

Genesis 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.

“This is the book...” The second creation story in Genesis 2:4 begins with these identical words. One would assume the author of Genesis wanted the reader to hearken back to that story. Whereas the first story of creation in Genesis 1:1 began with God speaking His Word which caused creation to come into existence, Genesis 2:4 made the first reference to the written word, “the book” (The RSV refers to “the generations” to translate the Greek word “Biblos”, our word for the Bible, the books). Genesis 5:1 is thus the second reference to “scriptures” in Genesis. Though 5:1 certainly echoes 2:4, this seems to be a third telling of the creation of humans in Genesis, albeit a summary of what we learned in the opening chapter. This telling of the story reaffirms the teaching of Genesis 1, though here humans are only created in God’s “likeness” (RSV) – the **Septuagint** however says “ikon” = image. The word “man” is the generic “anthropon” (=human, not specifically male). The patristic writers opined that humans having the “image” meant that God made humans “lord” over the visible earth in the same way that He was Lord over all things visible and invisible in the universe, including Lord over the humans. While the text reaffirms the teaching of Genesis 1 that humans are “ikons” of God, it offers no further explanation of the significance of this anthropology. As the story unfolds we are going to see that one way humans are like God is that we too have a heart, just like the Lord does.

“the book of the generations of Adam.” St. Matthew begins his Gospel with almost identical words: “The book of the generations of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1). Matthew no doubt intended to invoke the memory of Genesis as his genealogy imitates the first book of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. This is perhaps Matthew’s version of John 1, where St. John the Theologian intentionally harkens back to Genesis 1 as the very basis for understanding Christ. And certainly Matthew’s imitation of Genesis 5:1 is also hinting at the typological thinking the New Testament writers loved when interpreting the Old Testament. Adam was but the type of the real man Jesus who was to come. Jesus is the type of all those living in the light of the New Creation brought about by the coming of God’s chosen Messiah.

“When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.” The “When” at the beginning

of the verse tells us we have moved back in time, back to the beginning of creation, to the time before the Fall of Eve and Adam, to the prelapsarian world. This time, however, the story is not going to remain long in this prelapsarian state but is going to leap to the fallen world, skipping any mention of the cosmos before the Fall or how we got into our current state. The world before the Fall is just the springboard to dive into our world's

postlapsarian condition. Within a few verses of this return to the creation of the world, Adam will be dead, his 930 years of life condensed into a few summary. We are going to be impressed with how long these early humans live, but the text dismisses their long lives in a sentence telling us nothing about these men other than they once existed, had a son and died. No glory is given to their long lives. Their names and ages are remembered, but they are not credited with doing anything with their long lives except perpetuating the human race. But what the text does reaffirm is that despite sin, despite mortality, humans are created in the image of God – this has not been taken away from us humans. Biblical anthropology affirms that even after the Fall, after the fratricidal Cain, the image of God has been preserved in us. Even when the entire earth has become wicked and destroyed, the image of God is still visible in the one righteous man left on earth – Noah. Orthodox anthropology holds strongly to this positive view of humanity. Neither **Ancestral sin** nor our own current wickedness wipes out the image of God in us which is indelibly impressed upon our soul. Evil cannot wipe out the innate goodness which God planted deep within each of us. That image can get buried beneath a lot of dirt and corruption, but it remains alive in us.

If this is intended to be a third telling of the creation story its focus this time is on the humans with little reference to the created world. Genesis 2:4 which this verse echoes claimed to be the book of “the generations of the heavens and the earth.” Here in 5:1 it is the book of Adam and his descendents. The story begins with humans, not with chaos or with the earth, and it hardly mentions the world in which humans live but jumps right into the first humans and their descendents. The rest of the created world is largely ignored – no sun or stars or even animals mentioned, and unlike Genesis 1 & 2,

no mention of food in God's creation. The story of paradise and the Fall are also absent. And though God creates the first humans, this time it is the humans who are central to the story and the real actors as God becomes more distant from His creatures and is hardly mentioned in the chapter.

God intended for humans to have some affinity toward him. Our God-likeness relates us to God by nature, whether or not we believe in Him! But the image of God which is bestowed on us by God does not make us God, nor even like God, a lesson which Eve and Adam learned to their and our eternal sorrow. Elsewhere in the Old Testament the people of God are sternly warned away from mistaken idol/image worship. Isaiah 40:18 states flatly that no “likeness” of any sort compares with God. So though we are created in God's image, we humans are not comparable with God. God is totally other. In Deuteronomy 4:15-18, the Israelites are reminded that God is invisible and therefore it is forbidden to make any graven image in the likeness of any male or female or of any animal which humans might then worship. Christians believe that the imagelessness of God changed when the Word became flesh and dwelt on earth and we were able to both see and touch Him. The incarnation of God suddenly made God visible in the flesh. To see Christ is to see God the Father (John 12:45). This becomes the basis for the theology of the icon in Orthodoxy. God really has brought about a new revelation, and Orthodox icons are an affirmation of the truth of the Gospel that Jesus is both God and man.

And again as in Genesis 1 both male and female are created simultaneously and co-equally, both in God's likeness. God blesses both the male and female. In the Septuagint God *names* the male Adam. Naming another being is a sign of the power God has over the man.

“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.” The unusual wording which is reminiscent of Genesis 1:27 reinforces the idea of God making man both male and female and giving them one name. This may be what St. Paul had in mind when he wrote: “there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in

God Questions His Creation: Genesis 5

Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). For in Christ we both are blessed with what humans were before the Fall as well as with being a new creation.

Despite the apparent equality between man and woman being repeated here from Genesis 1, many who read Genesis including St. Paul still saw a male dominance as being normative on earth. Paul comes to that conclusion by reading Genesis 1:27 through the interpretive lens of Genesis 2:22. Genesis 5:1-2 repeats the Genesis 1:27 version of God creating humans: male and female are created simultaneously and both are ikons (in the image of) God. Usually such a repetition in scripture would be seen as significant by the Patristic writers such as John Chrysostom who thought that every verse and word was essential – doubly reinforced if the verse is repeated. In this case despite this particular repetition, St. Paul more or less downplays Genesis 1:27 and 5:1-2, in favor of a notion that the woman is created after the male so therefore is not equal to the male but must submit to the male (1 Timothy 2:12-14). His interpretation of Genesis 1 & 2 because it is part of Christian scripture becomes normative in Christian thinking, and yet it must be noted that his interpretation is not entirely faithful to the verses he downplays or outright ignores in 1 Timothy. In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus clearly accepted and affirmed the text of Genesis 1:27 and did not reinterpret that text through Genesis 2. "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female..." (Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:6) Jesus uses this passage in arguing against easy divorce and affirms that the husband and wife become one flesh – they share a union, a oneness which God intended when He made them male and female. Here Jesus does not rank the woman as either second rate to the male or somehow below the male in God-given dignity. When Jesus then makes the statement, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9, Matthew 19:6), one realizes He is not simply referring to their marital union but how God created them from the beginning – male and female sharing a God ordained oneness.

"... he blessed them..." The original blessing of humans in Genesis 1:28 included words for the humans to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth and subdue it. The blessing by God is

not fleshed out in this text. To "bless" is far more than to "wish them well" or "wish them good luck." In the Bible words and names have power and are chosen carefully for they are thought to contain the essence of thing they represent. To "bless" means to convey vigor, strength, life and peace to the one being blessed. God in blessing is bestowing the very life and peace which belong to Him.

Genesis 5:1 takes us back to the beginning of humanity one more time. It is not going to repeat the story of the original Fall of humankind. Rather the story simply reminds us that in the beginning humans were blessed by God. No paradise in the story this time, and no original sin is mentioned. But quickly in the story it becomes clear that the world is not paradise for in it there is sin, and though humans live long, they still die. The story is going to move quickly to the lives of the most important characters in the early history of the people of God.

3 When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

4 The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. **5** Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.

We know nothing of Adam's life since his expulsion from the Garden of Delight, other than he fathered a few children. After committing his original sin, Adam becomes silent, voiceless. Had he nothing to say? He lives 130 years before fathering Seth. What was he doing all this time? The text gives us no clue. If he did much as a parent, we will never know. He lives 930 years and apparently said nothing worth remembering; he had nothing to say for himself. Besides living long, he is noted for little else. He is not credited with having contributed anything to human culture, skills, inventiveness or achievement. Even those inspired by God to write Genesis were given nothing to say about his incredibly long, yet apparently totally uninspiring life. When God punished Adam for his sinful disobedience, God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19). Genesis however never speaks about any hardships Adam has with farming, and he is never reported to having broken a sweat about anything. The only part of the consequence for Adam's sin that is recorded to have come true is Adam dies – some 930 years after God sentenced him to death. Adam was granted a speedy trial, but it took almost a millennium to carry out the sentence. "But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:8). Was the Lord waiting all that time for Adam to repent?

"a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." In Genesis 4:2, Eve attributed the birth of Seth to herself and God (her helper). Here the story reasserts the patriarchal connection - Eve may have given birth to Seth with God's help – but Seth is in Adam's image and likeness. Eve credited God with the birth, but here God is not directly in the picture – the fatherhood is Adam's not God's. Eve is not mentioned at all. And the text clearly wants to trace the history of humanity from God

God Questions His Creation: Genesis 5

through Adam, not through Eve who is not listed even as the generic "wife." In this telling of events, Seth is a virtually motherless child. Of course, this also tells us why it is important to read all of the scriptures and not just select verses or versions of the stories that we prefer. It is even important for us to know how these Old Testamental texts were used by the New Testament authors. In doing this we come to understand the original text in its context, how it compares to parallel or similar texts, and how it was understood by Christ and His disciples. To read a text without the greater context of the entire Bible is to lose elements of the story and of Truth itself.

Jesus is said to be the new Adam – Christ God's Word incarnate gives new voice and hope to all humankind. Adam may have lived an incredible 930 years, but he still dies and passes mortality to his descendents. "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Romans 5:12). Jesus lived only 33 years and yet managed to give eternal life to all. "For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ... If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Romans 5:15-18). It is not longevity of life that measures how much any one person contributes to humanity or to salvation.

In this version of the Adam story there is no mention of Cain and Abel, but the descendents of Adam begin with Seth. This is a quick recapitulation of what the Genesis text has taught us up to this moment. Note that Eve is also absent from the picture. This is a patriarchal retelling of the story. The absence of any reference to Paradise or to the murderous Cain convinces scholars that several different traditions (sources) have been blended together to form the Jewish/Christian scriptures.

Perhaps the text is suggesting Seth is in the image and likeness of his father in a way that

Cain was not. Cain was a murderer, as is Satan (John 8:44) who is described as Cain's real father (1 John 3:12). Seth is in Adam's image and Adam in God's image. Cain is in the image of Satan for he was disinherited by an act of God from Adam's descendents. Cain is not even to be remembered.

"all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years ...' The incredible ages attributed to the first humans may be the effort of the final editor's of the Bible who wrote much later in history to show how sin will shorten the life spans of people through the centuries. Proverbs 10:27 says, "The fear of the LORD prolongs life." Adam though disobedient to the Lord still fears God when he heard God walking in the garden (Genesis 3:11). The fear of God is a holy thing not a hellish thing. The biblical text may be suggesting that as time went on people decreasingly feared the Lord, and thus the life span of all humans even of God's chosen ones becomes shortened through history. Many scholars note however that the life spans in the bible's chronology pale in length to what one can find in other Mideast and Asian religions where sometimes rulers are said to have lived thousands of years. In 2005 MIT's TECHNOLOGY REVIEW offered a prize of \$20,000 to any molecular biologist who could disprove the idea that humans are capable of living to be 1000 years old. This contest had nothing to do with the Bible, but was a challenge issued because of the claims of certain scientists that aging is a disease that can be cured. The scientists who judged the contest concluded that not one biogerontologist could refute the claim nor offer irrefutable scientific evidence to support their own claims that thousand year life spans were impossible. Thus by the standards of modern science, there is nothing scientific that says it is impossible to live the number of years suggested in Genesis. It perhaps is ironic that secular scientists who might reject the ages of the ancient biblical characters as myths, now in seeking "eternal youth" say that such life spans are totally possible. Of course that doesn't answer the question of whether living such incredibly long lives would be either good or fruitful. As Ralph Waldo Emerson quipped, "What would be the use of immortality to a person who cannot use well a half an hour?" And in Genesis even though these early humans live for centuries, the

God Questions His Creation: Genesis 5

totality of their lives is summed up in a sentence. They live nine hundred years and their biography can be written in 4 lines. Longevity of life is obviously not everything to the God whose revelation of truth is contained in these Scriptures.

Because numerology was popular at different times in biblical history, it is also possible the numbers had significance to the composers of the stories which are lost on us. Much speculation exists about the secret meaning of the ages of the men named in Genesis.

Adam's death is recorded. But very unceremoniously and quite unremarkably Adam (the first human, the parentless man created directly by God, and former resident of paradise) now returns to the dust from which he was made (Genesis 3:19). Was there even a funeral of some sort? Eve's death is not even recorded, she simply disappears into history becoming dust unnoticed by anyone and unrecorded by those inspired by God to write down His revelation in the Scriptures.

"Adam lived 930 years." Though God had warned Adam if he disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit he would surely die in the day he ate it (Genesis 2:17), Adam lives on for 930 years according to scripture. Adam surely didn't die in the day he ate the fruit! The text itself suggests it is not meant to be read literally. Adam's death fulfills the warning of God, but God allowed him to live for the continuation of the human race.

Adam died. Adam's death is actually the first "natural" death recorded in Genesis. Abel was the first human to die but he was violently murdered by his brother Cain. Lamech also boasted of murdering a unknown man. From then until the death of Adam (some 800 years according to the biblical text), no other human death was recorded. No women's death is recorded at all – the mothers and wives of these men are given no names and no obituaries.

If one reads the genealogy carefully one realizes Adam is alive when Lamech is born - all nine generations of humans living together on earth. Adam's death still must have come as a shock – for now it is clear that even without violence,

humans will die. The first man to be born after Adam dies is Noah.

Adam had "other sons and daughters." This is the first mention of Adam's daughters. Biblical **literalists** assume Adam's sons got their wives from his daughters and that such sibling incest was needed for the humans to fulfill the command to be fruitful and multiply. Many Christian writers assume the story is precisely a narrative talking about humanity in general but not in scientific and historic accuracy. Christian scholars also see the Adam story as symbolic and prototypical with all human beings coming from God but not all are necessarily genetic descendents of Adam and Eve.

6 When Seth had lived a hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh. **7** Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and had other sons and daughters. **8** Thus all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. **9** When Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan. **10** Enosh lived after the birth of Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and had other sons and daughters. **11** Thus all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died. **12** When Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Ma-hal'alel. **13** Kenan lived after the birth of Ma-hal'alel eight hundred and forty years, and had other sons and daughters. **14** Thus all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died. **15** When Ma-hal'alel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared. **16** Ma-hal'alel lived after the birth of Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and had other sons and daughters. **17** Thus all the days of Ma-hal'alel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died. **18** When Jared had lived a hundred and sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. **19** Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. **20** Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

There are no wives' names mentioned in the genealogy. No accounting is given of where the wives came from or who their parents were. The genealogy is purely patriarchal: a father-son schema. Each man's life is marked by only three events: 1) the man's birth, 2) what age he was at the birth of his son of this genealogy, and 3) how old he was when he died. The only mention of females at all is almost parenthetically – they are among the “other” sons and daughters each man had. These “other” sons and daughters are not named, are not part of the direct lineage being followed, and though their existence is acknowledged, they are not significant for the story. That they must have been marrying and producing families and descendents is not within the interest of the text.

Chrysostom reminds his audience that every word of the scriptures are inspired, and that they must not just be read in dull, leaden literal fashion, but rather one must allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the depth contained in the verses. He did feel the genealogies were inspired and important, but in his own commentaries he often glosses over them and does not do the verse by verse parsing which is his usual way to approach the biblical text. “I beg you all not to pass heedlessly by the contents of Holy Scripture. I mean, there is nothing in the writings at this point which does not contain a great wealth of thought; after all, since the blessed authors composed under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, on that account they hold concealed within them great treasure because written by the Spirit. ... You see, there is not even a syllable or even one letter contained in Scripture which does not have a great treasure concealed in its depths. ... Sacred Scripture does not call in to play human wisdom for the understanding of its writings, but the revelation of the Spirit, so that we may learn the true meaning of its contents and draw from it a great benefit.” For St. John not only are the writers of Scripture inspired by God, but also inspiration comes upon those who listen to or read them. It isn't literalism that is necessary to read them but more importantly we need inspiration to understand them. Like many patristic writers, Chrysostom saw the understanding of scriptures to be similar to mining gold – we cannot be satisfied with what we find on the surface, we must dig (work hard) to get deeper into them so that we can mine the depth of their riches.

One might ask why should we read these ancient texts with their lists of names, describing a world that no longer exists and lifestyles to which we cannot relate? St. Peter of Damaskos (12th Century AD) offers these thoughts about reading less interesting scriptural passages: “I went through all these slowly and diligently, trying to discover the root of man’s destruction and salvation, and which of his actions or practices does or does not bring him to salvation. I wanted to find what it is that everyone seeks after, and how people served God in the past, and still serve Him today, in wealth or poverty, living among many sinners or in solitude, married or celibate: how, quite simply in every circumstance and activity we find life or death, salvation or destruction ... Cain and Abel... between them jealousy triumphed, and deceit, and these gave rise to murder, cursing and terror. I was astonished, too, by their descendants, whose sins were so many that they provoked the flood...” For St. Peter, scripture offers us a chance to learn about the sins and mistakes of others, so that we don’t repeat them, and to realize there have been righteous people in every generation even when most people in the world practiced evil.

On the Sunday before Christmas the Orthodox Church commemorates the Holy Ancestors of Christ and has the holy men of the genealogy celebrating the birth of Christ: “Adorned with the glory of divine communion Adam exults today; with him, Abel leaps in gladness and Enoch rejoices; Seth dances for joy and Noah with him.” (Vespers hymn)

All of the men listed in this section live unbelievably long lives. And that is the sum total that we can say about them. No words of theirs are recorded, no deeds, no discoveries, no inventions, no achievements, no contributions to life. Men who supposedly lived 800-950 years left nothing behind but a name and a son. We don’t know where they lived, what occupied their time, what they believed. We have no knowledge of their relationship to God. An amazing piece of trivia is that despite the longevity of their lives, the first man mentioned to have gray hair is going to be Jacob in Genesis 42:38 – of course he had 12 sons which might explain the allochromasia of his hair!

“Enoch” This is the second man in Genesis named Enoch. Cain also had a son whom he named Enoch (4:17). In fact the genealogy of Cain listed in Genesis 4 is going to be paralleled by a list of similar names and descendants in Genesis 5 following Seth’s lineage. Some biblical scholars suspect the lists were perhaps derived from a single lineage which through time got remembered as two distinct lineages – one of them the godly descendants of Seth and the other of the ungodly descendants of Cain. One idea this might suggest to us is that in every human there is both the potential for good and for evil. Humans like to categorize “other” peoples, races and nations as good or evil, but the truth is that in each of us possesses the ability to do great good and also to do great evil. When we understand that truth, we begin to be more realistic and less arrogant about our selves. We also learn to be less judgmental and have a more balanced view of others. St. Paul wrote about this very real struggle within himself: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin” (Romans 7:15-25). He understood that each of us, himself included, is capable of doing good or evil. It is a war that rages within us as to whether we will choose the good or the evil. And as was seen in Cain, it is a battle whose outcome is not predetermined but which requires true spiritual struggle, asceticism, to overcome one’s own self-centered selfishness in order to freely love God and neighbor.

21 When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methu'selah. **22** Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methu'selah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. **23** Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. **24** Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

25 When Methu'selah had lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. **26** Methu'selah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. **27** Thus all the days of Methu'selah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

Enoch is a mysterious figure in the text. He lives 365 years, a number which corresponds to how many days there are in a year, though if the connection is intentional, its meaning still remains obscure. Enoch's description interrupts the formulaic description of each of the other personage's in the lineage who die after having children. Enoch however walks with God and his death is not recorded. The Prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 2 is the only other man in the Old Testament who is taken by God rather than dying. In the book of Hebrews much is made of Melchiz'edek for whom neither a birth nor a death is recorded and so Melchiz'edek becomes a prototype of the Eternal Word of God who became man. "For this Melchiz'edek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God... is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever" (Hebrews 7:1-3). As with Melchiz'edek, Enoch too is a prototype of the person who has a genealogy (as does Jesus) but for whom death has no permanent meaning because he is taken by God.

In the Septuagint we find this about Enoch: "Enoch pleased the Lord, and was taken up; he was an example of repentance to all generations" (Sirach 44:16). The biblical text does not give us a clue about Sirach's notion that Enoch is a model of repentance. That story comes from the non-biblical Jewish apocryphal literature. The mysterious Enoch's disappearance made him a very popular figure in the Septuagint and in both Jewish and early Christian apocryphal and apocalyptic literature. "No one like Enoch has been created on earth, for he was taken up from the earth" (Sirach 49:14).

"Enoch walked with God" The same verb for "walked" is used of God who walked in the Garden of Paradise in Genesis 3:8. Walking with God no doubt signifies being in God's presence and enjoying fellowship with Him.

Why did God "take" Enoch? The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon in the Septuagint suggests that God took Enoch to protect and preserve him from the wickedness that was all around him. By Wisdom's understanding God recognizes the effects of nurture and social environment on a person and found Enoch so rare and precious

that He decided to preserve him in holiness by plucking him out of the earth. "But the righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, nor measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for men, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There was one who pleased God and was loved by him, and while living among sinners he was taken up. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took him quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, nor take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and he watches over his holy ones" (Wisdom 4:7-15, which is a common Old Testament reading on the eve of certain saints in the Orthodox Church). In the New Testament the Book of Hebrews offers a slightly different explanation for why God took Enoch. "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God." (Hebrews 11:5) In Hebrews God is protecting Enoch from death not from the wickedness of his fellow humans.

"It was of these also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 1:14-15) {The quote attributed to Enoch is taken from the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is not part of Jewish scriptures, but which Jude obviously had read and valued}. It is one of the hints we have that early Christians read the non-canonical apocryphal literature – suggesting that the notion of a "fixed" canon was not held by all early Christians.

"Enoch... God took him." Took him where? That question has been asked for hundreds of years. Chrysostom in the 4th Century asked the question and says he was asked does this mean Enoch is still alive somewhere? Chrysostom

accepts a sense of mystery regarding these types of questions - we cannot know the answer. He argues we have to believe that the words mean something as the scripture is always precise in its meaning, but he acknowledges that he does not know how to answer the question and that probably the answer cannot be reached by reasonable inquiry for its meaning can be found only in God and God did not choose to reveal the depth of its meaning.

"and he was not, for God took him." It is perhaps more than coincidental that in the Joseph story later in Genesis (chapters 37 ff), after the 10 brothers have sold Joseph into slavery they use a similar phrase to say that their one brother is no more. They use the phrase to tell the lie that he is dead when in fact they have no idea where Joseph is. The text here as well clearly implies that something mysterious occurred and Enoch's whereabouts remain unknown.

"Let us again bless Enoch with holy words of praise, for since he was well-pleasing to the Lord, he was translated in glory: As it is written, he was seen to be too great for death, since he was manifested as a most true servant of God." (From the Canon of the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. 2nd Sunday before Christmas)

Enoch begets Methuselah. There exists an interesting parallel between the genealogy of Cain in Genesis 4 and that of Seth in Genesis 5. In 4:18 Enoch (Cain's son) has a grandson named Methushael. Methushael (Cain's descendent) begets a son named Lamech, as does Lamech the descendent of Seth. The parallel list of similar names seems to scholars too identical to be coincidence, but how this happened or the purpose it serves is lost in history. Some scholars think that a single list of descendents was variously attributed to Cain or to Abel by different sources. The final editor of Genesis kept both lists in the scriptures.

Methu'selah at nine hundred and sixty-nine years of age is the Bible's oldest man. Regardless of his age, he gets no more description than the other men in the genealogy. His great age still ends in death – humans are purely mortal beings and cannot escape death for ever.

28 When Lamech had lived a hundred and eighty-two years, he became the father of a son, **29** and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground which the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands." **30** Lamech lived after the birth of Noah five hundred and ninety-five years, and had other sons and daughters. **31** Thus all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died. **32** After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

According to the chronology of this genealogy, Adam dies in the year 930, Seth dies in 1042, and Noah is born in 1056. Noah is the first birth recorded after the death of Adam. This may be intentional to show that he represents a new beginning for humankind. Noah will become the father of all humankind after the flood. Noah is also the first human born who did not know Adam and thus is the first man born without direct roots to the Garden of Eden. This fact may help explain Lamech's comment that Noah is taken from the cursed ground rather than from the purer dust from which Adam was created.

"called his name Noah, saying, 'Out of the ground which the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.'" Lamech makes an unusual prophecy about his son Noah. In words very reminiscent of Genesis 3:18 where God tells Adam that the ground is cursed because of him and only through the pain of hard work will the soil yield crops, Lamech believes Noah is going to provide them some relief from the pain, the labor, and the curse. Noah indeed will rescue the human race but not quite as Lamech probably envisioned it. Noah's role in the salvation of humanity from the curse comes only with the destruction of the rest of humanity. Noah will in fact be involved in saving humanity from its own wickedness, but the toil of labor will continue beyond the flood.

Besides Lamech being a name both in the descendents of Cain and of Seth, another interesting parallel is both Lamechs have a connection to the number 77. In Genesis 4:24 Lamech's 77 fold vengeance is paralleled by Lamech father of Noah's age of 777.

The genealogy of Chapter 5 will be interrupted by the telling of the Noah stories in Genesis 6-9. The genealogy resumes in 10:1. The interruption in the flow of the genealogy gives modern scholars a clue that several different traditions (sources) have been woven together by whoever was the final editor of Genesis.

Source Theory is an attempt by modern biblical scholars to account for the "inconsistencies" and variations which are found scattered throughout the Genesis text. The fact that different "hands" may have had a role in writing and editing the text does not in any way deny the inspiration of the text. Whether one or

God Questions His Creation: Genesis 5

several authors and editors had their hand in assembling the text it all has been received by the Church as inspired and it is assumed the various authors and editors were inspired by God themselves. In ancient days, when communities relied on oral tradition to preserve their significant stories, the community shared in the remembering of the story. It was not just one person's responsibility to remember and tell the story; the entire community shared this task and responsibility. A good example of this communal responsibility is conveyed in Psalm 78, part of which reads, "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God" (78:5-8). Every family had the responsibility to tell the story of the community. Thus having more than one person/source being responsible for telling the community's story is normal to Israel.

Despite the incredible life spans of the men in the genealogy, humans are denied immortality. Humans are mortal beings bounded by their own limitations including their mortality. Whereas the threat of death to Adam may have been an abstraction he could not imagine, now the humans are beginning to learn what it means to be mortal. And the story suggests humans readily embrace the unrepentant sinner's philosophy, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (Isaiah 22:13). The Orthodox response to the unbeliever's indulgence is our liturgical prayer, "that we may spend the remaining time of our life in peace and in repentance." The unbeliever's philosophy makes the present world to be all there is and denies the afterlife; the Orthodox view on the other hand lives for that life in the world to come. Or as a modern adage has it, the first "lives to eat" while the second "eats to live."

According to the Chronology of this genealogy of Noah's ancestors only Adam (930) and Seth (1042) were dead when Noah was born (1056). Enoch had been taken by God in 987. When

Noah was born 7 generations were alive at the same time! All of Noah's ancestors die before the flood and so are considered to be **antediluvians**. Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives are the only antediluvians who survive the flood and thus preserve the human race, carrying the human seed over the flood into the new creation. None of Noah's ancestors are destroyed among the wicked by God in the great cataclysmic flood as they are all dead before God visits His judgment on the world. Their apparent natural deaths at great old ages were therefore also a blessing in that all of them are spared the wrath of God. When Noah's children are born there are only 4 generations in the lineage alive. Methuselah, the oldest man in Genesis is the last recorded death before the flood destroys the world. At the time of the flood only Noah and his sons (2 generations are alive). Noah's father, Lamech, would have lived to see Noah begin building the ark, but he dies 5 years before the flood begins.