

## **"...AND HE DIED.", GENESIS 5**

My Father's World #5

◆Intro: Jim sat at his desk staring out the window, his wife Sue was on his mind. It was no special day, really. Not a holiday. Not their anniversary. But he thought how really special a gal she was and with that pinch of realization he began to ponder how he might express his affection and appreciation for her. So on the way home that evening he picked up a bouquet of flowers just to say she was special. On the front door step he rang his own doorbell to surprise her. When Sue opened the door she immediately burst into tears! Jim caught her in his arms and gently asked why she was crying. This was her reply:

◆"Well, this morning Jimmy Jr flushed his slipper down the toilet. Then his little brother threw up on me. The Visa bill came and we don't have enough in the checkbook to pay it. I have a terrible headache and there's no Tylenol in the house. And now... you come home drunk!"

◆Sometimes it just seems like the ball is rolling down hill and nothing can stop it. That's what it looks like since Genesis 3. But let's read slowly. In Chapter 4 we have six godless generations after Adam through Cain. In chapter 5 we start over with Adam's creation (cf 1:26), and then his line through Seth which includes ten names. But Seth's line has a name similar to every one of Cain's!

◆1) Cain/Kenan 2) Enoch/Enoch 3) Irad/Jared 4) Mehujael/Mahalalel 5) Methushael/Methuselah 6) Lamech/Lamech.

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In Cain's line the 7th generation is the *godless* Lamech. In Seth's line the seventh is the *godly* Enoch!

◆[Now bear in mind that Hebrew genealogies don't always follow strict sequence like we might expect. The verb "to be the father of" (beget, *yalad*) is still true even if some generations are skipped. Adam was indeed the great "forefather" of Noah, for example, and could be said to have "begotten" the Noah. When Hebrew genealogies skip some and include others, it's likely to emphasize particular individuals in that genealogy. Matthew does the exact same thing with the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1.]

◆Our author seems to have chosen names to reveal a contrast in the two lines from Adam, and thereby make some theological points. Let's consider them.

◆**1. All sinners will face judgement and die. And I'm one of them.** To help this lesson sink in you might want to draw a tombstone on your sermon notes and label it with your own name. To help this sink in Moses does some other interesting things.

◆**A.** He notes that while God made Adam in his image (v1), Adam made offspring in *his* image and likeness. And we know that Adam's image is a fallen image destined to die. I think we need to think about this because people have a remarkable ability NOT think about it unless they're at a funeral, often not even then.

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◆ **B.** Moses also includes a repeated cadence of terms that are unique to this genealogy. It's the phrase "and then he died". Just like God said would happen back in the Garden of Eden if Adam & Eve were to disobey his one regulation. It also proves the snake wrong who said they wouldn't die. Now it kinda looks like *maaaybe* the snake was right! Look how long they live! When triple great grandpa reaches, say, 626 years you just might think he's never gonna die. The average life span on these patriarchs in Genesis 5 is 702 years! [By the way, long lives in this ancient period are attested to in the traditions of Phoenicians, Egyptians, Persians, Chinese.] Still we keep reading over and over, like to toll of a bell, "and he died."

◆ What exactly does death point to, you ask? That's the right question. Death points to the reality of judgement. That means that when I die, it is a judgement, and I will face judgement, because I am a sinful human like all the rest and God must eventually destroy all sin.

◆ *"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14, NIV.*

◆ "...man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment," Hebrews 9:27, NIV.

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◆ Biblically speaking, you and I are actually making that coming judgement worse every time we chose against God's commands!

◆ *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." Romans 2:5, NIV.*

◆ If you are a descendent of Adam, and you are, you are going to die. (Rom.5:12) How many days or years do you expect you have left? 10? 30? Suppose someone told you you have cancer and 3 months to live? When you put it like that doesn't it make what kind of soda you bring home from Walmart seem pretty trivial? And doesn't that highlight the fact that what you and I do, and say, and think while we are alive -all have consequences coming when we are not alive?

◆ "And he died" means everything I do matters to God. My life matters to God. What I glorify on my Facebook page matters to God. It means there are right things, and there are wrong things. It means I'd better not just pass off the hard questions saying "that's just what you believe" or "that's so old fashioned." Here's something very old fashioned: nobody ever fails to die. They've been doing it forever! It's verifiable! And it means we'd better be thinking about what's gonna happen the day after.



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◆ God reminds us we can store up wrath. But Jesus also reminded us we can store up treasure in heaven. Which one have we done today? But all is not dismal...

◆ **2. I could be walking with God right now, and it would count forever.** Let's dig into the glaring break in the cadence of "and he died" statements. It comes with Enoch (v24). He is one of only two humans the Bible records as being translated into heaven without dying. What? That's right.

◆ A. Instead of saying "he lived 365 years and he died" like all the others, the writer says (v23) "he lived 365 years, and he walked with God, and he was no more because God took him." That was the second time he told us Enoch "walked with God." We may conclude the author's point is that walking with God is the path that defeats death. Isn't that exciting? We don't necessarily have to die! What exactly is "walking with God."



◆ B. Walking with God isn't being very religious.

People of all religions are religious. And I dare say some far more than any of us are. This impressed itself on me when touring Turkey and Greece in the footsteps of Paul. People went to great lengths to build temples to non-gods like Apollo, and Diana. (show pix) You don't do that unless at least someone is truly dedicated to Apollo. Or truly loves Diana. Or is afraid. Or gets some kind of power or spiritual answer (I would call it demonic

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power.) These people were dedicated to their gods even though they were false. In contrast, we feel good about it if we can get 10 people to show up and weed the flower beds! So look, the Greeks were very religious, but they weren't "walking with God".

◆C. Here's something interesting. The only other person in this genealogy that is said to "walk with God" is Noah. (6:9) Now there is a commentary in the New Testament on these people in Hebrews 11. There, sandwiched between Enoch and Noah in a long list of ancient people of faith it says this:

*◆And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Hebrews 11:6, NIV.*

◆ We may conclude then by example of Enoch and Noah, that walking with God is believing he exists + earnestly seeking him. Looking for God in the moments of life. Will anyone say that of you at your funeral? Some folks stop at believing he exists. Let me ask you, How are you earnestly seeking God? It's important because such "walking with God" not only pleases him, but it is the path to conquers death(s)! Like Enoch! Like Noah who lived through the judgement of the Flood! So I am not urging anyone here to be more religious. I'm urging you to seek God, not just on Sunday morning. Reach out for him when you hurt. Talk to

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him when you feel happy. Bring your questions to him. Discuss with him what to watch on your streaming service. Sit in quiet and ask God if he has anything he wants to tell you.

♦ Lots of us are vaguely aware of God, but that doesn't enhance your life. Curtis and Eldredge put it like this:

♦ "The loss of heart best describes most men and women in our day. It isn't just the addictions and affairs and depression and heartaches, though, God knows, there is enough of these to cause even the best of us to lose heart. But there is the busyness, the drivenness, the fact that most of us are living merely to survive. Beneath it we feel restless, weary, and vulnerable."

♦ We can easily replace communion with God for activity for God. These are not the same at all. We can easily substitute busyness for meaning, and functional relationship for love. We throw ourselves into mastering our favorite sport, or replacing our entire wardrobe, or remodeling the house. But these things don't feed the soul. We are just pushing the inner life down for a while. But listen! You & I were meant to walk with God! It's what God did in the Garden with Adam and Eve, right? God wants to walk with us. God wants to defeat our everyday deaths as well as our final one!

♦ **Conclusion:** Now some concluding observations. Where Lamech in Cain's line states a prophecy of violence, Lamech in Seth's line makes a prophecy of comfort. He names his

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son Noah's, which name means comfort or rest. Also, Enoch knows that God's judgment is inevitably going to show up and makes a prophecy. He names his son Methuselah, which means "when he dies, it will come". If you add up the figures in the text, you will find Methuselah died the year the Flood came. And here we have the two major themes in Genesis 5: judgement on godlessness, and comfort for the godly.

◆ Here's another gem: the only other genealogy in Biblical records that uses the phrase in 5:1 *this is the book of the generations of* is Matthew 1:1 which reads "this is the book (biblos) of the genealogy (genesis) of Jesus. Certainly Matthew was thinking of Genesis 5 and Adam's genealogy. And whereas Adam's genealogy by and large dwindled in death, Jesus' genealogy led to miracle birth, which in turn brought eternal life to sinners like you and me! The descendants of Adam experience death in all it's forms: malice, jealousy, hatred, despair, emptiness, longing. We all die a little every day! In many ways life seems to be unravelling! But the good news is Jesus' descendants experience life in all it's forms: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness. -because he makes it possible to truly "walk with God".

◆ *1 Corinthians 15:21-26 (NIV) For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also*

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*through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death*

✦ Chose to walk with God today. Hard as you might think it is to adopt his standards, his commands... Different as these are from everything our culture tells you about being a genuine person... –walk away from all sin and evil, look earnestly for his path in every area of your life. God is going to drown all evil in the end. And he is going to save and reward each one that turns to him.

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Communion texts:

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (NIV) Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:47-49 (NIV) The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

Romans 8:1-2 (NIV 1984) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 5:12-17 (NIV 1984) Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death

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reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.