

Studies In

GENESIS

Book 5
Chapter Five

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CHAPTER FIVE

The fifth chapter of Genesis is a bright spot in the continuing narrative. Chapter four recorded the history of the Cainites, the godless line who lived independently of God. Murder and polygamy were introduced through Cain and his descendants. But here in chapter five we have God's record of the Sethites, the godly line who called upon the name of the Lord and sought to obey Him.

This chapter opens with an interesting statement which is really the title of the chapter: "*This is the book of the generations of Adam*" (5:1). This is one of the ten human "generation" passages, the story or history of certain families. Here we have the history of Adam's family. It is obvious that these genealogies do not include all the generations. For example, Cain and his descendants were the offspring from Adam, but they are not included here in chapter five. Most genealogies do not include all names. Moses speaks here of the line of godly men in the history of Adam. Adam's posterity would be divided into two groups, the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Those mentioned in chapter five are the seed of the woman. They would be the controlling influence for good until Messiah would come. This is a vital chapter in the history of mankind and it calls for careful and prayerful study.

The phrase, "*This is the book of the generations of*" occurs in one other place in the Bible. The New Testament opens with the words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matthew 1:1). Now that is a very interesting fact that such a phrase should be associated with Adam and Jesus Christ. In the strict biblical sense Adam and Jesus Christ are the only two men who made history. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47).

The Bible is made up of two books, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first book tells of the origin and history of the first Adam; the second book records the origin and history of the last Adam. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Adam and Christ are the two representative heads of the human race. Every person is either in Adam and

therefore spiritually dead, or in Christ and spiritually alive.

The remainder of verse one and all of verse two combine to give to us a recapitulation of 1:26 and 27. After we have read the tragic results of the Fall in chapters three and four, the Holy Spirit recalls to the mind of the reader man's likeness to God when God created him, a likeness which was lost in the Fall. This "likeness" is regained in its initial step in the new birth, for the born-again man is said to be a "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). *The new man* in Christ is a *new creation* (2 Corinthians 5:17). The "likeness" will be perfected in the believer at our Lord's return when we will be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29) and "we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). To this glorious Divine "likeness" every child of God has been predestinated.

"Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (5:2). Notice that God "called their name Adam," meaning, I take it, that the name applied to both man and woman. We may conclude from this that the name *Adam* is generic, including both sexes. This thought is sustained in 1:26 where God said, "Let us make *man* in our image, after our likeness; and let *them* have dominion. . . ." Here the words *man* and *them* are used synonymously, which of necessity includes the woman. While we have come to think of the name "Adam" as the personal name of the first man, the name does more accurately designate the father, or progenitor, of mankind, the entire human race. Other Scriptures have in them this same idea. When God said, "I will destroy *man* whom I have created. . . ." (Genesis 6:7), He certainly included woman.

"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (5:3). Here is a statement which contains vital theological significance, namely, that Seth was born in the image and likeness of his father. Had Seth's father retained the image and likeness of God with which he was created, Seth would have been born with that same divine image and likeness. But the Fall changed all of that. So now he is the exact duplicate of his father. By descent Seth was born with a sinful, fallen nature like that of Adam. The fact that Seth replaced righteous Abel whom Cain murdered, and was in the godly Messianic line, could not alter the fact that he was essentially like his father, Adam, a fallen, sinful person. The fall of Adam was extremely serious in its consequences. Men continue to praise and flatter themselves, believing that we all have in us "a spark of divinity." But the Scriptures do not support such an erroneous idea. Seth was like his father in his Adamic, sinful nature.

We all inherit the corrupt, fallen nature of Adam. The New Testament writers, under the supervision of the Holy Spirit who guided Moses as he wrote Genesis, made much of this very important fact. The apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). In Adam we all have sinned, and "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). There is a certain solidarity within the human race whereby no person can escape the sin nature of Adam. However, there is that one and only exception, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ, for "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). The Last Adam is the one man "who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21), and "Who did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22). Let us remember at all times that we are sons and daughters of Adam and therefore we are partakers of his corrupt nature.

"And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters" (5:4). Before Adam's obituary announcement as stated in verse five, we are told that he "*begat sons and daughters*," possibly several of each. Here we find a satisfactory answer to the frequently asked question as to where Cain got his wife. It is apparent that he married one of his sisters.

There are several factors of interest in this chapter in addition to the few thoughts we have considered thus far.

First, we are impressed with *the extension of long life*. The longevity of the antediluvians has been the subject of much discussion and debate. Personally I accept this chapter, along with the rest of the Bible, as the inspired, inerrant Word of God. The "years" are literal years referring to the individuals named and not to clans. There was an early period in history when life expectancy was much longer than it subsequently became and people lived almost a thousand years. Early in human history, before sin had corrupted and complicated life by stress, disease and natural disaster, people lived many years longer than we live. The Bible does not go into this in detail as to why men lived so long before the flood, only that they did.

However, there is a passage in the Psalms which sheds some light on this subject. It is found in one of the recorded prayers of Moses. He said, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who

knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:8-12). Here Moses is prophesying that, because of man's sin, his life span would be reduced to an average of seventy years, a judgment that God Himself would send. Moses himself was not far removed from that number, for he died at age one hundred and twenty (Deuteronomy 34:7). He might have lived longer were it not for his own sin (Deuteronomy 32:48-51). Let us not attempt to evade the fact that man's sin is the one reason why his life on earth is brief.

This leads me to discuss briefly some key passages in the Bible which promise a long and peaceful life. Of course these promises are not without obligation on our part. God Himself gives to us the rules, and His rules are reasonable and possible to be obeyed.

The *first* of these is obedience to His Word. Look with me at two significant verses in Proverbs: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee (3:1, 2). "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many" (4:10). The Apostle Paul added an important word to children when he wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3). Now Paul did not say that this is "the first commandment," but that it is "the first commandment *with promise*." Actually this was the fifth of the ten commandments, but it was the first one to which this promise was added; "that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).

Obedience is the first lesson every new Christian must learn. Faith is a matter of the heart and cannot be seen by others with whom we come into contact, but obedience is a matter of conduct and can be observed. Let each of us lay hold of this truth and submit to it, for "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

The *second* secret to a long and happy life is to fear the Lord. Again the book of Proverbs is quite suggestive. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy day shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased" (9:10,11). "The fear of the LORD prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (10:27).

We need to understand the meaning of this word *fear*. There are three Greek nouns translated *fear* in the New Testament: (1)

Phobos, which means *terror, dread*. When a person is scared or afraid, as were the disciples, he is filled with fear (Matthew 14:26; John 20:19). This most certainly is not the kind of fear that prolongs life, but will, to the contrary, tend to shorten one's life. (2) *Deilia*, means *fright, fearfulness*. It is a word which suggests timidity or cowardice and is never used in a good sense. Our Lord used that word in John 14:27 when He gave assurance to His disciples. (3) *Eulabeia* is a reverence or godly fear of which we are exhorted to "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). It was this kind of *fear* our Lord Himself displayed (Hebrews 5:7). This fear has its spring in love, and prompts the believer to endeavor to please the Lord in all things.

To fear God is to worship Him. "O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him" (Psalm 34:9). "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Psalm 34:11). We have the promise that the years of our lives shall be increased if we live daily and consistently with the proper reverence and respect toward God.

The *third* secret to a long and happy life is to hate covetousness. ". . . He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days" (Proverbs 28:16). Now covetousness *per se* is not an evil thing. To covet is to fix one's desire upon, and it is not wrong to desire good things from a right motive. We may "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). But when we covet in a wrong sense, we commit sin. When we are greedy of material possessions we are guilty of that covetousness which God hates and condemns. It is one sin of which most of us have been guilty, particularly as it relates to money and the things money will buy. The Lord Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Christ knew that few persons can see no wrong in longing for those things others possess but which they do not have.

It is not until we take a serious and sincere look into the Word of God on the sin of covetousness that we are convicted of its evil. The apostle Paul testified, "For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7 cf. Exodus 20:17). When he wrote to Timothy he made it clear that a covetous man did not qualify for the office of bishop or deacon (1 Timothy 3:3), because covetousness is equated with idolatry (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). It has in it an element of lawlessness and has its roots in discontent which in turn results in a feeling of insecurity and restlessness. The Christian who covets wrongfully may cut off years from his life on earth. "Let your con-

versation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

And now we come to the big questions. Should all Christians expect to be long-livers if they abide by these rules? When we examine carefully these promises of a long and peaceful life we will see that they are not unconditional, immutable promises. Many godly saints, in both Old and New Testament times, suffered affliction, and many of them died under persecution. Affliction or death are not always a punishment for sin. God permitted a baby to be born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-3).

Some times the choicest children of God are called by God to suffer. The prophet Isaiah wrote of the children of Israel, "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction. . ." (Isaiah 30:20). In one of his great prayers to Jehovah, David said, "Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins" (Psalm 66:11). I saw this truth afresh when I read again the words of the good and godly Jeremiah: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them; he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up" (Lamentations 1:12-14). Within the nation of Israel there were many obedient followers of the Lord, yet they did not escape the afflictions which befell that nation.

But then God does add years to some of His children. He extended Hezekiah's life fifteen years (2 Kings 20:1-7). Hezekiah's illness was terminal, for at the very moment he was lying on his deathbed he was told by the prophet Isaiah to get his last will and testament in order because his time had come to die. Now, fifteen years is a very precious amount of time for one's life to be prolonged, and worthy of any sacrifice we can make.

For the sake of convenience we have listed the names of these men and the number of years each lived:

Adam	930 years	Cainan	910 years
Seth	912 years	Mahalaleel	895 years
Enos	905 years	Jared	962 years

Enoch	365 years	Noah	950 years
Methuselah	969 years		
Lamech	777 years		

The *second* factor of interest in this chapter is the *exacting of the death penalty*. The second thought follows logically upon the first. After the number of years is stated for the life span of each patriarch, there follows the doleful repetition of the final phrase, "*and he died.*" Each individual's record ends on that same note, the final toll of the death bell. Eight times in this one chapter it is recorded "*and he died.*" In the midst of the blessing of longevity there follows the blight of death. Here we get a clear view of the conflict between life and death. Long life, but certain death. "*Adam. . . died*" (vs. 5). "*Seth. . . died*" (vs. 8). "*Enos. . . died*" (vs. 11). "*Cainan. . . died*" (vs. 14). "*Mahalaleel. . . died*" (vs. 17). "*Jared. . . died*" (vs. 20). "*Lamech. . . died*" (vs. 31).

In this chapter God's justice and wrath against sin are stressed. Adam received the solemn warning from God, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2:17). Sin and death are inseparably linked together, a truth the Scriptures never minimize. "Every man shall die for his own iniquity" (Jeremiah 31:30). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel: 18, 4, 20). See also Romans 5:12, 14, 17, 21, 6:23; James 1:15). Death is the inevitable and inescapable consequence of sin resulting from God's immutable law. Nothing is more pitiable than the consequence of human sin.

The word *death* in Scripture is used in two ways. They will be grasped more readily if we see that the words *death* and *separation* can be used synonymously or interchangeably. The *first* kind of death is physical; that is the death of the body. When the spiritual part of man separates from the body, then the body dies. Frequently in the Bible we read of those persons of whom it is written that they "yielded up the ghost" (Genesis 49:33; Job 14:10; Matthew 27:50; Acts 5:10; etc.), meaning the body released the spirit. Every death is the separation of the spirit of man from the body. Death for the child of God is to "depart" or separate from the body, "and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:6). When a believer dies, he departs from one place to another, from earth to heaven.

The *second* kind of death is spiritual. This is the separation of the total man from God. On the day that Adam disobeyed God he died spiritually (Genesis 2:17) and subsequently all of Adam's posterity are born in that same spiritual state. We are born into this world spiritually dead, "alienated from the life of God"

(Ephesians 4:18), meaning that we all come into this world estranged from the life of God (Romans 5:12, 14, 17, 21). When we were born again we received God's life and are said to have "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14). At the time of conversion every believer shares with Christ His own spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13).

It is this *second* kind of death that is the eternal fate of all who die in rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John called it "the second death" (Revelation 20:6, 14; 21: 8) and he identifies it with "the lake of fire." It is the final and eternal separation of all unbelievers from God. W. E. Vine said, "Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. As spiritual life is conscious existence in communion with God, so spiritual death is conscious existence in separation from God." The punishment of all who reject God's truth is final and eternal, not temporary (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

The *third* factor of interest in this chapter is *the exception to the death penalty*. There are four verses which describe this man Enoch who did not die. "*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*" (5:21-24).

This incident is doubtless the highlight of chapter five. It is the one exception in the chapter to the tolling of the death bell. The godly character of this unusual man Enoch stands out in bold contrast to the evil character of his contemporary, Lamech. It is well to have before us the fact that there are two Enochs and two Lamechs. In chapter four there is a Lamech and an Enoch in Cain's line, and in chapter five there is a Lamech and an Enoch in Seth's line. Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth was given the same name as Cain's son. Lamech, the seventh from Adam in Seth's line was given the same name as the seventh from Adam in Cain's line. But their characters and behavior were markedly different. The evil and the good stand out in bold contrast. God has an Enoch, and Satan has an Enoch. Don't confuse these two. Never get them mixed up.

Enoch is a most interesting and striking person. Twice it is stated that "*Enoch walked with God*" (5:22, 24), the repetition suggesting the uniqueness of his relationship with God and its results. Only two men are said to have walked with God, the other being Noah (6:9).

Walking with God was a choice Enoch made when he was sixty-

five years old. It began at the birth of his son, Methuselah (5:21, 22). After the Fall, social and moral conditions deteriorated until Seth's son Enos was born. "Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD." But it was several generations later before Enoch appeared on the scene and began his unique career of a close fellowship with God, a fellowship like that which Adam experienced before the Fall. The Bible does not tell us what Enoch's behavior was like during the first sixty-five years of his life. But when his son, Methuselah, was born, Enoch turned to God. Apparently God used the birth of that baby to draw Enoch to Himself. Through prayer and obedience to God's Word Enoch maintained unbroken communion with God.

The first feature of Enoch's life was the fact that he *walked with God*. His walk with God was not an occasional stroll at odd times when it was convenient. His walk with God was a continuous, unbroken fellowship. In verse 22 he started to walk with God, and in verse 24, three hundred years later, he is still walking with God. He lived day by day in intimate communion with God. This kind of walking with God is still possible today, but more than being possible, it is enjoined upon every Christian. We are exhorted to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) and "not after the flesh" (Romans 8:1, 4); "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). We are to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1); "walk circumspectly" (Ephesians 5:15); "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Colossians 1:10); "walk worthy of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:12); and "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). This word "walk" is a term which describes the process of living a life.

The second feature of Enoch's life was the fact that he *witnessed for God*. Actually Enoch was a *prophet*. As a matter of fact, he commenced the line of the prophets. Now you will not find these facts in the Genesis account. They are recorded in the little Epistle of Jude, the book of only one chapter located next to the last book of the Bible.

Following are those divinely inspired words about Enoch as penned by Jude: "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). This passage by Jude presents an intriguing aspect of Enoch's prophetic witness. Because there are no references in

Genesis to the prophecies of Enoch, we should not conclude that he did not prophesy to the people in his own day. I believe that he did witness to the godless generation of the antediluvian age and that his witness was prophetic of God coming down to execute judgment in the flood.

This prophetic revelation possibly came to Enoch at the time Methuselah was born and when he commenced his walk with God. Many conservative scholars, ancient and modern, have interpreted the name *Methuselah* as meaning "When he dies, it will be sent," the "it" having reference to the coming judgment of the great flood. In this special revelation from God, Enoch knew that the flood would not come as long as Methuselah remained alive. Upon a careful examination of the chronological record, you will note that Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came (7:11), the exact same year that Methuselah died (5:27). The flood came exactly when God predicted it through His prophet Enoch. And so the name Methuselah commemorates that great prophetic warning.

It is not without significance that Methuselah lived longer than any other person in history, 969 years. The fact that God withheld the flood until Methuselah died tells us something about God's great heart of compassion for sinners. The Apostle Peter makes reference to this in both Epistles that he wrote. He tells how "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. . . ." (1 Peter 3:20). "The Lord. . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Look again with me at Enoch's prophecy as recorded by Jude. I see in those words a double fulfillment, one near in Enoch's day, and the other looking ahead to the second coming of Christ to earth. Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment. . . ." (Jude 14, 15). Within the context of Jude's epistle, Enoch's prophecy looked beyond the great flood in Noah's day to a future time when he will yet witness to a godless generation as described by Jude. Yes, Enoch prophesied of that great future event we know as the Second Coming of Christ to earth. The prophecy had its first fulfillment in the judgment of the great earthwide flood, but its final fulfillment awaits the return of Christ to establish His rule over the earth. This prophecy of Christ's second coming through Enoch was no new thing when he uttered it, but rather an enlargement or amplification of that great Messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15.

An intriguing aspect of Enoch's prophecy has to do with the part Enoch himself will play in its final fulfillment. Now we know that Enoch did not die, a privilege that even our Lord Jesus Christ did not share. The Genesis record says of Enoch that "*he was not; for God took him*" (5:24). The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "By faith Enoch was not found, because God had translated him. . . ." (Hebrews 11:5).

When the Scripture says "he should not see death," does it mean that Enoch would never die at any time in the future? After all, the same Epistle says that "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews 9:27). Now we know that the believers who are alive on the earth at the Rapture will not die (1 Thessalonians 4:17), so there is an exception to the divine decree in Hebrews 9:27. Is Enoch another exception to the divine decree in Hebrews 9:27? Or will he return to earth at some future time and die?

God actually removed Enoch bodily from earth to heaven, where presumably he is at this present time. More than twenty-five hundred years later, God did a similar thing with the prophet Elijah when He translated Elijah from earth to heaven without dying (2 Kings 2:9-11). Now we know that Elijah will return to earth to prophesy before the end of the Tribulation (Malachi 4:5, 6). We know also that during the Tribulation God will have two of His witnesses on the earth to prophesy (Revelation 11:3-12). It is no mere possibility, but a probability, that Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without dying with the view to future ministries.

Dr. Henry Morris in his book, *The Genesis Record*, wrote, "These witnesses are also identified as the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth (Zechariah 4:14). These anointed ones, these witnesses, are real men, not angels, as is evident from the fact that they are to be slain when they have finished their testimony and then resurrected (Revelation 11:7-12) and translated. If they are men in the flesh and yet were standing by the Lord in the days of Zechariah, they must have been born in the world sometime before Zechariah's day. Somehow they must have been preserved against death, in heaven, for many centuries. So far as we can judge from Scripture, only Enoch and Elijah could meet such specifications. . . ."

The third feature of Enoch's life is that he was *well-pleasing* to God, "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). These early chapters of Genesis tell us that the days when Enoch lived, leading up to the flood, were flagrantly wicked. In our next study in chapter six we shall see

some of the details of that wickedness. But in the midst of that prevailing evil Enoch stood out as one man who walked with God, witnessed for God and was well-pleasing to God. What light this three-fold witness casts on the high quality of Enoch's character!

What was the secret to Enoch's life and the obvious blessing upon him? The very next verse in Hebrews tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Enoch was a man of faith, one who believed God. Just as Abel worshipped by faith, even so Enoch walked by faith. From the day Methuselah was born Enoch lived to please God, and for the next three hundred years he walked by faith until God took him to heaven. Enoch's translation occurred before the judgment of the great flood.

I see in Enoch a type of all believers who will be living on the earth when our Lord comes to gather them to Himself. When Christ was yet on the earth He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). This I understand to be our Lord's appearing in the air to translate His Church to heaven before the Tribulation, just as Enoch was translated before the flood. In view of the fact that this appearing of our Lord is imminent, we Christians should be walking with God, witnessing for God and living daily a life that is well pleasing to Him.

The concluding verses in this chapter introduce to the reader, Noah, the son of Lamech. Noah was not the only child born of Lamech, for it is recorded that Lamech, like his predecessor, "begat sons and daughters" (5:30). However, we know nothing of their names nor how many there were. Apparently all of Noah's brothers and sisters died in the flood. Lamech lived seven hundred and seventy-seven years.

Lamech, like his grandfather Enoch, was a prophet. When Noah was born, Lamech "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" (5:29).

This prophecy suggests Lamech's faith and confidence for the future. But how did Noah bring comfort? He was God's preacher who warned of judgment to come. Lamech's prophecy is quite specific and it seems clear, "*concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.*"

Some Jewish teachers believe that Noah invented instruments

of agriculture and thereby relieved men from the difficult labor and toil which resulted from the curse after the Fall (3:17-20). When Noah came out from the ark after the flood, he "began to be a husbandman (a farmer), and he planted a vineyard" (9:20). Lamech, like Enoch, was given the vision of better times ahead for the farmer in that some means would be supplied to make his work lighter. After the flood God, Himself, said, "I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake" (Genesis 9:21). Ever since God cursed the ground, life for man was one ceaseless round of hard work. Every farmer longed for some comfort from endless toil. We know that Lamech's prophecy did not miss the mark. Each succeeding century since Noah has witnessed the discovery and development of farming equipment.

But isn't there something in Lamech's prophecy that runs deeper than the mere human achievements which help make our toil lighter? His prophecy does not stop at human prowess and progress. Jesus Christ is the ultimate goal of prophecy. So by preserving Noah, God determined that this son of Lamech would be the channel of comfort to the human race. The promised Seed of the woman (3:15) would bring true and lasting comfort to mankind. The God of the Bible is "the God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3).

There is more in Lamech's prophecy than meets the eye at first glance. The birth of his son Noah was the occasion for a prophecy that has steadied many believers. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Enoch witnessed to *communion* with God. Methuselah witnessed to the *compassion* of God. Lamech witnessed to the *comfort* of God.

To Be Continued



