

Methuselah:

God's Longsuffering – Genesis 5

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“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? – Psalm 11:3”

How long will God be long-suffering towards us as a church and as a nation?
How long will God endure a people, who turn divine institutions upside down, devalue life, and suppress hopelessness with the secular and sensual pleasures?

Our current social trend is to turning divine institutes upside down.

1. Seven states support same sex marriage and the biblical definition of marriage is now being debated.
2. Over 53% of Americans support same sex marriage
3. There is a ten-fold increase in cohabiting couples
4. There is a 461% increase in out-of-wedlock births
5. There is a 200% increase in children living single-parent homes
6. The divorce rate between Christians and non-Christians are statistically the same – pushing 33%.
7. Infidelity in the Christian home has reached an alarming rate

We are actively devaluing life

1. There has been 53 million abortions since 1973
2. Nearly ½ of all Americans believe abortion is morally right.
3. 70 Million Americans believe pornography is morally acceptable.
4. Forcible rapes have more than quadrupled since 1970. There are now approximately 90,000 a year.
5. There are now more than 730,000-registered sexual predator and the number is increasing.

6. Doctor assisted suicide is legal in a few states. This agenda is being place on the ballot in a number of states in the upcoming elections.
7. There is a 467% increase in violent crimes since 1960
8. There is a 463% increase in state and federal prisoners
9. There is a 150% increase in American's receiving welfare payments
10. There is a 60-point drop in SAT scores, despite all the funds spent on education.

Instead of facing this cultural downturn objectively, men often chose to suppress their hopelessness with more conveniences and temporal comforts.

How long will God be merciful? How much longer will God allow us to devalue life, turn His institutions upside down and suppress His righteousness with secular and sexual pleasures?

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? – Psalm 11:3"

Methuselah lived 969 years. He is the longest living man ever recorded. He lived during the latter half of the 1656-year period leading to the Noahic flood. His name can be translated to mean, "When he dies it shall be sent forth."

Apparently, his father Enoch had a divine revelation at the time of Methuselah's birth. It was a revelation of the earth's destruction. Methuselah was a living time clock of God's mercy. As Methuselah aged, the world could see the end approaching.

From the fall onward, the world continued to grow in its wicked ways.

1. From Adam we find Cain and his family line
 - a. Cain was a murderer (Genesis 4:8) and went out from the presence of God (Genesis 4:16).
 - b. He built a city (Genesis 4:17): This was another rebellious act against God. Remember part of his punishment was to be a wanderer and a vagabond – Genesis 4:18. After he made the city, he dedicated it as a monument to his son Enoch (Genesis 4:17). Since Cain rejected God's offer of forgiveness and life, he created

his own form of eternity – a monument. He probably reasoned, that after he died, he would be remembered by the city he built.

2. We then follow Cain's family line.

- a. Lamech was the seventh from Adam through Cain. He changed the Divine Institute of marriage – Genesis 4:19. Furthermore, we can see the progression of sin as the devaluation of life spreads – i.e. another murder and Lamech's arrogant defiance – Genesis 4:23-24.
- c. Lamech's son Jabal raised cattle. This raises the question if this was another violation to God's plan. God did not sanction eating meat until after the flood – Genesis 4:20 cf. Genesis 9:3.
- d. His son Jubal made musical instruments. The idea of music points to leisure time. Perhaps the mention of music in the Cainite line points to its importance in their culture. Music has many benefits, especially with those who choose to walk in the way of Cain. It helps soothe their noisy soul. They live a life without any hope beyond the grave. This is part of the tragedy of a life lived without God – Genesis 4:21.
- e. Tubal-Cain was the first worker of iron and bronze. His instruments helped relieve the pain of the curse and build their godless culture – Genesis 4:22.
- f. Lamech's daughter was named Naamah – Genesis 4:22. Her name means pleasure. Perhaps her name represents man's pursuit of pleasure apart from God: the pursuit of pleasure in children, pleasure in things, beauty, women etc.
- g. The objective world, apart from God, was too harsh to think on – death and judgment loomed ahead. Therefore, the Cainite line created a subjective reality filled with monuments, pleasures and pursuits. All action had the purpose of lifting the weight of the curse.

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” – Genesis 6:5-6

So when Enoch walked on the earth and saw all the wickedness around him, he named his son Methuselah, meaning, "When he dies, it shall come."

1. Methuselah's life began a 969-year time clock.
2. Enoch himself was a living testimony of hope. There is something after death.
3. Enoch, the seventh from Adam through Seth, points to those who walk with God. Lamech, the seventh from Adam through Cain, points to those who walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.
4. When Enoch's son, Methuselah reached 849-years his great grandson Noah began to build the ark and preach. People could see time was running out. Every decade eternity came closer. When men looked at Methuselah they were reminded that when he dies it shall come. When they looked at Methuselah's grandson Noah building the Ark, they were reminded that they would be swept away.
5. Methuselah was a living testimony of God's patience. He demonstrated God's grace. He lived longer than any man on earth. His long life was no accident. As long as he lived the flood would not come. Apparently God spared his life year after year while Noah built the ark.
 - a. 1 Peter 3:20 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
6. Methuselah's life demonstrates God's patience towards us. We think we have tomorrow. When I was younger, I seldom saw death. The first person to die in my family happened when I was in my twenty's. None of my close friends past away in my youth. To me death was remote. It wasn't pressing.

7. I can see how the pre-flood world must have thought, “It will never happen.” When you live to be 900 years old, human death is somewhat removed, it is not a major concern.
8. Enoch preached of the coming judgment – (Jude 14-15). Methuselah represented the timeline of the coming judgment. Noah prepared for the coming judgment. But to the pre-flood world, the thought of judgment and death was far from their minds. To them, it will never happen. However, their time was slipping away and they were not ready.

I don't know when God's long-suffering toward us will end. But as a nation we are on an unstable path. But, this is not the first time our nation has fallen into disrepair.

In the late 1600's our colonies fell into moral decline. The church was weak and ineffectual. The business community was plagued by failure and bankruptcy. The political community was awash with corruption and ineptitude.

Then, Church leaders began to pray. At first it seemed as if things got worse, not better. The colonies were pummeled in a devastating war with the Indians – known as King Philips War. It was a brutal conflict that shook the very foundations of the colonial American life. The people fell further into a godless despair.

After years of praying and fasting by Godly saints, the earthquake of October 29, 1727 occurred. It was the final blow. It shook Boston and the surrounding New England area to the core. This was followed by long after shocks. People feared death without God. Then Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley came on the scene and revival swept America and England. This was called the first awakening.

Following the revolutionary war the country again fell into serious moral decay. Alcoholism was a major problem – it was 4 to 5 times worse than it is today. Illegitimate births were rampant. Thomas Paine proclaimed Christianity is dead. Church rolls were shrinking. Then Francis Asbury began praying and preaching resulting in many souls being saved. This was followed by the rise of Timothy Dwight. He brought revival to Yale, which resulted in ½ of the graduating student body going into the ministry or missions. This was

followed by the revivals of Charles Finney, D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey - hence, the second awakening.

There is a key verse in Proverbs 28:2a

“For the transgression of a land (*nation*) many are the princes thereof . . .”

There are many contributors to a nations downfall. The prime factor is unattended to sin.

When God’s people grow weary: when their zeal is gone, and their joy is missing; and all aspects of worship and service become a chore. It is not that God failed. It is a sign that little sins have been left un-confessed and broken fellowship with God has taken place. When this problem is left unattended for long periods of time it grows into major problems. It eventually affects the home, the church, the community, the city, the state and the nation. Everyone begins to suffer.

There is a need to return to God. Notice the solution proposed in Proverbs 28:2b

“ . . . but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state (*stability*) thereof shall be prolonged.”

When we turn back to God and become a people of understanding and knowledge, the stability of the nation will be prolonged.