

Source:
 Waltke, Bruce K. *Genesis* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI: 2001), 114-119.

Genealogy (5:3-32)

3. had a son . . . named. The pattern of "birth" and "naming" furthers humanity's connection to divine activity. The connection between God and the first parents and the first parents and their children is established by the similarity between 5:1-2 and 1:26-28, the naming of the "offsprings" (5:2), and the repetition of "likeness . . . image" (5:3).

Seth. This also links the passage with the previous account (4:25-26).

4. 800 years. The nondiminishing longevity in the line of the antediluvians contrasts sharply with the essentially logarithmic decline in the post-

antediluvians.¹² Presumably, the postdiluvian world is more hostile to life than

the antediluvian (see also above "Literary Analysis: The Use of Numbers").

5. 930 years. The numbers are radically different in the different recen-

sions of the text. The three principal texts of the Pentateuch—the traditional

Masoretic (MT), the Greek (LXX), and the Samaritan (sp)—differ on the ages of

the antediluvians: in MT the Flood comes in the year 1656 B.C. after the cre-

ation of Adam, in sp in 1307 B.C., and in LXX in 2242 B.C. In MT, Methuselah

dies in the year of the Flood, in sp, Yared, Methuselah, and Lamech died in

that year; and in LXX, Methuselah lives fourteen years beyond it! The MT is

given credibility by its overall textual superiority to the other two text

types¹³ and by its symbolic use of numbers, which can hardly have been a

coincidence¹⁴ (see also above "Literary Analysis: The Use of Numbers").

he died. Through Adam's transgression death has come upon all (see also

Rom. 5:12-14). On the other hand, God's blessing assures the stability of the

created order. In spite of judgment and death, God's grace preserves the mes-

stianic line (Gen. 3:15) even while sin abounds in the earth (4:17-24).

18. Enoch. The description of Enoch deviates from the genealogy pat-

tern, highlighting his righteousness. In this line, he is listed seventh, a posi-

tion often favored in biblical genealogies (see note on 5:1-32; Heb 11:5; Jude

14). Enoch is a symbol of the covenant strength within this line.

22. walked with God. This rare expression (only 5:22, 24; 6:9; Mal. 2:6),

denotes to enjoy supernatural, intimate fellowship with God, not merely to

¹²See D. Patten, *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch* (Seattle, Wash.: Pacific Meridian, 1996), 215.

¹³See B. K. Waltke, "The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Text of the Old Testament," in *New Per-*

spectives on the Old Testament, ed. J. B. Payne (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1970), 212-39.

¹⁴Barnouin, "Recherches," Regrettably, this work is overlooked in R. W. Klein, "Archaic Chronolo-

gies and the Textual History of the Old Testament," *HTR* 67 (1974): 255-63.

I give a pious life.¹⁵ Enoch's life affirms that those who "walk with God" (5:22,

24) in this fallen world will experience life, not death, as the last word (see

Deut. 30:15-16; 2 Kings 2:1, 5, 9-10; Ps. 49:15; 73:24; Heb. 11:5).

23. 365 years. Perhaps a symbolic number corresponding to the days of

Analysis: The Use of Numbers"). Although longevity is often a sign of divine

favor (Ps. 91:16), the blessed Enoch's relatively short life span, especially

even greater privilege.¹⁶

24. was no more, because God took him away. This describes a sudden

and mysterious disappearance. Of all recorded Old Testament saints, only

Enoch and Elijah are represented as not experiencing physical death (2 Kings

2:1-12; Heb. 11:5). The expression "took him" (*laqah*) differs radically from

"to take the life of someone," referring to an untimely death (cf. Jonah 4:3)

or "to take from" (*lqh min*), referring to depriving someone of life (cf. Ezek.

24:16). Schmidt rightly renders "took him" in Gen. 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:3, 5

as "to rapture."¹⁷

29. He will comfort us. Whereas the Cainite Lamech sought to redress

wrong through revenge (see 4:24), the Sethite Lamech looks for deliverance

from the curse. Noah fulfills the prophecy by beginning viticulture and vini-

culture (see 9:20).

32. After Noah was 500 years old. The precise age of Noah at the birth

of these sons is uncertain. Later time-frame data suggests the order of sons

listed does not represent the birth order (see 10:21 and 11:10).

Shem, Ham, and Japheth. See 9:18 where their story is resumed.

Act 2: Transition: Escalation of Sin before the Flood (6:1-8)

Scene 1: Tyranny by the Sons of God and God's Resolve (6:1-4)

1. When men . . . This section forms a connection between Books 1, 2,

and 3, recalling the ominous situation at the end of the Cainite lineage (see

4:17-24) and forming a transition from the godly line of Seth to the Flood

story (6:9-9:17).

2. sons of God. This problematic expression has been defined as Sethites,

angels, or a dynasty of tyrants who succeed Lamech.¹⁸ All three interpretations

¹⁵Pity is commonly expressed by "to walk in connection with the LORD" (see 17:1, 24:20). So BDB,

236b,2 and *IBHS* §26.1.2b. The Hithepaal stem of the verb here signifies a durative-iterative notion. D.

J. Wiseman thinks it denotes here God's active presence among his people, but he does not carefully

differentiate the uses of the Hithepaal *hik* with different prepositions ("Abraham Reassessed," in *Essays*

on the Patriarchal Narratives, ed. A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity,

1980] 155 n. 31).

¹⁶See also John 17:24. The same language is used of resurrection (Ps. 49:15; Ps-73:24).

¹⁷Schmidt, "lqh," *TLOT*, 2:651. He also notes that the rapture of Umapishtim in the Gilgamesh Epic

is reported with the analogous Akkadian verb *legu*.

¹⁸Although many academics regard this story as myth or "demythologized" myth, I discount that

view because the inspired narrator regarded it as history.

can be defended from the Hebrew grammar.¹⁹ The traditional Christian

interpretation since the third century, supported by Luther and Calvin, understood the sons of God and the daughters of men to be the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain, and the sin the mingling of the two seeds, defining the lineage. ²⁰ Superficially this best fits the immediate context contrasting the cursed-laden line of Cain with the godly line of Seth, but it must be rejected for philological reasons. Genesis 6:1 reads "when men [*hā'ādām*] began to increase . . . and daughters [*bānōt*] were born to them," *hā'ādām* is generic for humanity and *bānōt* refers to all their female offspring. It is arbitrary (i.e., the burden of proof rests upon the exegete to prove a change of meaning) in the next verse to limit *'ādām* to the Sethites and *bānōt* to the Cainites. If anything, "daughters" in this context refers to Seth's, for in his lineage the begetting of daughters is repeated nine times (5:4, 7, passim), and the narrator never mentions daughters in Cain's lineage. The view that angels had sexual relations with mortals is extremely ancient. This interpretation was held in the early apocalyptic literature, in rabbinic Judaism, and by the early church fathers.²¹ This interpretation probably informs 1 Peter 3:19-20 and Jude 6-7.²² This interpretation, however, does not fit the context of the Flood, since the Flood judgment is against humanity (Gen. 6:3-5) and not the heavenly realm. God specifically labels the offenders in 6:3 as "flesh" (*bāsar* "mortal" in NIV). This interpretation also contradicts Jesus' statement that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25). It is one thing for angels to eat and drink (see Gen. 19:1-3), but quite another to marry and reproduce.

The interpretation that sees this designation as referring to royal dynastical successors of Lamech finds historical support in an ancient Jewish interpretation that the "sons of God" were nobles, aristocrats, and princes who married girls outside their social status and took great numbers of them into their harems.²³ M. Kline broke fresh ground when he modified "sons of God" to mean "divine" kings.²⁴ In his view, these tyrants, a continuation of the cursed line of Cain, were supposed to administer justice, but instead they claimed for themselves deity, violated the divine order by forming royal harems, and perverted their mandate to rule the earth under God. Their off-

¹⁹ Human beings are called "sons of God" in Hos. 1:10, angels/heavenly beings in Job 1:6, and divine kings in 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7; 82:6. Angels are called "sons of God" because they belong to the world of *elohim*, although not in a mythological, physical, or genealogical sense.

²⁰ Calvin, *Genesis*, 10.

²¹ Cf. 1 Enoch 6:1-7; *Testament of Ruben* 5:6; *Jubilees*; Zadokite Fragment; probably 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6-7 ("the angels who did not keep their positions of authority" shows strong influence by the apocryphal literature).

²² W. A. VanGemeren, "The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4," *WTJ* 43 (1981): 345-46. Jude compares the fallen angels characterized by hubris to the sexual immorality and perversions of Sodom and Gomorrah.

²³ U. Cassuto, "The Episode of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Man," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), 18.

²⁴ M. G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4," *WTJ* 24 (1962): 187-204.

spring, he further notes, were the Nephilim-heroes (*nephilim, gibborim*, 6:4), "evidently characterized by physical might and military-political dominance" (see Gen. 10:8-10).²⁵ This interpretation best explains "any of them they chose" (6:2). For example, Pharaoh took to bed whom he would (12:10-20), and so did David (1 Sam. 11). It also fits the immediate context of the Flood, the theme of Genesis, and connects the reference to the Nephilim and heroes in 6:4 to 6:1-3. However, the meaning "divine rulers" is somewhat questionable, whereas "angels" is well established. In addition, Kline's interpretation is recent and seems to undercut the interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19 and Jude 6-7. The best solution is to combine the "angelic" interpretation with the "divine king" view. The tyrants were demon possessed. Gispén asserts, "The text presents us with men who are controlled by fallen angels."²⁶ Their perverted psyches allowed this entrance of the demonic. Eichrodt asserts, "God's power operates . . . within the evil which has been begun by the perversion of the creature's will."²⁷

saw . . . beautiful . . . any of them they chose. The Hebrew reads literally: "saw . . . good . . . took." Their sin repeats the pattern ("saw . . . good . . . took") of the original sin in 3:6. They are driven by lust, not spiritual discernment.

married. Literally, "they took wives to themselves," which refers to permanent intermarriage, not fornication.

3. My Spirit. The Spirit of God is the source of natural life (Ps. 104:29-30). contend [*yāḏōn*]. The meaning of the unique Hebrew word is uncertain. Although the Greek translator only guessed at the meaning "contend," the most recent authoritative lexicon prefers this meaning.²⁸ Speiser argues for the meaning "to shield/protect" on the basis of an Akkadian cognate.²⁹ Brueggemann explains the sense, "The judgment is that God will not end-lessly and forever permit his life-giving spirit to enliven those who disorder his world. The breath of life (Gen. 2:7; Ps. 104:29-30) remains his to give and to recall."³⁰

a hundred and twenty years. This is probably the span of time between this proclamation and the Flood (see 5:32; 7:6), rather than the years of an individual's life span.³¹ God's judgment is seasoned by grace (cf. 1 Peter 3:20). The 120-year delay allows time for people to repent and provides testimony of the coming judgment through Noah and his huge ark.

²⁵ Kline, *Kingdom*, 115.

²⁶ W. H. Gispén, *Genesis I: Kommentar op het Oude Testament* (Kampen: J. H. Kok), 221, cited favorably by VanGemeren, "The Sons," 348. My independent investigations lead me to the same conclusion.

²⁷ Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:179.

²⁸ HALOT, 217.

²⁹ F. A. Speiser, "YDWN, Gen 6:3," *JBL* 75 (1956): 128.

³⁰ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 72.

³¹ It may refer to an individual's life span, but that seems contradicted by the age of the postlulvians who at first lived much longer (see Gen. 11) and then much less (see Ps. 90:10).

4. Nephilim: Also called "heroes," these are the offspring of the demonic tyrants filling the earth with violence (see 6:11; Num. 13:33). The Hebrew root (*nafal*) means "to fall" and may suggest their fate (see Ezek. 32:20-28). God will not allow any tyrant to oppress and terrorize the land forever.

and also afterward. This parenthetical remark reminds the book's audience that the same kind of horrible people exist after the Flood (see Num. 13:32-33).

heroes [gibborim]. The Hebrew here is also used for Nimrod and his biblical kingdom (10:8-11).

men of renown. These heroes may provide the historical base behind the accounts of semidivine heroes, such as Gilgamesh, of mythology. Instead of the Bible representing myth as history, as is commonly alleged, perhaps the ancients transformed history into myth.

Scene 2: Universality of Sin and God's Resolve (6:5-8)

5. The Lord saw . . . wickedness. Contrast this statement with Genesis 1 (passim). Before, what the Lord saw was good. Now humanity's "creation" has corrupted the earth. This act of looking upon the earth also signifies that God does not bring judgment without full awareness of the situation (cf. 3:8-14; 19:21).

every inclination. This is a vivid portrayal of the depth and comprehensiveness of human depravity (see 8:21). The situation portends the end of history at the second coming of Christ (Luke 17:26-27; 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 20:7-10, and Jewish apocalyptic literature).

heart. Moderns have no equivalent term for the Hebrew, which refers to the locus of thought, feeling, volition, and morality.³²

6. grieved . . . pain. Note the word play with "comfort" and "painful toil" in 5:29. God and humans are pained by sin.³³ Noah brings comfort to both. **was grieved.** The Hebrew here is also translated "changed his mind," a reference to a change of attitudes and actions. The unchanging God is always pained by sin. Moreover, because he is immutable, he will *always* change his plans to do good if people persist in their sin: "If it [a nation] does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it" (Jer. 18:10; see also Ex. 32:12, 14; 1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Jer. 18:11; Amos 7:3, 6).³⁴ God's change of mind about the human race at the

³²O. R. Brandon, "Heart," in *Evangelical Dictionary*, ed. W. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 498-99.

³³God allows himself to be pained. To say God is impassable is not to suggest that God does not have emotions but that emotions do not rule Him. See J. I. Packer, "Theism for Our Time," in *God Who Is Rich in Mercy: Essays Presented to Dr. D. B. Knos*, ed. P. T. O'Brien and D. G. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 7-8; and D. A. Carson, *The Gaggling of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 236-37.

³⁴R. Pratt ("Historical Contingencies and Biblical Predictions," in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. By J. I. Packer and S. K. Soderlund [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 180-203) convincingly analyzes prophetic prediction into three categories: (1) predictions qualified by conditions; (2) predictions qualified by assurances; and (3) predictions without qualification.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON BOOK 2

God's Mercy, Justice, and Sovereignty

Saints and sinners were found among all of Adam's children, as well as in the messianic lineage. God raised up prophets, such as Enoch (see Jude 14-15) and Noah (see 2 Peter 2:5), who communed with God and preached to their generations. The world may understand God's forbearance as a lack of will, but in truth it is God's long-suffering grace. God's judgment and delay of 120 years (Gen. 6:3) demonstrates that while God gives people time to repent, still he will not clear the guilty (2 Peter 3:9). Ultimately, judgment will come. Yet the ten generations from Seth to the climactic figure Noah, matching the ten generations from Shem to Abraham (11:10-26), represent history not as a succession of meaningless generations but as human activity under the hand of God leading to climactic salvation in the fullness of time.

Image of God

The image of God subsists, independent of the Fall and the Flood (Gen. 5:2-4). Although sin will be ever present, each life is still valuable, made in the image of God. Saints and sinners, however, will express that image differently. The Cainites, ruling the earth in self-love, corrupted it. The Sethites, walking in love for God, preserved it. Nevertheless, both have value in God's