

Main Idea: There’s much we can learn about the Christian family by looking closely at the first family. As we investigate Genesis 5, there are three important discoveries for us.

- I. We learn about our origin (1-2).
 - A. God created mankind.
 1. He made man in a day.
 2. He made man in His likeness.
 3. He made man in plurality.
 - B. God blessed mankind.
 - C. God named mankind.
- II. We learn about our ancestors (3-32).
 - A. First there was Adam (3-5).
 - B. Then came Seth (6-8).
 - C. Then came Enosh (9-11).
 - D. Then came Kenan (12-14).
 - E. Then came Mahalalel (15-17).
 - F. Then came Jared (18-20).
 - G. Then came Enoch (21-24).
 - H. Then came Methuselah (25-27).
 - I. Then came Lamech (28-31).
 - J. Finally came Noah (32).
- III. We learn about our desperate need.
 - A. We are mortal.
 - B. We are depraved.
 - C. We can experience hope beyond the grave, by grace alone.

Take Inventory: Am I living in light of the past?

There’s so much we can learn about the Christian family by looking carefully at the first family. That’s what we’re doing currently in our study of God’s Word. This morning, we are coming to a text we might be inclined to skip, the first genealogy in Genesis 5. But that would not be wise, for all of God’s Word is profitable, according to 2 Timothy 3:17. Frankly, there is much here for us, and I’m excited for us to see what God has in store for us today.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 5 [as I read the passage, four men will stand and say loudly, “And he died” and then say in unison, “for God took him”]

This past week I was reading an old document dated, “October 4, 1860.” It was a probate court document stating that Wilhelm Brandt, my great-great grandfather, a native of Hanover Germany, had lived five years in the United States, was presently living in Ohio, and was approved by the court to become a citizen of the United States.

It further said he had “behaved as a man of good moral character,” according to “the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the order and happiness of the same.” It also verified that he “made solemn oath that he will support the constitution of the United States, and that he doth absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every Foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty, whatsoever, and particularly all allegiance and fidelity to George the fifth, King of Hanover, whose subject he was.”

That’s a pretty significant document, for it changed the whole trajectory of an entire family.

Before us this morning is another historical document, though much older, which pertains to all of us. This is our family record.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the messages preached at WBC in 2000.

Do you like history? There's so much we can learn from history, and must. God wants us to learn from the past. Granted, we shouldn't live in the past, but He calls us to live in light of the past. To be saved in the present and have the assurance of eternal life in the future, we must learn about and put our total trust in a person who lived in the past named Jesus Christ.

It's been well said that history is *His* story. The Bible is a historical book. And this morning we have come in our journey through the opening chapters of Genesis to a genealogical record.

But this historical document is much different from the one I just read, and any other frankly. This one comes from God Himself, and it's far more than a list of names. God is teaching us. About what? Many things, first and foremost about our ultimate allegiance, which is not to George the fifth of Hanover, and not ultimately to the constitution of the United States, but to Him.

Why do we declare allegiance to God? We're about to find out in this document. We'll also discover many other things that are vital for our families.

As we examine carefully Genesis 5, we will make three important discoveries.

I. We learn about our origin (1-2).

Verse 1 begins, "This is the book of the generations of Adam." The NIV says, "This is the written account of Adam's line."

We first meet Adam in Genesis 1. We read in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" And that's what God did. He created Adam and Eve. We record the account of how He did it in chapter 2.

Then in chapter 3 we see the fall, for the first couple disobeyed God and were driven out from the presence of God. But not before God gave them a promise. In Genesis 3:15 He spoke of a coming deliverer, an offspring of this first couple who would make things right in this fallen world.

We turn the page and in chapter 4 we see another evidence of grace. God gives to this first couple the world's first children. We meet Cain, and then Abel. And it doesn't take long before we discover that the descendants of Adam and Eve enter this world in the same condition as their parents, as sinners.

And so we read about the first murder, and the consequent spread of evil. And we discover that there's a dividing line that runs right through every family. It's in Genesis 4 that we learn that there are two types of people in the world. There are people like Cain who live for themselves, and outwardly, seem to be doing quite well. Then there are people like Seth who likewise live for themselves initially, but then reach a point in their lives where a change occurs. They begin to call on the name of Yahweh (4:25).

It's at this point that the Genesis account stops the historical narrative, and inserts what the writer calls "the written account of Adam's line," or as the ESV and AV put it, "the book of the generations of Adam". It's an interesting book. It's actually a list of names, starting with Adam and finishing with Noah.

Who compiled this book? The Spirit of God did, as He did with every portion of the Holy Scriptures. In this case, He did so through Moses, who wrote Genesis in the fifteenth century BC. The wording in verse 1 may indicate that Moses had access to an existing, written document which he incorporated here.

And where does Moses start? Whose line is presented in this book? Adam's line. We can go back no further, can we? All human beings trace their ancestry to Adam.

So here's our first discovery. In verses 1-2 we learn about our origin. This is our family tree. The text states, "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.”

It’s worth noting that Moses isn’t giving us new truth here. We’ve already read this before in Genesis. Moses is basically restating three highlights pertaining to origin from Genesis 1-2. Look at the verbs. Moses uses three verbs to depict what God did at the beginning of the human family.

A. God created mankind. “When God created man,” says verse 1. Remember Genesis 1:27? “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Why are we here? Because God created us.

“You mean we’re not here by chance and random evolutionary process?” That’s right. We are here because *God created us*. This is fundamental reality, and always under attack.

How did God do it? There are three important phrases in the text which shed light on the subject. They also tell us much about our identity.

1. *God made man in a day.* In its attempt to render a smoother reading of the Hebrew, the NIV and ESV miss this. The KJV and the NKJV capture the literal rendering of the Hebrew, “In the day that God created man.” And at the end of verse 2, “In the day when they were created.”

Granted, “day” can be used metaphorically. But it can also be used to represent a twenty-four hour period of time. That’s how Moses used it when he recorded the creation of the first man and woman, saying, “And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31).

How long did it take God to make mankind? He did it *in a day*. Not an age. Not by means of an evolutionary process. He did it on day six.

2. *He made man in His likeness.* “He made him in the likeness of God,” says 5:1. Does that mean we look like God? Not physically, for God is a Spirit (John 4:24). God is infinite, while we are finite. But God imaged Himself when He fashioned mankind. He said so.

In my study I have a picture of my wife. Is it my wife? Sure it is, it’s not *your* wife! But is the picture really my wife? No, the picture is merely some Kodak paper and ink. There’s no inherent worth in the picture. The picture’s worth is linked to what it represents, for the picture is an image of my wife.

Out of all of His magnificent creation, the Creator fashioned only one of His creatures to portray Himself. He created mankind in His image. Again, ponder these breathtaking words at the end of verse 1, “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.”

I know some of you love your dog. For others, it’s your cat. But friends, we are something that those dear animals are not. We are God’s imagebearers.

3. *He made man in plurality.* What do I mean by *plurality*? I’m talking about what Moses communicated at the beginning of verse 2, saying, “He created them male and female.” Why are there two sexes? Is sexuality merely a social construct? No. There are two sexes by divine design.

Let that sink in. We are different by design. Whose design? God’s. God created two genders, male and female. In fact, it takes the two sexes together to express what God means by “human” (says OT commentator, Derek Kidner, p. 80).

Do you see the implications here? How should we respond to the common narrative, that gender is fluid, that our sexuality is whatever we choose it to be, that marriage is a relationship that we can define however we want? If we are here as the result of mere evolutionary process, then it follows that your opinion is as good as mine or the next

person's regarding these matters. But, if there is a Creator, and if He has a specific intent for these matters, then we would be wise to pay close attention to His intent.

There is a Creator. And He has revealed His intent. Moses here reminds us that God did not create Adam to be alone. He fashioned a complement for him, a companion, a partner, a woman.

Why is marriage sacred? It's because God designed it. Why is marriage a covenant relationship between a man and a woman? Because that's what reflects the unity/plurality nature of the trine God. And why should this marriage between a man and woman last for a lifetime? Because, once again, this reflects what God is like, for the Father's relationship with the Son, and the Son's relationship with the Spirit, and the Spirit's relationship with the Father and the Son, are unending.

God designed marriage, and He designed it this way on purpose. And when we follow God's good design, it leads to His glory our own flourishing. And we learn all this in our genealogy!

But there's much more. God created mankind--in a day, in His likeness, and in plurality. What else did God do?

B. God blessed mankind. This is the second verb Moses used to review what God did in the creation account. Verse 2 says, "And he blessed them." Hebrew *ba-rek*, to bless, to praise. It's often used of God (we are to bless, to praise God). But here it's what God has done for mankind. It's the opposite of curse. It means to bless with favor.

Just think. Adam and Eve lived under the blessing of God, enjoying His favor in a perfect world. They knew the privilege of experiencing life as He intended it to be, for their enjoyment, and most of all, for His.

And they forfeited it. They tried to redefine themselves. Instead of following God's revealed will, they sought to blaze their own trail. And it led them out of the perfect garden, away from God, into the harsh realities of life under the curse.

This is our fundamental problem, too. We too were created to live in relationship with God, under His blessing. But because of sin (Adam's sin and our own), we're cut off from God, and we're experiencing His just wrath.

Can we change? Can we experience God's blessing again? Praise God, yes! How? This is the message of the Bible. We must come to know and believe in the "last Adam," the God-man who came to this world on rescue mission. At the Cross, Jesus Christ took upon Himself God's wrath, so that we can now experience God's blessing.

This is the testimony of all who know Christ. As Ephesians 1:3 puts it, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us* in the heavenly realms with every spiritual *blessing* in Christ."

We who know Christ are no longer under God's wrath, but once again under His blessing. But there's more, a third activity.

C. God named mankind. Verse 2 concludes, "And named them Man when they were created." The KJV reads, "And called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." The Hebrew word *Adam* is used in various ways. It was Adam's personal name. It can refer to the male gender. At times it can designate both sexes, like our term "mankind" (or "humanity") does.

So here, "God called them 'Adam' or 'man.'" What does that indicate? Yes, there's difference of function and role, by God's design (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19). Husbands and wives (and children too) have differing roles in the family, which are designed by God to complement rather than compete with each another. But when it comes to value and worth, there is a fundamental, beautiful equality between men and women. God called *them* "Adam."

This is the first discovery. By looking at the first family genealogy in Genesis 5, we learn about our origin. We learn who we are, and why we are here, and how we are to function. There's great confusion in the world about these matters, but our good and wise and gracious Maker makes it so clear for us, because He loves us. Let's thank Him.

II. We learn about our ancestors (3-32).

Okay, so now we've reached the part we tend to speed read, the genealogy. Ray Stedman tells the story of an old Scots minister who was reading from the first chapter of Matthew's gospel:

He started reading, 'Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac beget Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah,' and he looked on ahead and saw the list to follow and said, 'and they kept on begetting one another all the way down this page and halfway into the next.'

If we are honest, that is what most of us do with the genealogies of the Bible. We skip them. Or try to get through them as fast as we can to get to something really practical.

But all of God's Word is practical once we grasp its God-given purpose. God gave us His Word so we could *know Him*. That includes this genealogy.

He didn't give us this genealogy merely to satisfy our curiosity. He gave it to transform us, not merely inform us.

A couple of general comments first. One, *this is Seth's line*. We already saw Cain's in chapter 4. Cain was a wicked man whose descendants were wicked, too. But God preserved a godly remnant in the world, just like He does today. Genesis 5 gives us Adam's lineage through Seth.

Two, some of the names in Seth's line sound familiar to the names in Cain's. Cain's son was Enoch, and there was an Enoch in Seth's line. Both had a Lamech as well. Scholars have wondered about the similarities. One thing's for sure. People can have the same names, descend from the same ancestors, and have the same family-blood flowing through their veins, *and be very different*. Godliness is a matter of grace, not genetics.

Three, the genealogy includes *ten generations*. Moses identifies ten names and what happened to them. We meet Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. Let's take a close look at our ancestors one at a time.

A. First there was Adam (3-5). "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."

And so, at age 130, Adam had a son. He'd had two sons prior to this, but one was now dead and with God, and the other was living but away from God. At which point God gave Adam "Seth," a child of promise to replace Abel. Even Eve recognized this when she named Seth in 4:25.

What was true of Seth? Seth shared in Adam's "*likeness*" and "*image*," says Moses. And in whose likeness and image was Adam formed? God's. Let's not miss that. Moses used the same words to depict Seth's connection to Adam as Adam's to God. What was true of Adam was true of Seth. Seth, too, is an imagebearer.

What happened after Seth was born? Adam lived another 800 years and had other sons and daughters. How many? We're not told. How many children can a couple have if they live to be over 900 years old?

It's interesting that the text specifies the number of years Adam lived *after* Seth was born, namely, 800 years. Why are we told that? I'm not sure. I do know that there's a tendency for young parents to create a child-centered home, which is not good for either

the child, nor the parents. I'm sure that Adam loved Seth, but there was more to life for Adam than Seth. 800 years of life, to be specific.

Parents, we should love our children, yes. But let's not live for them. That place of allegiance is already taken, first by God Himself, and then by the spouse He's given you.

At this point the critic says, "Hold on. You don't mean to tell me you actually believe Adam lived to be 930 years old, do you? How could a man live so long?"

To the first question, my answer is, "Yes, I believe it because that's what God's Word says, and God never lies. To the second question I would say this. The modern assumption is that the present is the key to understanding the past. So if the average life span of people is 84 years in our day, it must have been in Adam's day.

Not so. The present is not the key to understanding the past. The fact is, the first world was *very different* from our world. Noah's flood changed many things. It changed the world's geography—prior to the flood there was one continental land mass and one sea (1:9-10). It changed the world's climate—before the flood there was a vast water expanse around the globe (1:6) which may have shielded harmful radiation from the sun and created a greenhouse effect on the planet. What's more, in the first world diet was different—both man and the animals were vegetarian (1:30).

My point is this. So much has changed as the result of the judgment of the flood sent by God. We *don't know* and can't even imagine what that pre-Flood world was like.

Gordon Talbot observes, "The Bible does not tell us why people lived long lives at that time in history. Various suggestions have been put forward. Perhaps the human race in its original purity was much stronger than in later generations. Perhaps the cloud cover over the earth before the great Flood strained out damaging rays from the sun. The Lord chose to give them long lives, and we may just have to leave it at that, rather than speculating further."²

Moses repeats an interesting sentence, and we see it first with Adam. "All the days that Adam lived were 930 years." You don't live 930 years all at once, but day, by day, by day.

My father died at the age of 84 years. That means he lived 30,712 days. Adam lived 339,450 days. That's 930 years, times 365 days per year. Adam lived. *And he died.*

B. Then came Seth (6-8). "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."

We're not told much about Seth. We're given his age when Enosh was born, which is 105. We're told that he like Adam had other sons and daughters. And that he lived 912 years. And that he died.

Why are we told the name of only one of his sons and not the others? Because the purpose of this genealogy is to show us a connection, between Adam and Noah. And Seth's firstborn was part of that vital connection. His name?

C. Then came Enosh (9-11). "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."

Remember, it was during Enosh's lifetime that some type of spiritual renewal occurred. According to Genesis 4:25, "At that time [during the lifetime of Enosh] men began to call on the name of the LORD." The implication? Before that time, they didn't. Before that time they were doing what Cain's line did, working, inventing things like industry and entertainment, basically, doing life without the Living God.

² Gordon Talbot, p. 48.

But then God broke the cycle, as it were. During the time of the son of Seth, people began to recognize their need for the Lord. And they started calling on His name.

D. Then came Kenan (12-14). And so the pattern continues, “When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.”

We know nothing else of Kenan. He lived, had a son, had other sons and daughters, and he died.

E. Then came Mahalalel (15-17). “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.”

Same pattern, but with a slight twist. Mahalalel was *only* sixty-five years old when he fathered Jared. That's the youngest age so far in the genealogy. Nonetheless, he too lived along time, had other children, and he died.

F. Then came Jared (18-20). “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.”

Jared is the second oldest man on the list, at 962 years. Impressive, yes. But it's all relative, for just like all his ancestors, we read the familiar words, “And he died.”

What's most noteworthy is what happened to his son.

G. Then came Enoch (21-24). “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.”

All of a sudden the pattern breaks with Enoch. Enoch *walked with God*.

Don't miss the contrast. The family record states that Adam lived 930 years and then died. Seth lived 912 years and then died. Enosh lived 905 years and then died. Kenan lived 910 years and then died. Mahalalel lived 895 years and then died. Jared lived 962 years and then died.

All these men lived, but Enoch *walked with God*. There's a difference, isn't there? The world is full of people who *live*, and have children. But it's a beautiful thing, though rare by comparison, to find a person who *walks with God*.

Ray Stedman shares the account of a little girl who was telling her mother the story of Enoch. She said, “Enoch used to take long walks with God. One day he walked so far God said, 'It's too far to go back; come on home with me.' That is what happened to Enoch.”

Enoch was quite a man. He walked with God. He didn't always do it. No one does. Left to ourselves, we ignore God. Apparently, for Enoch, walking with God started when he became a father.

I've seen this firsthand. When a person becomes a parent, they often begin to think seriously about God, perhaps for the first time in their life. Why? Because as they look into the cradle they're gripped with a sense of responsibility, and *inadequacy*.

Thankfully, there's help for the inadequate. Aren't you glad? Those who walk with God avail themselves of this help, just like Enoch did.

Dear friends, we were meant to walk with God. It's what God created us to do. It's also what Adam forfeited (Gen. 3:8), and what God still requires (Micah 6:8). Praise, God, it's also what Christ makes possible (1 John 1:1-4).

It's significant that when we trace Adam's descendants through Cain, at the seventh generation we find a man named Lamech. Lamech was the epitome of ungodliness (Gen

4:23-24). Conversely, Enoch was the seventh generation of Adam through Seth. Godliness culminated with Enoch.

Enoch walked with God, and because he did, what happened? *God took him*, says the text. His life was cut short.

“Well, he did live 365 years. That’s a long time.” Compared to what? Not compared to his contemporaries. Enoch’s father lived to be 962, and his son lived to be 969. Enoch left this world before he reached *half* the ordinary age of his day.

Enoch walked with God, and then he was no more. Think of the implications. Methuselah lost his dad. Mrs. Enoch lost her mate. Jared lost his son. Mahalalel lost his grandson. Do you think they felt the loss and wrestled with the question, “Why did God take him in the prime of his life?”³

It’s a perspective problem, and most of us struggle with it. We think, “I’ve got a right to live so many years,” or “I’ve got a right to have my family members so many years.” That’s not the way a person walking with God sees it.

Enoch reminds us the goal isn’t a long life. The goal is to live a God-centered life. The apostle James died before he was 40. The missionary David Brainherd died at the age of 29. Jim Elliot was about the same age when he was martyred. Indeed, our Savior lived but 33 years, and then he gave His life.

A successful life isn’t necessarily a long life, but a life that honors God, long or short.

So what happened to Enoch? God took him. Took him where? Right into his heavenly home. Enoch experienced a glorious transition. Years later, something similar happened to Elijah (see 2 Kings 2:11-12). One of these days, something similar will happen when Christ returns in an event known as the rapture (see 1 Thes 4:13ff).

H. Then came Methuselah (25-27). “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.”

According to genealogy, here is the man who lived longer than any other person, Methuselah, with 969 years of life. But his story ends the same way. And he died.

I. Then came Lamech (28-31). “When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son²⁹ 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.”

Once again, we see the pattern change with Lamech. We’re told that Lamech named his son “Noah”, which sounds like the Hebrew for “rest”. But then we’re told what Lamech said after his son was born. In verse 29, “This one shall bring us *relief* (rest).”

Why did Lamech say that? His words seem to be an evidence of faith. He affirms that his son will bring relief and rest to the world. And so he did, though not quite as Lamech might have envisioned.

It’s interesting that if you add up the ages given in Genesis 5, Noah was born about 1,000 years after the curse. Just think of it. One thousand years of toil and pain went by. And then Noah was born. And his father called him “*relief*”.

We also discover that Noah was the first person on the list who was born after the death of Adam. According to this genealogy, Adam died at the age of 930. Noah was born in the year 1056 after creation. Perhaps Lamech heard about Adam’s death. And perhaps he thought that since Adam died the curse spoken to Adam would soon come to an end.

³ If there are no gaps in the genealogy, Seth was still alive when God took Enoch. In fact, all of Enoch’s ancestors listed in Genesis 5 were still alive, except for Adam who died 57 years before Enoch’s departure.

No doubt, he knew about the promise God had given concerning a coming deliverer (Genesis 3:15). And so he named his son “Noah”, “relief”, with the hope that his son would fulfill God's promise.

To be sure, Noah would be a special man, one who “found favor in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen 6:8). But his mission would be far more radical than Lamech could ever have imagined.

No, Noah would not be the promised deliverer. The world would wait many more centuries until the day when He would come. Rather than bring relief to the world, Noah would see the complete destruction of it.

And this brings us to the end of the first family genealogy.

J. Finally came Noah (32). “After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Perhaps Noah had other sons and daughters before these three. If so, they died either before the flood, or in it. Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born about twenty years after God told Noah that the flood was coming. We can assume they helped Noah build the ark.⁴

A brief comment about the dates - If we work with the figures given in Genesis 5, we can date the Flood at 1656 years after Creation. That is, *if* there are no gaps in between the ten given names. And if the chronology has no gaps, then Adam died 57 years before Enoch did (his great, great, great, great grandson). That means Adam would have lived to see his descendants through Lamech, Noah's father. In fact, Noah would have been born only 126 years after Adam died.⁵

But are there gaps in the record? Do these ten names represent continuous links or could they be separate landmarks (as Kidner puts it, p. 82)? That's not an easy question to answer. In the Bible, there are other genealogies. Some of them have “gaps”. Matthew's genealogy of Christ, for example (Matthew 1:1-17) is arranged into three successions of 14 generations each. And his genealogy is known to be selective.

Robert Deffinbaugh observes, “The expression ‘A begat B’ does not always imply direct parentage.” Matthew 1:8 states that ‘Joram begat Uzziah,’ but from the Old Testament (II Kings 8:25; 11:2, 14:1,21) we learn that Joram was the father of Ahaziah, who fathered Joash, father of Amaziah father of Uzziah. Thus ‘begat’ can mean ‘begat the line culminating in.’

Elsewhere Kitchen states, “Terms like ‘son’ and ‘father’ can mean not only ‘(grand)son’ and ‘(grand)father,’ but also ‘descendant’ and ‘ancestor’ respectively.”

The question remains, “What was Moses' intent in Genesis 5?” His intent is to show a firm connection between Adam and Noah. Could there be gaps in the genealogy? Perhaps. Could there be no gaps? Perhaps. The language of the text and the nature of biblical genealogies would allow for either. I prefer to take the reading at face value until given reason not to do so.

Now it's time to make it personal with our third discovery.

III. We learn about our desperate need.

Warren Wiersbe has remarked, “You do not move ahead by constantly looking in a rear view mirror. The past is a rudder to guide you, not an anchor to drag you. We must learn from the past but not live in the past.”

In a moment, we will close our Bibles and move into the future. But right now we have an opportunity in the present. God gave us this historical record to teach us about our origin, and our ancestors, but ultimately, about our need to consider three realities.

⁴ Talbot, p. 51.

⁵ Usher dated Adam at 4004 B.C, assuming that the generations in this chapter are an unbroken chain.

A. We are mortal. The pattern in Genesis 5 is so clear. So and so lived, then he had a son, then he had other sons and daughters, then he lived a long time, and then he *died*.

The statistics are clear. One out of every one person born into this world in the *dies*. That was true in the eighteenth century for Wilhelm Brandt, and it's true for those of us living in the twenty-first century, if the Lord doesn't return first.

We're born, we live, we may have a family, and then in the end, we die. We are mortal. Whether we live 90 years or 900 hundred years, death is inevitable. It's the tragic consequence of being a sinner in a sin-cursed world.

God told Adam and Eve, "Eat and you shall surely die." And they did. And we do.

Are you living in light of your mortality? You will not be here much longer, nor I.

B. We are depraved. Some are deprived, but all are depraved. What is depravity? We see the seeds of it in Genesis 5, and then the ugly fruit of it in Genesis 6. Genesis 6:5 states, "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."

That's depravity. In ten generations the earth was full of people, full of wicked, evil people. There were thousands and thousands, if not millions and millions of people. But there was only *one* righteous man, Noah.

How do you explain that? Why weren't there more righteous people? Why don't people seek God? The answer is because mankind is *depraved*. We are depraved. Our children are depraved. We are all born that way.

If you want to read a good description of depravity, listen to what God said to Noah right after the flood in Genesis 8:21. "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though *every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood*."

When we look to the past, we see our mortality. But we also see our depravity. Is there hope for depraved sinners who are facing certain death? Thanks be to God, yes!

C. We can experience hope beyond the grave, by grace alone. Like Enoch did. Enoch walked with God and God *took him*. Do you see the grace of God in this?

Friends, this is the message of the Christian faith. Sinners can be reconciled to God and have a personal, forever relationship with God. How? By our merit? No, but by the merit of the Deliverer God sent to rescue us. It's through the merit of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, that God saves any depraved sinner who will repent and believe.

Have you admitted your sin to God and put your total faith in Jesus Christ? If you have, you are in the forever family tree. If not, why not now?

My friend, in a genealogy that's full of "and he died," "and he died," "and he died," praise God for this certain hope! The grave is not the end for the child of God. Enoch walked with God, and God took him to heaven. This is our hope, too.

Let's all take inventory by asking this vital question. *Am I living in light of the past?*

Closing Song: #406 "My Hope Is in the Lord" (all four verses)

Closing charge: Let the redeemed of the Lord...SAY SO.

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning in our series *The Christian Family*, we looked at the first genealogy in Genesis 5. Take some time to think about your own family tree. When did your ancestors come to the USA? Where were they from? What type of work did they do? What place has the gospel had in your family tree?
2. Take time to read again today's text, Genesis 5. What effect does the reading of this genealogy have on you? Why did the Spirit of God give us this list of names?
3. What do we learn about our origin in verses 1-2? Why is it important for us to know about Adam? Find other passages in the Bible that help answer this question.
4. Look again at the list of names and ages in verses 3-32. What stands out to you? What's the significance of this list? How does it prepare us for the gospel?
5. The phrase "and he died" appears over and over in this genealogy. How do those words affect you? What difference should they make in the way we live as families this week?