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...AND HE DIED

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I'm sure some of you are out there thinking, "Hurray. Another gloom and doom sermon: 'And He Died.'" Really, though, it's not unhappy at all because we have the whole story. I don't expect anyone to stand up and cheer, "Yay! Deaths!" but there is hope at the end of it all. There is no doubt that the curse is at work, resulting in death, but there is also a promise and blessings at work, which lead to abundant life.

[SIDE NOTE: I've read comments this week about the tragedy in Chili to the effect that "God is trying to get people's attention." I agree, but I think the people God is trying to wake up are His own people, to stir us to action. God is not some cosmic bully, picking on people to "get their attention" or "give them what they deserve." The Bible tells us that "it is appointed unto man once to die." It may be that we *will* die in an earthquake or some other tragedy. God certainly knows the hour and manner of our deaths; but these catastrophes are not "God giving people what they deserve." If God gave us what we deserve, *we'd all be in hell at this moment*. Instead, God gives us what we do *not* deserve—mercy. We are to take that gift and share it in this lost and broken world. Now is the time for us to be the salt and light God has called us to be. Now is the time for us to speak life into a dying world, not to stand in judgment over those who are suffering. These tragedies are opportunities for us to share God's love, not an opportunity to revel in self-righteousness.]

A man was talking to his son about the dangers of improperly fueling a vehicle (and I won't tell you the name of the man and son, but I assure you they're quite real). The father was explaining why it is important to touch something metal before fueling so that all static electricity will be discharged. "Do you know why what I'm telling you is important?" asked the father.

"Why, Dad?" replied the son.

"Because you only get to explode once, and you want to *save it for something special!*"

Of course the father was kidding. The truth is that none of us really want to die, especially a painful or horrific death. As Christians, we have a blessed assurance and home in Heaven, but we're not especially eager to get there. We do not lack faith, nor do we fear death. The problem is that *death in itself is an abnormality*. It is an effect of the curse. The day may come when we approach the end of our days and see death as a release from our pain and suffering; but that too is an effect of the curse—an abnormality.

Let's turn our attention to Genesis 5, in which we see the effect of the curse even in the godly line.

*This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;*

*Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.*

Genesis 5 starts with an important historical marker: “*This is the book of the generations of Adam.*” Two words really stand out: *book* and *generations*. The word *book* of course refers to something written. I’ve pointed out before that Isaac received, as part of his inheritance, certain books. In Genesis 26:5, God promises to bless Isaac as He had blessed Abraham:

*Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*

As we’ve noted before, the word *commandments* here refers to something written. I don’t know exactly how it came about, but I do believe the Word of God is giving us a clue to its own construction. You see, for many years, Bible critics and scholars put forth the theory that these first five books of the Bible were not actually written by Moses at all, but were collected stories passed down by word of mouth for generations, and finally written down much later, and then put into their present form after the destruction of Jerusalem while the Jews were in Babylonian exile. Clever people then attributed those writings to Moses to give them credibility. Therefore, the whole of the Pentateuch is based on myths and deceit. If you watch a documentary on the History Channel that has anything to do with Moses, this is the theory you’re going to hear. The problem is that the theory is defunct; secular and liberal scholars still use it and promote it, but it just doesn’t stand up to scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> One of the main reasons this theory even arose was that, at the time the theory was put forth in the late 1800’s, it was assumed that writing had not yet been invented when Moses was alive. That, of course, is long since discredited.<sup>2</sup> We now know that writing was well established long before Moses; it arose in the very earliest human civilizations.

What is more is that when we compare other early writings with Genesis, the word *generation* takes on a new significance. The word *generation* is from the Hebrew word *toledoth*. Researcher P.J. Wiseman, while studying ancient clay tablets, “found that most of the old clay tablets had ‘colophon phrases’ at the end; these named the writer or owner of the tablet; they had words to identify the subject, and often some sort of dating phrase.”<sup>3</sup>

Wiseman saw that the colophons in the ancient tablets always were at the end, not the beginning. He applied this idea to the toledoth phrases in Genesis, and found that in every case it suddenly made good sense. The text just before the phrase “These are the generations of ...” contained information about events that the man named in that phrase would have known about. That person would have been the logical one to write that part. In other words, each toledoth phrase contains the name of the man who probably wrote the text preceding that phrase. Or, in still other words, the book of Genesis consists of a set of tablets, each of which was written by an actual eye-witness to the events described therein. These tablets were finally compiled by Moses.<sup>4</sup>

I’m not stating that Adam wrote these earliest chapters of the Bible; but I am saying that it would be consistent with the clues we find in the Bible and elsewhere. It is, in my opinion, a very plausible and

1 Refuted thoroughly a hundred years ago by George Wright, “The Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch,” *The Fundamentals*, 1917. Available at <http://www.eaec.org/bookstore/fundamentals/02.htm>.

2 Eric Lyons, “Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch--Tried and True,” *Apologetics Press: Reason and Revelation* (January 2003) 23[1]:1-7. Available at <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/13>.

3 Curt Sewell, “The Tablet Theory of Genesis Authorship.” Originally published in *Bible and Spade* (Winter 1994) 7:1. Available at <http://www.trueorigin.org/tablet.asp>.

4 *Ibid.*

reasonable theory. Be that as it may, someone wrote these things down, and apparently Moses compiled the writings. One more thing: some Bible translations mangle this line. Just be aware of that.

That brings us to the next part of verse 1 and into verse 2: “*In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.*” If the first phrase about the book of the generations of Adam ends one early written record, then this statement here would mark the beginning of another tablet. It does seem that this repetition indicates the beginning of another written source, which Moses tied together here. These verses discuss things we talked about long ago, so for the most part we’ll breeze by them. I do want to note that the word *adam* means *man* or *mankind*. It’s the same word in Hebrew: *Adam* the individual or *adam*, the human race. *Eve* is not mistakenly called *Adam* here.

We know from the previous chapter that Adam already had two sons, which are not named in this chapter. Look with me at the next three verses, please.

*And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth:*

*And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.*

When Adam was 130 years old, he had his third named son. This son was, as chapter four tells us, the heir of the promise in Genesis 3:15, that God would send a Redeemer for fallen man. This son, Seth, stands in contrast to Cain. Seth is like his father Adam. I’m sure they were physically alike enough, but I believe the wording here is meant to show that *this* son followed in the ways of his godly father.

It seems incredible that Adam and the others listed hereafter should live so long and have such good health that they can father children over a period of centuries. Ancient men were not stupid; if the Bible were edited in the time of Babylonian Exile as liberals state, then certainly these numbers *should have* been more in line with ordinary lifespans. After all, according to that theory, their construct needed credibility. I therefore believe all the more that these ages are authentic. They are not pared down to create believability. If we believe this account at all, then these long ages are really what we should expect to see. After all, we are very close to God’s perfect primeval act of creation. The curse of sin entered immediately at the point of Adam’s sin, but the highly stable original creation should logically have taken a while to begin to wind down. Think of it as a kind of flywheel. You know what a flywheel is, right? It’s a heavy disc that is spinning very rapidly. The flywheel will continue to spin like that for a long time, even if it is jostled. The more you interfere with it, the faster it will wind down; but while it’s spinning fast, it will want to remain like that. That is how I think of the original creation after the introduction of sin. It took a while for the full effects of the curse to have the grasp on us that they have today.

Some people attribute the long lives to the different atmospheric conditions before the Flood occurred, which we read about starting in the next chapter. I do not know whether that had anything to do with it or not. I just know what the Bible does say, and as we’ve mentioned before, the Bible only tells us what we *need to know*, not everything *we’d like to know*. The Bible simply and plainly, without apology, attributes extremely long lifespans to these first generations.

Adam lived 930 years, had sons and daughters, and then...the curse took its final toll on him. God's perfect creation, created in His own image, passed through the abnormality of death that he had introduced into the world: "And he died." Truly, the "wages of sin is death."

This is the pattern we see through out this chapter, with one notable exception. Let's read on now:

*And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:*

*And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.*

*And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:*

*And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.*

*And Cainan lived seventy years and begat Mahalaleel:*

*And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.*

*And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:*

*And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.*

*And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch:*

*And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.*

*And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:*

*And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:*

*And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

The pattern is repeated: each man lived, begat children, and eventually died. We know very little about these men in this chapter, but we do know that they are selected for inclusion here because they are the godly line from Adam to Noah, and as we can see in Luke, to Jesus Christ, the promised Redeemer who would break this curse of death.

That is the general pattern; but there is one notable exception, which we've just read about. Enoch was a godly man who did *not* die. The passage here states that he "walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." Seems puzzling, doesn't it? Hebrews 11:5 sheds light here:

*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

Enoch, then, passed from here to God's dwelling place directly. I think, as some others have suggested, that perhaps God in His mercy was showing these early people that there was life beyond death. No matter how long we live, eventually we will pass on. What will the end be? Enoch's translation was a direct action by God to cause people to consider their ways.

One other man was translated in a similar manner: Elijah. Elijah was a prophet of God some twenty five centuries after Enoch. As Henry Morris points out, Enoch's translation occurred about halfway between Adam and Abraham, and Elijah's translation occurred about halfway between Abraham and Christ; and both occurred in times of deep apostasy.<sup>5</sup>

There are two other things I want to point out about Enoch. The first is that he was a preacher of righteousness. The book of Jude records for us a small portion of his testimony. The second is that he gave his son a name with immense prophetic significance: *Methuselah*, which means, "When he is gone, judgment." We'll come back to this in a minute.

Jude tells us that Enoch spoke along these lines:

*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*

*To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14, 15).*

Sounds pretty harsh. The world was becoming increasingly wicked.

Let's continue the passage:

*And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech.*

*And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.*

*And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:*

*And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.*

*And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:*

*And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.*

Methuselah lived and died, and his son Lamech lived and died; and yet they preserved the truth of God in the midst of what we will see was rapidly becoming a world in total rebellion against God. Remember, Methuselah's name means, according to some interpreters, "When he is gone, judgment." It

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2006), 157.

may not be readily apparent upon reading this, but if you compare the years of his life to other information in this chapter and the next, you will see that Methuselah died the *very year* that God did send judgment on the earth. Now, think about this: Methuselah is also the longest living human being in the biblical record. Does that not speak of the mercy of God? In fact, he even outlived his own son Lamech!

The point today is that all of these men, though they apparently lived godly lives, died. Though they lived extremely long lives, they died. The curse was being fulfilled. And yet, even in the midst of the curse, we have the continuation of God's promise of Genesis 3:15 to send a Redeemer through a line of godly men; we have the reminder of the life hereafter in the example of Enoch; we have the forewarning of judgment in the name of Methuselah, and yet the withholding of that judgment for as long as possible--969 years! I want to leave you with this one verse:

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [of judgment!], as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).*