

The heart of the problem

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[0 : 00] Let us say our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your great glory our supreme concern.

! Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. I wonder if any of you have done some family history research. It's been quite an interesting hobby. You try to trace your family back through the generations.

Or maybe you've watched the TV show, Who Do You Think You Are?, where the famous celebrities trace their family back and find out lots of interesting things about them.

They often find out about events that had happened in their families that they knew nothing about. Sometimes these events can be upsetting to find out what our ancestors were actually involved in. The Bible contains many genealogies and often we attempt to skip through them in our reading. We wonder why they are there. What is so important about them?

[1 : 22] Well, as they are there in our scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, there has to be a reason for them.

And while we might find them difficult, we need to stop. We need to reflect. And sometimes to try and see the connections between the names that are mentioned and the other stories that we know about and have read about in our Bibles.

Genealogies matter. Genealogies matter. Especially when we consider the big picture of the Biblical narrative, which records events, births, deaths, kings enthroned, kings deposed, covenants made, covenants broken.

The whole story of the people of God. The genealogies provide us with a backdrop to such events. They can tell us when events happen, who is involved. We might even get clues as to why certain events happen.

So they are important in our reading of scripture. They show us that the people we read about were real. They were connected to each other.

[2 : 45] And the fact that their names are remembered and written down show us that they mattered. They mattered both to God and to the story of his people.

Now, even in our conversations with some people today, if we meet somebody new, we want to know who their family is. Especially when you live in a small place. Who was their father? Who was their mother? Who were their grandparents?

People want to be able to place someone in their history and know something about them and their family. Well, our passage this morning is one such genealogy and one that we might have been tempted to skip over in our rush to find out what happens next in the story.

We want to move on to chapter six and the story of Noah and the flood. I'm sure the majority of us will have heard about Noah and the flood. Remember that story from our Sunday school days.

But there are some important things that we can take from our passage. There are also some rather puzzling verses, which scholars have written many pages about.

[4 : 03] We might not cover them all. But chapter five starts with the words. This is the written account of Adam's family line.

So this phrase tells us it's the start of a new section in Genesis. There are ten generations listed from Adam to Noah.

And they're all listed in a similar fashion. When X lived N years, he became the father of Y. After he became the father of Y, X lived N years.

X lived a total of N years and then he died. There are two exceptions to this. Enoch and Lamech. And we'll get to them in a minute.

But verse one reminds us of what we read in chapter one. God created mankind. He made them in the image of God.

[5 : 01] He created them male and female and blessed them. Now at this point in that point in the story, sin and death had not yet entered.

But we know that very soon, because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, sin and death enter the world. So the start of this genealogy reminds us that we are created in the image of God.

But the fact of their ages, of their deaths, remind us that sin and death are now with us. And we will all die one day. Verse three.

When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image, and he named him Seth.

So there's a bit of a contrast here between verse one, in which mankind was created in God's image, and Seth being created in the image of Adam.

[6 : 06] So because of the fall, Adam had been corrupted, ashamed, guilty, under the power of death. And all of Adam's descendants have inherited this image also.

Because of the sin of Adam, we too fall short of the glory of God. But as Christians, we know that we are made in the image of God.

We have the sin of Adam, but we know the rest of the story. For Romans 6 tells us, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But in the story of God's people, we're not quite there yet. It was a long way to go. As we go through the genealogy, we read that they all lived to a great age, at least to our minds.

Adam was 930. Seth was 912. Enoch, 905. Methuselah, 969.

[7 : 13] Lame, 777. Now Enoch is different, because he only lived to 365, a youngster. Now these large numbers definitely feel strange to us.

There are many different theories as to what they might mean. Do they relate in the same way as we count years? Or are they something different? Now I'm not sure that that really is an important question that we should get too bothered about.

If you want to read more, there are many pages written about it. And this is also a pre-flood genealogy. The world and life was different again after the flood, as we shall find out in a few weeks.

Genesis chapter 11 lists another genealogy. And there are again ten generations, up to Abram. But the years they lived were much shorter than the years we're reading about today.

And for me the important point really is that the people mentioned were real. They lived and they died. And they bore sons that lead from Adam to Noah.

[8 : 25] Now we'll come to those two names mentioned that are a bit different. Enoch and Lamech. We are taught that Enoch was the father of Methuselah when he was 65 years.

Then he walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. And he lived for a total of 365 years.

Now the last part of this verse is what is different. Enoch walked faithfully with God. Then he was no more. Because God took him away.

We are told that Enoch did not die the way that everybody else did. God took him away. The only other person mentioned in the whole Bible who was taken by God and did not die was the prophet Elijah.

Elijah was taken up to be with God in a whirlwind. But Enoch had great faith and was very committed to God for the whole of his life.

[9 : 31] In Hebrews we read, 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. And without faith, It is impossible to please God.

Because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists. Well, Enoch believed in God. And he walked with him.

Now we are not told exactly what Enoch did. Or what his life was like. Apart from that phrase. He believed and he walked faithfully.

Now we are called to believe in God. And to walk faithfully with him. But the first thing you need to do is believe in God. To believe in the God that we read about in the whole of scripture.

[10 : 35] The God who created the world and all things in it. The God who restored the world again through Noah's faithfulness. The God who made the covenant with Abraham.

The God who led Moses and his people out of Egypt. The God who showed his love and care for his people many, many times.

And the God who sent his son Jesus to live among us. To be an example for us. And to willingly die on the cross. That our sins might be forgiven.

That is the God we are to believe in. And once we have believed in this God. We believe in what Jesus did for us on the cross. We have received God's mercy and grace.

We are to walk faithfully with him throughout our lives. We are made in the image of God. But we have the sin of Adam in our hearts.

[11 : 35] Which will separate us from God. But we also have the forgiveness of God through Jesus' death on the cross. Something that is so amazing.

So wonderful. Why would we not want to spend all our days living for him. And following his ways. Our faith connects us to God through Christ.

So that we can say with Paul. I am able to do all things through him. Who strengthens me. The more time we spend with God. Through study.

Meditation on his word. Prayer. Sharing together with other Christians. The more we come to know the character of God. His sovereignty.

His majesty. His holiness. His wisdom. His justice. His humility. His graciousness. His compassion.

[12 : 32] And above all. His love. Now yes. Sometimes it can be a struggle. To walk with God faithfully every day. But the more we seek him.

The more we do his will. The more we will experience. His goodness and grace. And we can walk faithfully. With God. Now Lamech.

Is the other person. In this genealogy. Whose description does not follow exactly. The usual formula. We are told that Lamech lived for 182 years.

And then he had a son. Noah. But then Lamech. Says something about this son. He says. He will comfort us. In the labour.

And painful toil of our hands. Caused by the ground. The Lord has cursed. Noah means rest. Now Lamech was possibly being hopeful.

[13 : 30] That through Noah. There would be some relief. From the toil. That was being experienced. Because of the fall of Adam. But there was still some hope there.

Now of course the real need. The real heart of the problem. Isn't just relief. From hard or painful labour. Or bad working conditions.

But it is sinful rebellion. Against God. For only God. Through his son. Can ultimately solve. This basic problem. There is no use really.

In only addressing the symptoms. Of the problem. You need to get right down. To the root. Of the problem. Then we move on. To chapter 6. Skipping a few verses.

Tells us. Verse 5. Tells us. About the heart. Of the problem. To change. The Lord saw. How great. The wickedness. Of the human race.

[14 : 27] Had become. On the earth. And that. Every inclination. Of the thoughts. Of the human heart. Was only evil. All the time. Mankind. Was not.

In a good place. Evil. And wickedness. Was ruling. People's hearts. And God. Was not pleased. So not pleased. That we read. The Lord.

The Lord. Regreted. That he had. Made human beings. On the earth. And his heart. Was troubled. God. Has emotions. They're shown here.

They were also shown. In the first chapter. In Genesis. He has the emotion. Of finding. What he created. Was good. And but now. He shows this distress.

About the wickedness. Of man. When God's. Attributes. Of righteousness. And justice. Are offended. By sin. It causes him.

[15 : 22] To express. The emotions. Of regret. And grief. Which shows us. How deep. God. Is affected. By sin. And then.

He announces. He will wipe. From the face. Of the earth. And human. The human race. I have created. The human race. And with them. The animals. The birds.

And the creatures. That move. Along the ground. For I regret. That I made them. A very strong. Statement. Of intent. For the creator. God.

