

The Genealogy

(i) Incomplete and selective

The genealogy from 'Man' to Noah is now presented. First, **let us consider the genealogy itself.** It shows that the story of the human race goes on. There is a connection between Noah and the people of Genesis 1–4.

(ii) Segments of family lines

(i) The genealogies are probably not complete. In Genesis 5 and Genesis 10 the same rounded number of segments suggests it was deliberately composed, picking out ten of the significant sections of the family line.

(ii) It is likely that the interpretation of the very long ages is partly to be explained by the assumption that names **sometimes** stand for segments of the family line. '*When Man (or 'Adam') had lived for 130 years he had a son...*' ^{☐¹} may well be a Mesopotamian way of saying: 'At one point in the distant past the oldest family-line known went on for 130 years and then there came someone who had a son who started a new section of the family line...'. There is evidence that ancient genealogies could work like this. It is quite certain that 'A begat B' can mean 'A begat a line ending in B'. The long lifetimes also are an ancient way of speaking. In Mesopotamian king-lists we have kings with fantastic ages, but the kings are known to have actually existed. In the 'unimportant' patches it is likely that a name stands for a segment of the genealogical line.

^{☐¹} 5:3

(iii) Gaps but not too big

(iii) The gaps in the genealogy cannot be too big. A date of 1,000,000 BC for Cain (for example) would be impossible.

(iv) Key figures

(iv) The ten names pick out key men, tell the age at which they begat the most significant of their sons, and the length of the line before another key-figure is considered.

(v) Time span

(v) The ten segments of genealogy in Genesis 5:1–32 cover about 8000 years (the approximate sum). If these are the accounts of 'lines' rather than individuals, then the dates of the whole genealogy runs from about 13000 BC to about 5600 BC (the latter date depending on the interpretation of Genesis 10 yet to be given). If there are some gaps it could go back somewhat earlier. How far back is uncertain, but not tens of thousands of years.

Implications

• God's faithfulness

Secondly, let us consider **the implications of the genealogy.**

It shows **God's faithfulness.** God had commanded the human race to multiply. ^{☐¹} Despite the sin of man God has not withdrawn the possibility of continuing to multiply upon the earth. Between Genesis 5:1 and 5:32 there are 8,000 years at least, maybe more, in which God had allowed humankind to continue.

^{☐¹} 1:28

• The depth of the fall

It shows **the greatness of the fall of humankind.** The chapter begins by reminding us of what was at the beginning of man's story. He was made in the likeness of God. ^{☐¹} But then the rest of the chapter tells us to what depth he has descended. Genesis 2:16 has been fulfilled: 'And he died ... and he died ... and he died' is the dominant note of the chapter.

^{☐¹} 5:1-2

• Death

It shows **human inability to defeat death.** The running phrase of the chapter, 'And he died... and he died', shows that despite the great technology and achievements of humankind recorded for us in

Genesis 4:17–24 and despite the spirituality of Genesis 4:25–26, man still cannot rise above the curse of death.

• **Fellowship with God triumphs over the fall**

It shows **that fellowship with God is the way of triumphing over the curse of the fall**. There are ten segments of genealogy: Adam – Seth – Enosh – Kenan – Mahalalel – Jared – Enoch – Methuselah – Lamech – Noah. The phrase ‘And he died’ comes eight times and Genesis 9:28 makes a ninth. Once the phrase is conspicuously absent. Enoch did not die! ¹ Enoch’s triumph began in fellowship with God. *He ‘walked with God’,* that is, he went through life, step-by-step in fellowship with God.

¹ 5:21-24

• **A promise – inherited by faith**

Amidst that fellowship he was given a promise. Enoch did what he did ‘by faith’ and faith is always related to promise. By faith and patience we inherit promises. ¹ Somewhere in the days of his fellowship with God, God revealed to him that He did not wish Enoch to die. Amidst the endless dying that had gone on for thousands of years God planned to give a demonstration of His power over death. And Enoch believed God! *‘By faith Enoch was taken up...’* (Hebrews 11:5).

¹ Hebrews 6:12



• **Enoch a glimpse of redemption**

In Enoch, God gave a glimpse of what redemption is and what it would mean for the snake to be crushed. The hope for the human race would be exemption from the curse of death altogether. The day will come when *‘there will be no longer any death’* and the first things of our fallen world will have passed away – Satan included. ¹ The hope of total deliverance from the curse of the fall includes a restored fellowship with God and the total abolition of death. Enoch had the privilege of giving the world a glimpse of it. He went into God’s presence without his body dying. He had the same experience that all Christians shall have who are alive at the time when Jesus comes – glorification without having a funeral first!

¹ Revelation 20:14; 21:5

• **Not great knowledge but simple faith**

Enoch’s story is a hint to us that what is needed in life is not great knowledge but simple faith. Enoch had little knowledge of what would come in the centuries ahead of him. Paul’s epistles were not available to him. The life of Jesus was unknown to him. He did not even have the examples of David and Abraham. There were no great heroes of faith to be a model to him, except perhaps Abel. Yet his triumph over death was one of the greatest achievements ever. Only Elijah would ever repeat it. It is a demonstration to us that if we have a word from God, and if we believe, nothing is impossible for us.

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