

What's In a Name?

Genesis 5

I. INTRODUCTION: I

I. 2 People often are heard to say, "What's in a name?"

A. Shakespeare said, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

B. These things are said to suggest names are meaningless.

C. If names were meaningless, why does every parent in every nation on the earth give their offspring a name!

D. ** Also, why don't parents name their boys "Adolph," or their girls "Jezebel"?

2. 3 Names are very, very important in the Bible:

A. Abraham: father of a multitude

F. Solomon: peaceful

B. Isaac: laughter

G. Nehemiah: God is consolation

C. Jacob: supplanter

H. Malachi: my messenger

D. Moses: drawn out

I. Barnabas: son of encouragement

E. David: beloved

J. Jesus: Jehovah is salvation

3. 4 Very briefly, let's look at Adam's descendants in Genesis 5 and learn an important lesson.

II. DISCUSSION:

I. 5 Generations of Adam:

A. The generations, or descendants, of Adam are given in Genesis 5.

(1) Adam: "the ground, man, mankind"; Gen. 5:5, 8; 930 years old.

(2) Seth: "appointed or compensate"; Gen. 5:11; 912 years old.

(3) Enosh: "mortal"; Gen. 5:14; 905 years old.

(4) Cainan: "possession"; Gen. 5:14; 910 years old.

(5) Mahalaleel: "praise of God"; Gen. 5:17 895 years old.

(6) Jared: "descent"; Gen. 5:20; 962 years old.

(7) Enoch: "dedicated" ("the seventh from Adam"; Jude 14); Gen. 5:23; 365 years*

(8) Methuselah:

(a) His name consists of two elements.

(i) The first part is **נִית** (*mat*), which is one of a few words to denote man or mankind, and is used most often to indicate a male capable of combat. There is an obvious and grim connection with the word **מוֹת** (*mut*), to die; corpse.

(ii) The second part comes from the verb **שָׁלַח** (*shalah*) meaning send, send out, let go. The charge of the verb becomes clear in the meaning of the derivatives: **שֶׁלַח** (*shelah*), a sort of weapon that was thrown, like a javelin; **שְׁלֻחִים** (*shilluhim*), sending away; **שְׁלוּחָה** (*sheluha*), shoot, branch (Isaiah 16:8); **נוֹשֶׁלַח** (*mislah*); undertaking (that to which one stretches out the hand), or pasture

(where animals get to roam free); מִשְׁלֹחַ (mishloah), outstretching, sending; מִשְׁלַחַת (mishlahat), discharge, deputation.

- (b) For a meaning of the name Methuselah, Jones' *Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names* reads "When he is dead it shall be sent." NOBS Study Bible Name List reads "man of a javelin"; perhaps less dramatic is "man with a mission."
- (c) Gen. 5:27; 969 years old).
- (9) Lamech: "despair, a wild man"; Gen. 5:31; 777 years old.
- (10) Noah: "relief, rest"; Gen. 5:28-32; 950 years old.
- (11) Shem: "renown"; Ham, "hot"; and Japheth, "may God make wide"; Gen. 5:32.

2. **6** Lessons:

A. Let's look at some lessons we can learn from the generations of Adam:

(1) Evidence that bolsters our faith:

- (a) Although these people lived long, long ago; they really did live!
- (b) Why did they live so long?
 - ☛ Less time for genetic mutations?
 - ☛ Shielded by water canopy from harmful solar/cosmic radiation?
 - ☛ Higher levels of free oxygen in pre-flood atmosphere? 35% vs. 21%? (e.g., hyperbaric chambers)
 - ☛ Higher atmospheric pressure? (Increases CO₂ uptake of plants; cherry tomato plant grew to 14 feet tall in two years yielding baseball-sized tomatoes; eventually reached 45 feet tall yielding 15,000 tomatoes.)
- (c) Bottomline: We don't know!
- (d) What we do know: **Rom. 15:4**: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
- (e) So why did God include the generations of Adam in Genesis 5?
 - (i) There must be a reason.
 - (ii) God is not the "author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33; 2:9).
 - (iii) There must be some lessons to learn! Rom. 15:4
 - (iv) **1 Pet. 3:15**: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;"

(2) **7** God patiently waits for sinners to repent:

- (a) God patiently waits for sinners to repent; but His patience is always limited: **1 Pet. 3:20**: "...who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared..."; **Gen. 6:3**: "And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'"

- (b) God's patience ran out! He decided He had enough of man's sinfulness and decided to destroy the world: **Gen. 6:5-7**: "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'"
- (c) Was God fair? Did God give man adequate warning? YES! **Gen. 6:3**: "And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'"
- 2 Pet. 2:4-5**: "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;"
- (d) God was longsuffering: **1 Pet. 3:19-20**: "by whom (by Holy Spirit, v. 18) also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water."
- (e) **8 Methusaleh**:
- (i) Methusaleh was the son of Enoch.
 - (ii) Jude tells us Enoch was a prophet: **Jude 14-15**: "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'"
 - (iii) Enoch was a very righteous man, because "he walked with God" and as a result "he was not, for God took him." (Gen. 5:24)
 - (iv) But, as a prophet, Enoch gave his son Methusaleh a very interesting name.
 - (v) ****** The name Methusaleh means, "When he is dead it shall be sent." (Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names).
 - (vi) **9** When Methusaleh is dead, what will be sent? The Flood! (chart)
 - (vii) ****** Please note the following chart. (BTW: Note how the long lives of these patriarchs allowed their lives to greatly overlap one another. Imagine the stories and knowledge that was shared!)

Name											Total
Adam	0	130	235	325	395	460	622	687	874	56	930
Seth		0	105	195	265	330	492	557	744	168	912
Enosh			0	90	160	225	387	452	639	821	905
Cainan				0	70	135	297	362	549	731	910
Mahalaheel					0	65	889	227	479	661	895
Jared						0	162	227	414	596	962
Enoch							0	65	252	113	365
Methuselah								0	187	369	969
Lamech									0	182	777
Noah										0	950
Shem											600

(viii) Explain pattern:

- ☛ ****Adam (130)→Seth**
- ☛ ****Seth (105)→Enosh**
- ☛ ****Enosh (90)→Cainan**
- ☛ ****Cainan (70)→Mahalaleel**
- ☛ ****Mahalaleel (65)→Jared**
- ☛ ****Jared (162)→Enoch**
- ☛ ****Enoch (65)→Methusaleh**
- ☛ ****Methusaleh (187)→Lamech**
- ☛ ****Lamech (182)→Noah.**

(ix) So then, Noah, Lamech's son, was born when Lamech was 182 years old and ****Methusaleh (Noah's grandfather) was $187 + 182 = 369$ years old.**

(x) The Bible then says, "*Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.*" (Gen. 7:6)

(xi) **** When the flood came, Methuselah was in his 969th year; the year he died!**

(xii) Hence, his name, "*When he is dead it shall be sent.*" was a reference to God's sending of the Great Flood. The flood came when Methuselah died!

(xiii) Methuselah was a living, walking, talking warning from God by his very name!

(xiv) Noah preached the warning of the Great Flood and Methuselah's name confirmed that divine message and warning!

(3) **10** God patiently waits for sinners to repent today:

- (a) God was longsuffering in the days of Methuselah and Noah as he warned mankind of the impending judgment of the Great Flood.
- (b) God is just as longsuffering today as he warns us about the final judgment and dissolution of the Universe:
- (c) **Read 2 Peter 3 (**v. 11)**

(3) **11** There is an end to God's patience:

- (a) The flood came in the 600th year of Noah, just as God had promised when Enoch prophetically named Methuselah ("*When he is dead it shall be sent.*").
- (b) The Bible says, **Gen 7:21-23:** "*And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. 23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.*"
- (c) God is patiently waiting today for all men everywhere to repent; because He "*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (1 Tim. 2:4)
- (d) But, just as God's patience and longsuffering came to an end in the days of Noah, so too will His patience and longsuffering come to an end at some point in the future.

2 Pet. 3:8-9: *“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

- (e) We don’t know when that day will come; we only know it will come as a great surprise to the vast majority of folks.

Matt. 24:37-40: *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

- (f) Very simply, but profoundly, we need to be ready!

Matt. 24:42-44: *“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

II. CONCLUSION: 12

- I. Nothing in a name?
 - A. Methuselah’s name meant everything to the pre-flood world!
 - B. They foolishly ignored the preaching of Noah and the meaning of Methuselah’s name.
 - C. ** Do you think the doomed men pictured here remembered the meaning of Methusaleh’s name?
2. When the fountains of the deep broke up and the rain began to fall it was too late.
 - A. ** God’s longsuffering had ended; the time for repentance and salvation was gone.
 - B. Only the “*fearful expectation of judgment*” (Heb. 10:27) remained.
 - C. The only thing left to do was to vainly climb and crawl, vainly trying to reach a safety place that did not exist.
3. Judgment is coming! Don’t be caught unprepared like those in the days of Noah! 2 Cor. 5:10-11a
4. ** Don’t let this happen to you!

Adapted from various sources; including a sermon
(*The Bible Under the Microscope*) by Greg Gwin.