

In the Beginning

Adam's Descendants

Genesis 5:1-6:8

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Adam's Descendants

Scripture

We are currently in a series of sermons on Genesis 1-11 that I am calling, "In the Beginning." I plan to preach only six sermons on these 11 chapters. It is just an overview of redemptive history.

So far, we have looked at the Creation of all things in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Then, we examined the Fall of man into sin Genesis 2:4-3:24. Last week, we examined God's faithfulness in the account of Cain and Abel in preserving a line of descendants that would eventually lead to the birth, life, death, resurrection, and victory of Jesus Christ over Satan. Today, we shall see God's faithfulness in Genesis 5:1-6:8 in the account of Adam's descendants.

Let's read about Adam's descendants in Genesis 5:1-6:8:

¹ This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years

and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ 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." ³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁶ When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³ Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great

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in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 5:1-6:8)

Introduction

Last time we saw how sin entered the second generation from Adam when Cain murdered his brother Abel. Cain also lied to God when he said that he did not know where Abel was. Sin impacted every generation so that Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam, simply murdered a young man for striking him. Lamech’s poem expressed that he would defend himself. He did not need God in his life. He was the epitome of human autonomy.

A more modern expression of human autonomy was captured in the famous poem by William Ernest Henley (1849–1903). He wrote this poem while recovering from an amputation of one of his legs. The poem – later titled “Invictus” – is a powerful expression of human autonomy, most explicitly stated in the poem’s final two lines. Here is the poem:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears

Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.¹

But, as we learned last time, in the battle that began in the Garden of Eden between the offspring of Satan and the offspring of the woman, God was faithful in preserving a line of descendants that would eventually lead to the birth, life, death, resurrection, and victory of Jesus Christ over Satan. And that offspring of the woman was not Cain but Abel. After Cain murdered Abel, the offspring of the woman was Seth (Genesis 4:24).

Seth, who was a descendant of Adam, was the line that God was raising up and preserving, and from which the Lord Jesus Christ would be born. However, even in this line there was sin.

Lesson

Genesis 5:1-6:8 teaches us that God's grace triumphs over growing sin.

Let's use the following outline:

1. Divine Blessing (5:1-4)
2. Human Death (5:5-20, 25-32)
3. Human Taken (5:21-24)
4. Human Degeneration (6:1-4)
5. Human Depravity (6:5)
6. Divine Judgment (6:6-7)
7. Divine Grace (6:8)

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invictus>.

I. Divine Blessing (5:1-4)

First, let's look at divine blessing.

Moses, the author of Genesis, divided the book of Genesis into ten sections. Each section is introduced by the Hebrew word, *toledot*, which means, "These are the generations of..." Today's lesson introduces the second of the ten *toledots*, the generations of Adam. Once again, Moses goes back to the beginning, as he said in Genesis 5:1-2, **"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."**

A few weeks ago, I saw a snippet of a lecture by Dr. Mark Futato, Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL, define "blessing" as "empowerment for abundant living." Further, Dr. Futato said that there are two types of blessing. The first type of blessing is an empowerment to *produce wealth*. We see that illustrated when Abraham's servant spoke to Laban about God's blessing of Abraham in Genesis 24:35, "The Lord has greatly *blessed* my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys." And the second type of blessing is an empowerment to *produce children*. We see that illustrated when God said that he would bless Abraham's wife, Sarah, with a son in Genesis 17:16, "I will *bless* her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will *bless* her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

And, of course, we see God's blessing to Adam come to fulfillment in verses 3-4, **"When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters."** So, God blessed Adam with many children. In fact, in a very real sense, we are all

related to Adam, as he is our first parent.

II. Human Death (5:3-20, 25-32)

Second, notice human death.

Moses noted in verse 5, **“Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.”** Similarly, Moses noted about Seth in verses 6-8, **“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.”**

I should make a comment about the longevity of the patriarchs. Many of them lived almost 1,000 years, with Methuselah being the oldest at 969 years. Some question their longevity, suggesting, for example, that they counted years shorter than we do. However, there is no reason to doubt their longevity, as they lived prior to the Flood and God seemed to allow people to live almost a millennium rather than almost a century, as we do.

Each patriarch fathered many **sons and daughters**, and very quickly there were thousands of descendants populating the earth. We remember that at the end of Genesis 4, in verse 26, Moses wrote, “To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.” So, descendants of Seth were calling upon the name of the Lord. They were loving and worshiping and serving God; not perfectly, and not everyone, but generally there was a godly line of people loving, worshiping, and serving God.

Nevertheless, there is a dark note at the end of each descendant, because we read, like a refrain in a poem, **“... and he died.”** In verse 5, Adam died. In verse 8, Seth died. In verse 11, Enosh died. In verse 14, Kenan died. In verse 17, Mahalalel died. In verse 20, Jared died. In verse 27, Methuselah died. And in verse 31, Lamech died. The death that God spoke about in the Garden of

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Eden came to everyone with a certain finality: “... and he died” – “... and he died” – “... and he died.”

But, in the midst of this dark description of death, there was an astonishing account that shines bright with hope.

III. Human Taken (5:21-24)

Third, observe the human taken.

We read in verses 21-23, “**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.**” And this is where we would expect Moses to write, as he did for all the other patriarchs, “... and he died.” But, instead of noting that Enoch died, Moses wrote in verse 24, “**Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.**” The writer to the Hebrews tells us what happened to **Enoch** in Hebrews 11:5, “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 having pleased God.” So, Enoch never died.

What is striking is that **Enoch** was the seventh generation from Adam through Seth’s line. You may recall from our previous study that Lamech was the seventh generation from Adam through Cain’s line (Genesis 4:17-18). In seven generations from Adam through Cain, Lamech showed himself to be a murderer, an adulterer, a self-sufficient, autonomous man who did not need God in his life. On the other hand, in seven generations from Adam through Seth, **Enoch** showed himself to be a man who **walked with God**. What an astonishing contrast! Rebellion versus submission; independence versus dependence; walking away from God versus walking with God. And the question is: which one is a description of you?

In the entire Bible, the description “**walked with God**” is

applied only to Enoch and Noah (Genesis 6:9). So what does it mean to “walk with God”? Kent Hughes says that it “describes the closest personal communion with God – as if walking at the side of God.... The phrase also indicates the deepest obedience, for the metaphor of walking suggests walking along God’s path, in the same direction.”² Allen Ross takes it a step further and says, “The expression became a common description of the life of fellowship and obedience with the Lord, as if to say that walking with the Lord was a step above mere living.”³

Walking with God is the goal of every Christian. Our desire is to know God, love God, worship God, serve God, proclaim God with every bit of strength and breath we have.

Is that your goal?

IV. Human Degeneration (6:1-4)

Fourth, look at human degeneration.

Genesis 6:1-2 says, **“When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.”** The difficulty with these verses is the identity of **“the sons of God”** and **“the daughters of man.”** Various solutions have been proposed, as summarized in the notes of *The ESV Study Bible*:

Various scholars have proposed that the “sons of God” are (1) fallen angels (cf. Job 1:6; some, however, suggest that this contradicts Mark 12:25, though the reference in Mark is to angels in heaven; see also 2 Pet. 2:4–5; Jude 5–6); or (2) tyrannical human judges or kings (in the ungodly line of Lamech, possibly demon-possessed); or (3) followers of God among the male descendants of Seth (i.e., the godly line of Seth, but who married the ungodly

² R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 120.

³ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 174-175.

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daughters of Cain).⁴

It is difficult to decide which view is correct. However, clearer is the fact that some kind of sexual perversion took place. This is affirmed by the Lord's statement in verse 3, **"My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."** And from this time forward, man's longevity rapidly diminishes from almost 1,000 years to a little over 100 years.

Moses also said in verse 4a that **"the Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them."** They were likely part of the degeneration that was taking place at that time. The exact meaning of **"Nephilim"** is uncertain. Moses simply described them in verse 4b as **"the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown."**

V. Human Depravity (6:5)

Fifth, notice human depravity.

Then we come to one of the saddest verses in the entire Bible in verse 5. Moses said, **"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."** It is hard to conceive of a more complete description of human depravity.

VI. Divine Judgment (6:6-7)

Sixth, observe the divine judgment.

That led Moses to write in verses 6-7, **"And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals**

⁴ Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 61.

and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” We should not think that God made a mistake. Moses was simply using human language to describe the emotion of God as he observed the depravity of humanity.

VII. Divine Grace (6:8)

And seventh, notice the divine grace.

Moses once again gives us a shining glimmer of God's grace in verse 8, **“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”** In his providence, God picked **Noah** to be the recipient of his amazing grace, so that **Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.** Because of God's grace to him, Noah, like Enoch, walked with God. And we shall learn more about Noah next time.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Genesis 5:1-6:8, we should be assured that God's grace is greater than our sin.

We live in a fallen world. We struggle to walk with God. Our only hope is in the marvelous grace of our loving God. As Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” He also said of God in Titus 3:5, “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Let us thank God for his grace to us, as the hymn writer put it, “Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”⁵ Amen.

⁵ Paul Eckert, *Steve Green's MIDI Hymnal: A Complete Toolkit for Personal Devotions and Corporate Worship*, Electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1998).

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The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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