

Genesis 5:1-6:8 “The Generations of Adam”
Psalm 14
1 Corinthians 15:35-58

April 12, 2009

Introduction

Our Old Testament lesson shows us how all have turned aside –
how we have all become corrupt.

In the words of Psalm 14:2,

“The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,
to see if there are any who understand,
who seek after God.”

David answers this by saying,

“There is none who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:3)

Or as Genesis 6 puts it,

Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And yet we are told in Psalm 14:5 that “God is with the generation of the righteous.”

There is a seed of the woman who does not follow the voice of the serpent.

But if there is none who does good,

then how can there be a “the righteous”?

Psalm 14:7 explains:

“Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people,
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.”

It is true – in one sense – that there is none who does good, not even one.

But it is also true that there is a promised seed – a chosen seed –
the generation, the offspring of the righteous.

And that seed is ultimately our Lord Jesus Christ himself,

and because we are his, we have become the generation of the righteous in him.

And so let us sing Psalm 14 as those who rejoice in the salvation that Christ has brought!

[sing Psalm 14]

[read 1 Cor]

Paul tells us that the first man was from the earth, a man of dust;
the second man is from heaven.

There are two men in all of history.

The first man was a man of dust – and he returned to dust.

The second man is from heaven – and he returned to heaven.

Paul says that there is a pattern to history – a purpose to the structure of history.

History moves from the man from the earth to the man from heaven.

The first Adam became a living being;
the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

It is fitting that we come to Genesis 5 on Resurrection Sunday,
because Genesis 5 is all about the necessity of the resurrection.

Genesis 5:1-6:8 is the second part of Genesis.

We have seen that Genesis is structured by the “toledots” –
“this is the book of the generations of...”

Genesis 1:1-2:3 serves as the introduction to the book.

Genesis 2:4-4:26 is part 1,

which tells us of the generations of the heavens and the earth.

Now we come to part 2,

which is the generations of Adam.

It is not the story of Adam,

but of the story of Adam’s descendents.

There are two basic themes in this second part:

- 1) the demonstration that Noah is the legitimate seed of the woman (chapter 5)
- 2) the contrast between Noah and the rest of humanity (6:1-8)

One thing to remember is that this story is *our story*.

After all, we are of the line of Seth.

Indeed, all humanity is of the line of Seth!

The Cainites were wiped out by the flood.

Therefore the entire human race is descended from Seth, from Enoch, and from Noah.

1. Image and Sonship (5:1-5)

5:1 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.

He named them Man (“Adam”).

I know that in our day we have moved away from the generic use of “man.”

We often substitute “humanity” or some other neutral term.

And that is not necessarily wrong.

If we are required to use biblical gender language,

then every noun should have “gender”

and we should develop a “you feminine” and a “you masculine”!

What *is* important is that we *understand*

what the bible is doing with *its* gender language!

If you translate this, “And called them *human beings*,”

as several modern translations do,

then you are missing the point of the text.

Let me state this very simply:

If you translate the Word of God in a gender neutral manner,
then you are effectively saying that modern assumptions and attitudes
have greater authority than the Word of God.

It is true that one part of the meaning of “adam” in Hebrew is “humanity.”

But the whole point that Genesis is making
is that this “male and female” that God created *is* Adam.

They are one flesh.

Literally!

Because Eve was taken from Adam’s own flesh.

God created Adam male and female.

Why is this so important?

Because if you soften this and turn it into “humanity”
then you wind up losing some of the resonance of sonship and inheritance
later in Genesis (and throughout the scriptures).

If all humanity (male and female) are both Adam,
then that means that both male and female are together “sons of God,”
partakers of the inheritance in Jesus Christ.

The irony is that gender neutrality winds up dividing the genders
so that “man” means male and “son” means male –
and thus the biblical language that was intended to include women
winds up excluding them!

And if you women don’t like being called Adam and sons,
don’t worry – in the evening service we are going through Ephesians,
where Paul speaks of us as a feminine body –
so that men and women together wind up as bride and mother!

But the point of the text is that Adam (man) was created male and female.
Male and female are both essential to the image of God.

What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

To be created in the image of God means to be a son of God.

Why do I say that?

Because Genesis uses the same language to speak of fathering a son
that it uses to speak of being created in the image of God.

*3 When Adam had lived 130 years,
he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

When God created man he made him in his own likeness, after his own image.

When Adam fathered a son, he was born in his own likeness and his own image.

The idea of image and likeness certainly is connected with sonship –
but it is also connected with the idea of kingship.

(As we saw in Genesis 1, where image and likeness language
is also connected with the idea of having dominion over the creatures)

It is worth pointing out that Adam had at least two other sons prior to Seth
(and probably many more),
but none of them are said to be in his image and likeness.

We know that Seth was not the firstborn.

His position in this list is rooted in the fact that he is the heir of the promise.

What promise?

The promise that the Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent.

In one sense all of Adam's children reflect him.

All receive his genetic imprint.

All inherit the corruption and guilt of original sin.

But one of his sons is said to be after his own image and likeness.

There is one who inherits the promise as the son of God.

*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.

This launches a series of ten generations –
the last of which ends in a triad of sons.

Recall that in chapter 4 there were seven generations –
the last of which ended in a triad of sons.

This will be an important pattern in Genesis as we will see later,
as there will also be ten generations after the flood,
ending with a triad of sons as well!

2. From Adam to Noah: the Seed of the Woman (5:6-32)

What is this genealogy doing?

Some have tried to establish a chronology in order to ascertain the age of the earth,
but we know from Exodus 6

that some chronological genealogies have gaps.

(In Exodus 6 there are only four generations from Levi to Moses,
and the ages of each are given there.)

But in 1 Chronicles 7 there are 10 generations from Ephraim to Joshua)
So this chronology is probably not given to establish the age of the earth.

What does the *text* say that it is doing?

The text does tell you what it is doing.
It is right there in verses 1-3.

It is recounting the transmission of the divine image –
the lineage of the sons of God,
those who have inherited the rule of creation
as God's vicegerents.

So then why does the text go into such detail about the ages of the patriarchs?

The ages of the patriarchs are quite interesting:

Enoch lives 365 years (one earth year)
Lamech lives 777 years (the synodic periods of Jupiter and Saturn)
(a synodic period is the number of days it takes
for a planet to return to the same place in the sky)
Jared lives 962 years (the synodic periods of Venus plus Saturn)

Other similar numeric connections can be found as well.

In fact if you take a man's age when his son is born
and the years he lives after his son's birth
and divide each number by 60,
the sum of all the remainders will be 365.

Now you may wonder why divide by 60?

Well, the ancient Babylonians used a base 60 scheme of counting
(indeed, the ancient Babylonian genealogies must be understood
in terms of this base 60 computation for the ages of their kings).

In other words, what these ages are doing is showing us what God had said in Genesis 1:
the stars were given as *signs* –

not that the stars *govern* our lives,
but they are pointers that show us something.

Here we see that the cycles of a man's years
may match the cycles of the heavenly spheres.

And that the whole of the generation of the righteous –
the whole of the righteous line, the seed of the woman,
has come to the completion of its line in the number 365 –
the number of one year.

Which is also the number of Enoch.

And Enoch is important as the central exception
to the relentlessness of death in this chapter.

- 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.*

Enoch walked with God (5:22, 24) – as does Noah (6:9).
The connection between Enoch and Noah is important.

Listen to them in Hebrew:

Hanoch.

Noach.

The names are about as similar as Elijah and Elisha.
And for good reason!

So Enoch and Noah both walk with God.

The word “walk” is one of the most common words in the OT.
It is used more than 1500 times.

But it is only used 64 times in this particular form (the hithpael).
And this usage of “walked with God” has judicial overtones.

This is the form used for the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in 3:8.
It is the form used for God’s call to Abraham
to “walk before me and be blameless” in Genesis 17:1.

And throughout scripture,
when men or angels “walk through the land”
as agents of judgment,
this is the form that is used.

This suggests that Enoch and Noah were agents of God’s heavenly council.
We often think of “walking with God” in terms of piety.

And certainly that *must be* included.

But if you just hear this as “Enoch and Noah were pious, godly men,”
then you will miss the point.

Certainly Enoch and Noah were pious, godly men.

But “they walked with God,” means that they were prophets.

The LXX translates this “they were pleasing” to God.

In one sense that is a terrible translation,
since it might tend towards the “piety” approach.

But if you realize that the Greek translation of the OT said that Enoch and Noah were pleasing to God,
that may help you understand why God says at the baptism of Jesus,
“This is my beloved son with whom I am well-pleased.”
It is the same word.

The baptism of Jesus, where he took on the divine call to “walk through the land” as the prophetic herald of the coming Kingdom of God,
was where he was declared to be the new Enoch,
the new Noah,
the Son of God,
the Seed of the Woman who would crush the serpent’s head!

Certainly the New Testament thinks of Enoch and Noah as prophets.
Jude 14-15 says that Enoch the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying,
“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones,
to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly
of all their deeds of ungodliness
that they have committed in such an ungodly way,
and of all the harsh things
that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

This is a quotation from the apocryphal book of Enoch.
It is unlikely that Enoch actually spoke these exact words.
But if Enoch was a contemporary of the Cainite Lamech,
(both of them, after all, are 7th from Adam)
and if Enoch walked with God (in proclaiming judgment),
then this is undoubtedly a faithful summary
of what Enoch prophesied.

2 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 3:20, Heb 11:7 all speak of Noah in similar terms.

Enoch and Noah therefore should be seen as prophets
who bring a covenant lawsuit (of sorts) against the wicked in their day,
similar to the way in which the prophets of later generations
will bring charges against Israel and Judah and the nations.

And indeed, this is part of our calling as prophets, priests and kings in Jesus Christ.
We bring a message of coming judgment to the nations.

Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!

The message of the resurrection of Jesus is *not* a warm, fuzzy message of
“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!”

Rather, as Paul said in Athens to the philosophers of his day,

God “commands all people everywhere to repent,
because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness
by a man whom he has appointed;

and of this he has given assurance to all
by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)

After all, the resurrection of Jesus is the culmination of the message
that Enoch and Noah proclaimed.

Judgment Day has happened in Jesus,

(he is the well-pleasing Son – he is the Son who walked with God!)
and therefore anyone who repents and believes in him,
and is baptized into his name,
has passed through that judgment in him.

We’ll come back to baptism in the next couple weeks,
because that is what the Flood is all about!

But what is especially interesting about Enoch is that he is the seventh from Adam.
Seventh from Adam is the Cainite Lamech, who inflicts death.
Seventh from Adam is the Sethite Enoch, who does not die.

Lamech is the prototypical wicked king who boasts of his power in taking vengeance.
Enoch walked with God as a faithful prophet,
and then God took him.

Does that remind you of anything?

In the days of the Kings there was an especially wicked king
whose idolatry and vengeance was especially notable.

And in the days of Ahab God sent a prophet who brought the covenant lawsuit,
and then God “took” Elijah up into heaven as well,
before his work was complete.

In the same way, Enoch’s work was not complete,
and even as Elisha completed Elijah’s task, after Elijah was taken,
so also Noah will complete Enoch’s task, after Enoch was taken.

In verse 28 we hear of the birth of Noah:

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.

It is no doubt quite intentional that we are told that the Cainite Lamech
boasts of 77-fold vengeance,
but then the Sethite Lamech lives 777 years!

The story of the Cainites ended in vengeance –
as their line is cursed – alienated from the ground.
The story of the Sethites ends in relief from the curse.

The Cainite Lamech arrogantly proclaims the glory of his own kingdom.
The Sethite Lamech proclaims that rest will come through the promised Seed.

Whose voice are you listening to?
The Cainite Lamech would tell you that vengeance and power and technology
has the answers to all your problems.
After all, that is what the Cainites devote themselves to in chapter 4.

But the Sethite Lamech tells you that it is the promised Seed that will bring relief.

In the genealogy of the Cainites we hear about city-building,
technological innovation,
all in the service of human pride and arrogance.

In the genealogy of the Sethites we hear about worship.
This does not mean that cities and technology are bad.
After all, the history of the scriptures will end with the city of God,
the new Jerusalem!
What it means is that we are looking for a city made without hands.
We do not trust in technology to save us.
Instead, we worship God and we proclaim his message to the nations.

3. The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men (6:1-8)

*6:1 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.*

In verse 1 we hear that man is multiplying.
God had said to be fruitful and multiply!
But in verse 5 we hear that the wickedness of man is also multiplying (same word).

There have been two main proposals for who the “sons of God” are.
Some have said that they are angels.
Others have said that they are the Sethites – the holy line.

Based on what we’ve already seen in chapter 5,
it would seem to make sense that they are the Sethites – the sons of God.
The seed of the woman has blended itself with the seed of the serpent,
and the result is the corruption of the whole of humanity.

The pattern of 6:2 is the same as Genesis 3:6.

Like Eve, they “saw” that something was “good [or attractive]”
and so they “took.”
This is the pattern of sin and temptation.
It starts with seeing.
“Seeing” has to do with perceiving.
Whether it is physical seeing, or intellectual perception,
sin begins with “seeing” that something is desirable.

We sin because we perceive that there is something we desire,
something we call “good” or “beautiful” or “attractive.”
And because the thing that we desire is good, beautiful, attractive,
we convince ourselves that we should take it.

And therein we believe the lie.

We listen to the voice of the serpent – the voice of folly –
and we turn from the path of wisdom.

*3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh:
his days shall be 120 years.”*

This is the third reference to God’s Spirit in Genesis.

The first was when the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the deep,
as the Spirit of God brought life and order out of the *tohu vbohu*,
the barren wasteland of the abyss.

The second was when the LORD God walked in the garden
in the Spirit of the day (often translated “cool of the day”
due to the idea of “ruach” meaning either Spirit, wind, or breath).
But here God says that he will not leave his Spirit among men.

Why?

Because he is flesh.

Some have said that Paul’s “spirit-flesh” dualism is rooted in Greek philosophy.

But the basis for that distinction is found here in Genesis 6.

Man is flesh.

And so God’s Spirit will not abide with man
(or perhaps better, “contend” with man) forever.
Judgment will come.

And it will come in 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.*

The Nephilim appear both before and after the flood,
so it is not likely that this is a reference to a particular “race.”
Rather, the Nephilim appear to be giants –
great warriors and heroes who were larger and stronger than other men.

This could be a reference to Gilgamesh or other ancient mythic heroes
(suggesting that ancient myths may well have been based
in some sort of historical events).

*5 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.
6 And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth,
and it grieved him to his heart.*

There is a word play going on here with 5:29.
In 5:29 the Sethite Lamech said of his son, Noah,
He will bring us relief (nacham) from our work
and from the painful toil (itsabon) of our hands.
Now in 6:6 God says that he was sorry (nacham) that he had made man,
and it grieved him (itsab) to his heart.

Truly Noah brings relief –
but the relief that he brings comes only through the sorrow of God.
And truly Noah brings relief from our painful toil –
but only through the grief of God.

And what does the grief and sorrow of God look like?
You are probably expecting me to say “the cross”!

“The grief and sorrow of God is most fully expressed in the death of his Son”

And that is true.
But it is *only* true because of what that *really* means.
In our day this has become the centerpiece of the “warm fuzzy Jesus” movement,
in which the cross has become an emblem of God’s
mushy-hearted love for humanity.

But if you would truly understand what the grief and sorrow of God looks like,
read verse 7:

*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.”*

This is what the repentance of God looks like.
God’s grief over the rebellion of humanity results in judgment.

Condemnation.
Destruction.
God says, “man has turned to evil, therefore I will wipe man out.”

This is a chilling passage.

The consequences of human rebellion are nothing less than cataclysmic,
catastrophic judgment –
and judgment not only against man,
but also against animals, creeping things, and birds.
God gave dominion to Adam.
When he failed,
when he fell,
the ground itself was cursed,
and everything under his dominion came under judgment.

And it was this cosmic, cataclysmic judgment
that came upon our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

This is the shortest verse thus far in the Hebrew Bible.
Five words.

Noah found grace (or favor) in the eyes of the LORD.
As cosmic, cataclysmic judgment hangs over the earth,
as Man comes to brink of utter extermination,

Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

In the flood, you see a picture of death and resurrection of Jesus,
as Noah and his family are brought through the waters of destruction,
the waters of judgment and death,
and are restored to life.

Even so, Christ Jesus our Lord has passed through
the cosmic, cataclysmic judgment of the cross,
and he has been raised up in glory as the firstfruits of the dead.

Truly, as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
But each in his own order:

Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.
Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father
after destroying every rule and every authority and power. (1 Cor 15:21-24)

And so let us sing number 284 in the Trinity Hymnal, “This Joyful Eastertide”

Meaning of the Supper

In the Lord's Supper, our Lord Jesus Christ wishes to communicate his body and blood to us, which ought to cause us to reflect upon the fact that our body and blood—which means our whole nature—are corrupted to all evil and thus to eternal death, so that they of themselves may never share in the Kingdom of God—as the apostle Paul says in 1 Cor 15:50—“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

But to deliver us from this corruption, the eternal Word of God became flesh, so that there might be a holy flesh and blood: that is to say, a truly divine man, through whom our flesh and blood is restored and sanctified. And this happens as we eat and drink of His body and blood by faith.

In this Supper the Lord truly offers and gives His holy and sanctifying body and blood to us, as truly as the visible things of the bread and the cup, through the ministry of the Church, as His holy Word declares: “Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you; this is my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin, drink ye all of it.”

Brothers and sisters, let us believe those promises which Jesus Christ, who is the unfailing truth, has spoken with his own lips: that He is truly willing to make us partakers of His body and blood, in order that we may possess Him wholly and in such wise that He may live in us and we in Him. And though we see but bread and wine, we must not doubt that He accomplishes spiritually in our souls all that He shows us outwardly by these visible signs, namely, that He is the bread of heaven to feed and nourish us unto eternal life. So, let us never be unmindful of the infinite goodness of our Savior who spreads out all His riches and blessings on this Table, to impart them to us. For in giving Himself to us, He makes a testimony to us that all that He has is ours. And remember that the Lord thus imparts Himself to us that He may ever live in us, and that we may be one body in Him our Head, even as we all partake here of the one bread.

Therefore, let us receive this Sacrament as a pledge that the virtue of His death and passion is imputed to us for righteousness, as though we had suffered them in our own persons. May we never be so perverse as to draw away when Jesus Christ invites us so gently by His Word.

Instead, lift up your hearts on high where Jesus Christ is seated in the glory of His Father. Believe that you are nourished unto eternal life by His substance when His Spirit lifts our hearts above all earthly things by faith, attaining even to heaven, and entering the Kingdom of God where He dwells. This is where you will find grace to sustain you in your hour of need.