

Genesis 5:1 – 6:8

^{5:1} This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. ² He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. ⁶ Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh. ⁷ Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸ So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. ⁹ Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ Then Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died. ¹² Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ Then Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he became the father of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ So all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died. ¹⁵ Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ Then Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died. ¹⁸ Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹ Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. ²¹ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. ²² Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³ So 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 Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ Then Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. ²⁸ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. ²⁹ Now he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.’ ³⁰ Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹ So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died. ³² Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ^{6:1} Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’ ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and

He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.' ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Historical and Cultural Background

- The number 10: 'establishment' or 'completion'
 - Ten utterances of God in Genesis 1
 - Ten people listed between Adam and Noah in Genesis 5
 - Ten generations listed between Shem and Abraham in Genesis 11
 - Ten genealogies before the nation Israel in Genesis 2 – 50
 - Ten plagues on Egypt in Exodus 7 – 12
 - Ten commandments for Israel in Exodus 19
 - Ten healings by Jesus in Matthew 8 – 9, which is Matthew's compressed summary
- The number 1000: an idealized number
 - The Sumerian King list, from the end of the 3rd millennium, tells of 8 kings who each ruled 30,000 years and then the flood swept the earth.¹
 - Barosis, a Babylon priest writing a history of Babylon in 300 BC, writes about ten kings before the flood who ruled a total of 432,000 years. Average life span 43,000 years?
 - Hesiod, Greek poet, 9th century BC, writes a similar claim for the early history of mankind
 - Revelation 20 speaks of a 1,000 year reign of Jesus
 - Thus, quantity of years means quality of life
- The terms 'father' and 'son' can mean 'ancestor' and 'descendant.' As in, 'King David was the father of Jesus, and Jesus was the son of David.'
- Hebrew names are often important clues
 - Adam: 'man'
 - Seth: 'appointed'
 - Enosh: 'mortal'
 - Kenan: 'sorrow'
 - Mahalalel: 'the blessed God'
 - Jared: 'come down'
 - Enoch: 'consecrated'
 - Methuselah: 'death shall bring'
 - Lamech: 'despair'
 - Noah: 'rest'
- Recall the line of Cain from Genesis 4
 - Contrast Enoch in Cain's line vs. the Enoch in Seth's line
 - Contrast the Lamechs also

¹ Bill T. Arnold, Bryan E. Beyer, *Readings From the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), p.150 – 151

Questions

1. What's going on here? How does this section differ from the last section?
 - a. This is a genealogy of Adam. The previous section was a genealogy of 'the heavens and the earth.' So the focus is on human beings.
 - b. Human beings are now a sign of contradiction. We bear the image of God (5:1 – 3). Yet we die. Everyone dies because they bear 'the likeness of Adam.'
 - c. What's with the long life? A literary device that says that people were living a good quality of life, in God's view that is. Notice that everyone comes close to the ideal number of 1,000 but does not fulfill it. They are living a good life compared to the line of Cain, but falling short.
 - d. 'One option is attaching some significance to the fact that all of the 30 numbers can be expressed as combinations of the two "sacred" numbers 60 and 7 in terms of years and months. 60 was culturally significant because it was the number that Babylonian mathematics was based on (the influence of this sexagesimal system is still felt today with our 60 minutes per hour and 60 seconds per minute). And 7, of course, has a prominent place in biblical symbolism beginning with the Sabbath. So when we're told that Methuselah was 187 years when he had his son Lamech (Gen. 5:25), we can see that $187 = 60+60+60+7$ years. And then because 60 months = 5 years, when Adam is said to be 130 years at the birth of his son Seth (Gen. 5:3), that can be expressed as $(60+60 \text{ years}) + (60+60 \text{ months})$.' (<http://biologos.org/blog/long-life-spans-in-genesis>)
2. How does Seth's line compare with Cain's line back in Genesis 4? Pay special attention to the Enoch in Cain's line and the Enoch in Seth's line, and the Lamech in Cain's line and the Lamech in Seth's line. The two names are almost certain meant to catch our attention, so we would compare them.
 - a. Cain's line (Gen.4)
 - i. Enoch: trapped by his father, part of a dynasty, meant to live on forever to defend his father
 - ii. Lamech: revenge 7 fold; despairs of life
 - b. Seth's line (Gen.5)
 - i. Enoch: walked with God and actually did live on forever
 - ii. Lamech: lived 777 years; despairs of sin; yet hopes; is this Lamech stating things accurately when he says that God cursed the ground? Isn't it more appropriate to say that Adam and Eve cursed the ground?
3. How does Seth's line compare with Cain's line back in Genesis 4? Pay special attention to the contrast between city and land, and where their focus was.
 - a. Cain's line: they are focused on what they built; but this city was later wiped out by the violence they brought and the flood from God
 - b. Seth's line: they apparently worked with the ground (5:29); had a deep spiritual life with God as suggested by the quality of their lives (described as long life) and by Enoch's life especially; they lived in hope that God would bring about the champion He promised in Gen.3:14 – 15; they are preserved through the flood; they are the true heirs of Adam and Eve
4. What else is happening with the rest of humanity?
 - a. Boundary crossing between the faithful and the unfaithful. The 'sons of God' probably refer to the men of Seth's line. The 'daughters of men' probably refer to the women of Cain's line or other children of Adam and Eve who are not part of the family of faith.
 - i. There is one theory that the 'sons of God' refers to angels, but that literary designation is unprecedented. It would also be difficult to explain. Why did that happen back then but no longer happen now? I reject this idea of angels conceiving humans or half-human beings:
 1. Angels and demons, and certainly Satan, have no power to create life. That is what seems to make life on earth distinct from life in heaven, as per Genesis 1 where life reproduces after its kind.
 2. Angels and demons do not have earthly bodies (see the story of Jesus casting demons into pigs in Matthew 8:18 – 34, Mark 5:1 – 20; Luke 8:26 – 39). A spirit being creating life in a woman's womb is a prerogative of God alone.
 3. True life (which can reproduce by itself) does not arise from different species or kinds. The Son of God shares the same nature He receives from the Father eternally. The child of a human receives human nature from his parents. God

created each creature according its own kind and nature, and reproduction follows this law. The devil has no power to break this God-given law.

4. Someone posted this to a Facebook group on Orthodox theology, which I find helpful:

'The idea of [the Nephilim] being angels is to be found in Second Temple Judaism, before the coming of the Lord. Among its defenders was Philo of Alexandria, who had some influence on the usage of the allegoric method of exegesis of Scriptures. The first Christians absorbed some Jewish beliefs, some of them, uncritically (such beliefs were not part of OT Scriptures nor of Christ's NT Revelation). Philo of Alexandria was a very deep thinker and had some influence on Christian exegesis, but he was in no way a canon or rule of Christian Faith.

Most of the Fathers or Christian writers or teachers who taught the angels were the "sons of God" lived before the First Ecumenical Council [of Nicaea in 325 AD]. From the age of the Councils, we hardly heard about this teaching. John of Damascus summed up the Patristic teaching and theology in a panoramic way, and his teaching precludes this myth. John Cassian, before him, told us how an elder named Serenus (one of the Egyptian elders of the desert) taught him that the "sons of God" were the descendants of Seth, and not from Cain. Thus, one cannot even think the rejection of the angelic interpretation is a matter of "scholar theologians" - it was a tradition kept also by the Fathers of the desert.

Since the angelic view no more showed its head throughout centuries, from this we have the consensus of the Fathers was expressed by this silence and by their eventual agreement. It is a Protestant attitude to think the earlier Fathers are automatically superior or wiser than the later ones, due to their antiquity. The disagreement only appears during the first two or three centuries of Christendom.

Speculation about this Jewish myth came back, in Orthodoxy, from Protestant influence, I think. To be frank, it seems a very American thing, linked with Apocalyptic culture. I never heard about any controversy on that, say, in Greek or Russian theological milieux. I might be proven wrong, but until then, this is my strong impression.'

However, I have found a few early church writers who seemed to believe in the angels and demons theory: Justin Martyr, *Second Apology* 5; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 18; Athenagoras of Athens (no citation).

- b. Warriors, conquerors: The Nephilim were warriors. They were present also among the Canaanites in Num.13:33 and strike terror in the hearts of the Israelites.
 - c. Rampant violence (Gen.6:4)
 - d. God names the internal corruption in humanity (Gen.6:5 – 6). It was evidenced by Genesis 2:4 – 4:26 in the fact that the jealousy triggered by the serpent in Adam and Eve now is internal to Cain. This is the first time the diagnosis is given this clearly.
 - i. Do you agree? Is there a human nature problem? Or is the evil we do simply because our external circumstances are bad?
 - ii. Does anyone agree with God's diagnosis? It will take a long time until one person, Moses, reaches the same conclusion (Dt.30:6).
5. How is God redeeming humanity? How is that shown here?
 - a. He preserves Noah's life
 - b. He will undo the corruption in people's hearts one day.

Summary

- We are contradictions: to bear the image of God who lives, yet we die.
- Jesus resolved the contradiction. The eternal Son of God became human, to share in our fallen humanity, so we could share in his healed humanity! And now he not only killed the sin-sickness we inherit from the fall by dying himself, he breathed new resurrection life into human nature in his resurrection. So he alone

resolves the problem of fallen humanity. He alone can put that new life into us by his Spirit when we receive him.