverance emerges to a God who hears

[23 : 29] Noah would be the answer to the relief from the curse a direct answer to the call of Lamech as as he as one interestingly well interestingly as one Lamech in chapter 4 cried out for revenge this Lamech in chapter 5 cried out for relief he was heard by God for God's deliverance would come not only shortly but ultimately eternally but the second the second literary divergence is where I want to spend the rest of our time it is in the episode of Enoch another duplicate name between chapters 4 and 5 one receives an earthly city and here in chapter 5 one seems taken into a heavenly city taken by God there it is in verse 21 Enoch lived 65 years he fathered Methuselah and Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years

Enoch walked with God and he was not for the Lord took him the Lord took him the account of Enoch is incredibly fascinating for the text makes it look as if he somehow eluded death he was not found his friends went looking his sons and daughters went looking his sons and daughters went looking and they could not find him as death would seize and take his father his grandfather his great grandfather as death would take his loved ones he was taken by God the picture is a vivid one almost like a cosmic tug of war two parties I picture two of my kids fighting over a single object death pulls on one end and up to this point has been undefeated death has won every match claimed every victim and all of a sudden in chapter 5 verse 24 the writer documents a new victor namely God himself how is this even possible?

the writer tells us that this man Enoch walked with God we have he walked with God and let's consider that for a moment we have seen God walking with man in the garden we have seen man hiding from God we have seen Cain walk away from God and here all of a sudden you see a man walk with God it's as if he somehow found a way back into the garden it's as if walking with God you proceed past the cherubim you proceed past the flaming sword he walks you with you into the garden to the tree that's the image you're supposed to get as a result of walking with God

Enoch is spared see the text's literary divergence shows us deaths apparent defeat this is how the writer to the book of Hebrews understands this by faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death and he was not found because God had taken him now before he was taken he was commended as one who had pleased God and without faith it's impossible to please God for whoever would draw near to God must believe he exists and rewards those who seek him those that walk with God are those that please God those that please God are those who believe in God and believe know he rewards those who seek him and this is the divine exception this you need to know is the alternate ending God delivers from death the surprise in this chapter is that not all die this is the wonder of deliverance

God will defeat death for those who walk with him how did Enoch know? I had no idea but eight generations in Adam must have been recounting stories there was this day where I walked with God and Enoch must have considered if that is possible then I want that he desired that he wanted what Adam lost peace with God and so he set out to walk with God he set out to please God he set out to know God he set out not to hide from God but he committed to walking with God he set his ways before God he establishes dreams before God he establishes purpose for God he submitted to life to his life to God's rule what does it look like to walk with God?

[29 : 08] well Amos tells us how can two people walk together people walk together if they're not agreed and so the simple answer is agree with God and you will walk with God you will come to live under God's words and you will commit to living out God's ways so here is the grand declaration of scripture that God that God deliver people from death and suffering and as the next cry went out looking for relief relief would come in his son Noah but in Noah but in Noah great great great probably multiple great grandson the Lord Jesus and so when the Lord Jesus arrives he asserts that he conquers death he reverses the fortune of the sufferer he announces that he comes and he gives life and life abundantly to the weeping Martha who had just buried her beloved brother he outlandishly only what God can say

I am the resurrection and life whoever believes in me though he die shall he live everyone who who lives and believes in me shall never die and as death is at work in our mortal bodies for the believer life is at work in you on this Palm Sunday we commemorate what we call the triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem as the crowds announced the arrival of a king they saw as a crowning ceremony but you and I know that it's not actually a crowning ceremony per se it's actually a funeral march because Jesus the descendant of Adam was about to square off with death and you just imagine for a moment sin, hell, Satan, and death we're about to face off with Jesus and there the son of God fastened on his cross would give up his breath and death in that moment would have shouted we've done it we're a hundred percent all die all die and little do they know that to put the son of God into the ground would result in the unexpected the grand exception that somehow

Jesus the walking God man God man would walk out walk away death would forfeit to a new victor would crush him and secure all those who swore allegiance and here you have it for those who walk with him we lay with him in the grave but we walk walk with him because God is able to deliver from death those who walk with him so here you have in Genesis 5 the book of death and he died and he died but at the other end of the Bible you'll find another book that we call the book of life and the revision the amendment the second edition let's say of that book and though he died yet lived well

Father we come to you the great God who delivers those who walk with him and so Father for this morning may we be those who pace with you may we be those who stroll with you may we be those who walk with you help us to that end we pray we ask these things for Jesus sake we ask these things for Jesus sake!