

98-04-05b

We resume our study this morning now by turning back to Genesis chapter 5 where we saw, and I think the title here in my New King James is apt, the reign of death. We had the question back in Genesis chapter 2 and chapter 3 in the account of the fall with Adam and Eve where the partaking of the fruit God said, in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. And they did partake of that fruit.

Well, we say, well, what happened as far as the death thing is concerned? But you have this knell, you have this bell ringing in chapter 5. Verse 5, all the days that Adam lived were 930 years and he died. Obviously at some point Eve died. Seth lived 100 years and so forth.

Verse 8, all the days of Seth, 912 years and he died. And you have this, and he died at the end of each of these with one exception. We saw the lines last week, the descendants.

By the way, let me just pause here. There is a lot going on with numbers throughout the Bible and this is one example. And to look at the lifespans, why does this chapter record the specific lifespan? The length of time lived, when an individual had his first son, how long he lived after that having sons and daughters, and then the total of his lifespan.

It's a pattern that repeats throughout here. Why is that? Do these numbers mean something? They do. I don't know exactly what, and I'll just be honest with you.

A lot of people have done a lot of work on these lifespans. It is significant. There are patterns and there are enticing clues about this, but you run the risk of getting off into numerology and sort of fanciful things.

I don't know enough at this point to be able to tell you with confidence what these lifespans mean. As I study and maybe down the road after many more years, I can come back to this and confidently teach what these mean. But there are things in the Word of God that none of us have grown to the point of being able to adequately draw the full meaning out of.

I fully expect a lot of us are going to be eagerly sitting in Bible class in the millennium, learning some of these things that we just couldn't get to, couldn't learn our way up to. I will apologize to you that I can't explain it. I will tell you some of the observations that are very enticing.

The length of these lifespans is quite great, obviously, prior to the flood. I think there are reasons for that, which we'll cover when we actually get to the flood. But these lifespans, the length, all of these numbers are numbers that are divisible by six or it's a number divisible by six and then you add seven to it.

Every single one of them is a number divisible by six. Some of them have plus seven added to it. In one case, Methuselah, you have plus 14.

But there are symmetries and interesting mathematical properties of all of these lifespans. There has been some speculation that prior to the flood, people used something other than the decimal system, that it was actually the sexagesimal system, sex being the prefix that means six. You have sextuplets, septuplets, that kind of thing.

Because all of these are divisible by six, most of these are multiples of five years, which is 60 months on a 360. I personally believe, and we'll talk more about this in the discussion of the flood, I believe prior to the flood that the rotation of the Earth was slightly different than it is now. We didn't have the wobble in the Earth's axis and so forth.

And that a year was in fact 360 days even, which of course is six times 60. And that the calendar in Israel long after the flood, all down through the united and divided monarchies and so forth, and up to this day, the Hebrew calendar is based on a 360-day year. And because that doesn't match reality, every so often they actually have to throw in a 13th month.

Every five or six years they have to put in an extra month in the calendar to get things back on track, so that you don't wind up with your summer months happening in the middle of winter and so forth. But that calendar which goes back to the mists of time, ancient past, is a 360-day. And I think it probably goes back to the days before the flood when a year really was 360 days.

So these lifespans have mathematical properties related to the number six. And they probably figured time on the sexagesimal system. But the things that we can conclude from these lifespans, there are two primary features.

One is, these were real people. They actually lived. They're not mythological figures.

Many of the surrounding cultures in Mesopotamia and later on the surrounding cultures of Israel, when Moses wrote these books, had legends, kind of like we look at the Chinese. The Chinese have these dynasties that go way back into the mists of ancient time. You had them all up and it's thousands and thousands of years.

The Egyptian king lists go back into obscurity. The Mesopotamian king lists go back into obscurity. I believe if you total up the king lists of the pre-Diluvian, the Sumerians had a flood story and they had a list of kings that ruled before the flood.

If you total up their lives and their reigns, it adds up to something like 241,000 years. One king might reign for over a thousand years and that kind of thing. This is also possibly a survival or misinterpretation of records and verbal evidence from before the flood where they may have mistaken months for years and that kind of thing.

It's very interesting though because when we get down here to Jared in verse 18 of chapter 5, Jared lived 162 years and begot Enoch. After he begot Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared, or Yared as we saw last week, were 962 years and he died.

Enoch lived 65 years and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, and now we have a break in the pattern, it doesn't say Enoch lived, it says Enoch walked. Throughout the Bible, the verb for walking, whether it's *halak* in the Old Testament or *peripateo* in the New Testament, these words are often used as a synonym for lifestyle or for life, the way you live your life, that's your walk.

We talk about the Christian walk sometimes, and walk as children of light is one of the commands of Scripture. But it says Enoch walked with God 300 years. Enoch is exceptional in this regard.

He walked with God. We're going to see shortly that this is also a comment made about Noah. It is also a comment made about Moses.

Enoch walked with God 300 years and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Once again, you'll notice that Enoch walked with God in verse 24.

This is an important point. If Scripture repeats something, you might as well just get a little rubber hammer and hit yourself in the head because that is something important. Enoch walked with God.

He was exceptional in this regard, even in the line of Seth. Enoch walked with God. When's the last time we have any knowledge of someone walking with God in the Genesis account? It's back in the garden.

Adam, spending time with God, who comes and walks in the garden in the cool of the day, in the breeze time of the day. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. We've had this death knell ringing all through chapter 5. And he died in verse 5. And he died in verse 8. And he died in verse 11.

And he died in verse 14. And he died in verse 17. And he died in verse 20.

But then with Enoch, he was not, for God took him. This is a powerful, powerful statement. Think about it.

Condemnation as a result of the fall. Death. And people start dying.

Adam dies. Each descendant of Adam dies. All of a sudden you have Enoch, and Enoch leaves and he does not die.

And it's remarkable. There are a lot of people around. Apparently this was a well-known observation.

Apparently there were witnesses. It may have been something like Elijah in the chariot of fire, who was another one that did not experience death. You go over there to 2 Kings and see the career of Elijah.

2 Kings 2, verses 1-10, his translation, you find some similarities. And, of course, there's a witness. Elisha is there and sees this.

But think about it. This reign of death, what about eternity? What about resurrection? What about life with God? Is there any hope for those who have died? Has there been any teaching? Is there any knowledge that once someone dies? Can you imagine when Abel was murdered? Well, is Abel gone forever? Is that it for Abel? The two men that Lamech kills, the descendant of Cain. Well, are they ever coming back? Is that it for them? When Adam and some of these others begin to die, well, what now? Is that all there is? What's going to happen? Well, in the early days, who knew? But here you have the translation of Enoch.

Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him. What does that say? Human beings can go to be with God. There is life with God after this earthly life.

This is a stunning revelation and we miss it when we go down through the genealogy. We say, oh yeah, well Enoch was not, God took him. This was unprecedented, unimaginable, and it answered a big question.

What about the future for people who die? Is there something beyond death? Is it possible to live with God eternally? And the answer is yes. Enoch is a living illustration, an example of the fact that there is a future. It is possible to go and live with God and not be under the power of death.

Death never exercises its power over Enoch. It's possible to be a human being. It's possible to be a descendant of Adam and not be subject to death.

Why Enoch? Enoch walked with God. The key to escape from the clutches of death, the key to eternal life, life with God, is walking with God. Remember what we saw over in 2 Peter? How do we escape the corruption of the world? How do we escape the hold? What is the sting of death? It's sin.

What is the escape? Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Walking with God. In Christ dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form.

The knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of God. To walk with Christ is to walk with God. To walk with God is to escape the power of sin and the power of death.

And Enoch, this one simple statement, he walked with God and he was not for God took him, is powerful. You could preach on this lesson after lesson. There's life.

There's hope. There's escape. The power of God transcends the power of death.

There is an eternal future for man that transcends this life, that is above and beyond this life. God took Enoch to be with himself, and that's where he went. It's amazing.

The more you think about it, the more amazing it becomes. And what a great hope in this age of darkness, as we're going to see, even though father had son and that son had a son, the trend of human civilization is going from bad to worse, and it's corrupting, and it's degenerating, and it's getting worse and worse. You saw that in the line of Cain with Lamech.

Now you have double murderers instead of single murderers. Now you have people claiming a 77-fold vengeance instead of a 7-fold. We're going to see shortly in chapter 6 how bad things get and what God thinks about it.

But in the midst of this, you have Enoch. Remember what we were talking about, the sex-adjustable system and the significance of numbers, the number 6, the number 7, and so forth. Six days God created the heavens and the earth.

On the 7th, he rested. In the 7th day, you have rest. Enoch is the 7th generation.

Adam is generation 1. Seth is generation 2. You come all the way down. Enoch is generation 7. He is numerically the generation of rest. He's the generation of hope.

When is it that we are going to walk with God? It's in the 7th millennium of human history. Another thing we find here in the chronology of chapter 5 is by adding up these lifespans and so forth, we get some idea of the length of time between Adam and the flood. If you follow the Masoretic text, there is some variation.

If you go to the Septuagint, there is some monkeying around with these numbers. A hundred years have been added to some lifespans and so forth. The Samaritan Pentateuch, if you recall, the Samaritans were split off from Israel following the Babylonian captivity.

They were the ones that intermarried and were sort of half-caste Jews and were looked upon with great scorn. They had the books of Moses and they preserved them in a separate tradition of preservation. They didn't have the Masoretes to preserve it.

They had their Samaritan scribes who made copy after copy down through the generations. A lot of times when we are looking at textual problems, we'll go to the Samaritan Pentateuch for the first five books to see what theirs says. In some cases, there has been conscious alteration of the text to fit their particular religious tradition.

But in other cases, their text will preserve a reading that has been lost in the Masoretic text and is one of the tools and clues that God has given us. In the Samaritan

Pentateuch, there is some variation on the length of the lifespans. You look at the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic text and you say, well, none of these agree.

Which one is which? Well, I have reasonably high confidence that the numbers preserved in the Masoretic text are correct and you can explain the differences in the other texts. But given all of that, it is evident that the period of time from Adam to the flood is 1,656 years. If you move forward from the flood down to the time of Christ and want to give a BC date for the creation of Adam, you wind up with roughly 4004 BC.

To the creation of Adam? Yes, because it says Adam was 130 years old when he had his son and so you move back from the birth of Seth to presumably the year of Adam's creation. Add all that up in the biblical chronology, you get 4004 years. Adam to Christ, 4004 years.

1,656 years after Adam is the flood. 1,656. Oh, I thought you said 66.

1,656. So, 4004 years from Adam to Christ. Actually, 4004 BC would be the year.

In reality, Christ was born a couple of years prior to the zero year. If you want to get really intense, you can look at the fact that we lost a year in the dating scheme. You have 1 BC and you have 1 AD.

If you look at that, you lose a year. If you subtract a BC date and an AD date to get a span of time, if you want to say, well, how long was it from Alexander the Great to Napoleon or something, if you use a BC date and an AD date and do a subtraction, you've got to add a year in there because in our calendars, nobody thought about the zero year. There's a year zero in there.

And when you take all that into account, most people think that Christ was born actually in about 3 BC. Well, that's where your four years come from. So, it's actually 4,000 years from Adam to Christ exactly.

If Christ was born in 3 BC and you take into account the zero year, you've got exactly 4,000 years from Adam to Christ. But I digress. The chronology here in chapter 5 tells us, first of all, as I mentioned, that these were real men.

They weren't mythological. They weren't like the Sumerian king lists and so forth. They were real.

They lived a certain period of time. They got married. They had children.

They had sons and daughters. And eventually, they died. But then you have Enoch.

Enoch walks with God. It says that twice to emphasize the fact that he walked with God. And death doesn't exercise its power over Enoch.

God exercises his power over death. A walk with God is the key to breaking the power of sin, the power of death. And that principle holds true for each one of us.

How do we avoid death in life? How do we avoid an unproductive life? How do we avoid the power of death, the sting of death, which is sin, in our lives? It's our walk with God. It's the only thing. What can you imagine? They could have medical technology.

They do a lot of things. They can put people on machines. They can give you vitamins and tell you not to eat this and avoid that and so forth and try to prolong life.

Nobody has yet found immortality. There is no way. In science fiction they say, well, we could transplant your consciousness into a cyborg or into a robot or something and you could be immortal.

It's never going to happen. Man cannot escape the grip of death except through the grace of God. God has power over death.

Christ has broken its power forever. And going to God, walking with God, we partake of that divine remedy. But these life spans that we have here give us an indication also of the span of human history.

4,000 years from Adam to Christ. It's been 2,000 years from Christ to the present, give or take. We know that the final chapter of human history, the millennium, is going to be 1,000 years.

And the symmetry of a 7,000 year span of human history is too great to be ignored. On the six days God created the heavens and the earth, on the seventh he rested. The seventh millennium of human history will be the millennium of rest where Christ is on the throne in Jerusalem.

He rules with a rod of iron. He breaks in pieces the nations like a potter's vessel and so forth. And there is a wonderful 1,000 year rule of Christ.

It's the period of rest. Enoch is the seventh generation from Adam. And you can look at Jude 6 to see that this is a biblical concept to observe his generation.

Jude calls Enoch in Jude 6. We say Jude 6 because there is not more than one chapter here. It's a single chapter. Actually, Jude 6 is a reference to what we're going to see in chapter 6 of Genesis.

But verse 14 is what we want to see in Jude. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men, saying, Behold, the Lord comes, and so on. So Jude notes that Enoch is the seventh from Adam in the seventh generation.

So his life and his example are tremendously significant for us. There's also a wonderful thought here that I learned from reading a book called Portraits of Christ in Genesis by

Dr. Dehaan that we have here as well, and looking forward to the flood, the coming judgment of God on human civilization. There's another coming judgment of God on human civilization very soon, the great tribulation spoken of in Daniel and Ezekiel and Revelation and so forth.

There are people who live out their lives and die before that takes place, Methuselah being the most prominent of those since he lives 969 years, and the flood takes place in the year of his death. Enoch leaves this world in an unusual fashion. He is translated.

He is caught up to heaven, as it were, to live with God. And this illustrates for us the principle that there is the catching away of someone who then does not go through the flood. Noah and his sons and their wives, and of course Noah's wife, Mrs. Noah, these eight people are preserved through the flood scenario.

They are preserved as it takes place, and they live through it, much as the tribulational saints are going to be preserved, many of them, through that cataclysmic judgment of God in the latter half of that seven-year period. But we have Enoch who is caught away in a supernatural fashion prior to that great judgment. What does that remind you of? It reminds us of the rapture of the church.

There is going to be a supernatural catching away of the church, those who walk with God, as it were, prior to the cataclysmic judgment. And I think that this is one of many strong arguments. There are people who think, well, the church is going to go through the tribulation, we're going to be here and be like Noah in the ark and have to go through everything.

There are those who think that there is no such thing as a rapture of the church, there's only the second coming and it's all one thing. You have names for all these positions. There is the pre-tribulational rapture, which is what we believe, that the church is caught up before that seven-year period begins.

There are those who think it's going to happen halfway through, like Gleason and Archer. They think, well, we'll go up through the first three and a half years, and then God will catch us away, and then the last three and a half years of the great tribulation we won't go through. There are others who think, no, we get caught up in the air with Christ at the second coming.

Jesus comes down, we come up and meet him, and then we come back down with him to start the Millennial Kingdom. That's called the post-tribulational rapture view. This is a strong argument or a strong support for what we know to be true, which is the pre-tribulational rapture of the church.

Enoch, in a sense, illustrates the rapture of the church. He's caught away in advance of this cataclysm. It isn't that he's caught away and it immediately begins, and that's true

of the tribulation.

When we are caught away and that last seven years of the age of Israel runs, the 70th week of Daniel, the judgment of God doesn't begin on day one of that 70th week, day one of that seven-year period. The Antichrist is in place, and peace and prosperity, they're eating and drinking and making merry, everything's great. They're saying peace and safety, and everything's wonderful for three and a half years.

It's not until halfway through when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel that bad things start happening, and then you have the wrath of God descending, and you have your vials and your bowls and your trumpet judgments and so forth, the seals being opened, the seal judgments of Revelation. In the same way, Enoch is translated and human history goes forward, but it's a limited time. We're going to see God say, There's going to be 120 years left, and then bad things are going to happen.

So, we see several great principles in the life of Enoch. He's just very briefly described here, and yet he is a powerful expression of hope. God's power over death, the possibility of life beyond death, life with God as a result of walking with Him, and we also see a great truth for ourselves, that God catches Enoch away in a supernatural fashion prior to this great judgment on the earth.

You might also turn just quickly to Hebrews chapter 11. We saw the author make reference to Abel, who offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain in Hebrews 11.4, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. And through it, he being dead, still speaks.

By faith, in verse 5, Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found because God had taken him. For before he was taken, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. And then you have that wonderful verse so often quoted, Hebrews 11.6, and without faith, it is impossible to please God.

So we know by the scriptural statement that Enoch pleased God, that he was a man of faith, because without faith, it's impossible to please God. He who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Enoch was a diligent seeker, and God rewarded him.

His place in the scriptural record, his supernatural translation to be with God, were rewards because he was a man of faith, he made that choice. Each one of us has that very same choice. There is no environmental factor, there is no hereditary factor, there is no circumstance of life that is capable of preventing us from expressing faith in God.

We have that privilege, we have that right, we have the authority over our own soul, we are captains of our own ship, and we choose. There is a wonderful reward from God that transcends anything this world can offer, as Enoch so graphically demonstrates. We'll

come back to Hebrews 11 when we are studying Noah, since that's the next verse in that chapter.

But return with me now to chapter 5 of Genesis. After Enoch's life story here in verses 21-24, we have Methuselah. Methuselah lived 187 years and begot Lamech.

After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Methuselah were 969 years and he died. You'll notice the prevalence of the number 6 there in his lifespan as well.

I guess I should complete my thought on the number 6. Why would the number 6 be so significant? Because 6 is the number of things running their course and things being completed, and the 7th is rest. In 6 days God created the heavens and the earth. In 6,000 years God is going to make his point in human history.

And then the 7th is when things are perfected. It's when they're completed, it's the time of rest. You have 6 generations and then in the 7th you have Enoch.

And the purpose of God is expressed in Enoch as he walks with God and God brings him to himself. 6 days of creation, 6,000 years of human history. The number 6 is significant because this is the time of God's dealing with man, the time of God's provision for man, the time of the fulfillment of God's purposes for man.

And then in the 7th day or in the 7th millennium, in the 7th generation, you find the fulfillment, the completion, the time of rest. All the days of Methuselah, 969 years, and he died. Lamech lived 182 years and had a son.

He called his name Noah saying this one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord has cursed. After he begot Noah, Lamech lived 595 years and had sons and daughters. All the days of Lamech were 777 years and he died.

Noah was 500 years old and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Makes us wonder if they were triplets since apparently Noah was either 500 years old when the firstborn was begotten or they were all born in the same year. Now it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever for he is indeed flesh. Yet his days shall be 120 years. There were giants on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them.

Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart.

So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them. Several very interesting and amazing things in that section. And we will take a fresh start at those next week.

In the meantime, you might compare the thinking of God in verses 5 through 7 and the statements of God in verses 5 through 7 with what we saw at the beginning of the creation account. When God looks, what does he see? When God sees, what does he say? What has been the end result of this grand experiment, this grand project of creation? That's where we will begin next time. The thought I'd like to leave us with this morning is the choice that we make.

It's very clear throughout the genealogies, through the great division that took place in the garden, there's the knowledge of good and there's the knowledge of evil. Which do we choose? Let's close in prayer. We thank you, Father, for the privilege of studying your word.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will use it in our souls to transform us, to renew our minds, to give us the motivation and the divine enablement to live a life that pleases you and glorifies our Savior, Jesus Christ. We ask these things in his name. Amen.