



Genesis 5:1-6:8

PRAY

'Who do you think you are' was the title of a song by the Spice Girls but more recently is the name of a TV show on BBC One. In each episode, a celebrity goes on a journey, in order to try and trace their family tree. This TV show came out of the popularity in recent years of researching into your family history, finding out where you came from. It's something my dad has done and so far he's managed to trace our family tree back to 1752.

Family trees are important in the book of Genesis. In Genesis 4 there is a family line from Adam via his first son Cain to the three children of Lamech. In Genesis 5 there is a bigger family line or genealogy that goes from Adam via his son Seth to the three sons of Noah.

But why are family trees important. Why is it important to know who you are and where you've come from? The reason is to do with the promise God made back in Genesis 3:15. God said to the serpent "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel*".

In that promise God makes two important points. Firstly that there will be two groups: the serpent's offspring known as Satan and his followers; and the woman's offspring. Secondly, one of the woman's offspring is going to be a serpent crusher, one who will represent the woman's offspring and destroy Satan and his followers for good. It is important to know who you are because that will tell you whether or not you are on the side that wins.

In Genesis 4 we learn from life of Cain and from his family line that he was one of the serpent's offspring. Cain rejects God and murders his brother, and like the serpent is cursed by God. Cain's family line goes from bad to worse with Lamech surpassing Cain in wickedness. At the end of Genesis 4, the woman, Eve had another son Seth. Around that time men began to call on the name of the Lord, a hint Seth and his family were going to show themselves to be the offspring of the woman.

Quite often TV shows will have trailers advertising them, and giving the viewer a sneak peak at what is going to happen on it. Genesis 4:25-26 is like a trailer with Genesis 5 being the actual programme. In Genesis 5 we (along with the original readers, the Israelites) are going to learn a bit about where we have come from but also how we can make sure that we are the offspring of the woman and not like Cain the offspring of the serpent. So let's sit back and watch what happens...

Scene #1: 'Who do you think you are?' (5:1-32)

As we think about Genesis 5:1-32 I want us to note three things which teach us about what we are like and how God responds to this. These things will then become clearer when we look at the opening verses of Genesis 6.

The first thing we learn from Genesis 5 is what we are like. We are like God and Adam.

1. We are like God and Adam (v1-3)

At the start of 'Neighbours' before the new episode you get a short recap of what has happened¹. That's what we get in verses 1 and 2. We're taken back to Genesis 1 and reminded that people were created in the image and likeness of God. But it is important to note that we are not made in the image and likeness of God, like Adam was in Genesis 1.

Look at verse 3: "*When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image*". Adam's son was made in the image and likeness of Adam. This means he was made in the image and likeness of God because Adam was. But it also means he is sinful and under the sentence given by God like Adam was.

Adam's son Seth had inherited the image of God from his father; he had also inherited sin from his father too. People born are now a blend of God and Adam. They have God's image, but they have Adam's sin, that's why a newborn baby will sin even if they were put in a perfect environment.

¹ 'Neighbours' is an Australian soap. Another example of this is the 'Previously on 24' segment.

Everyone born is a sinner like Adam. Romans 6:23 tells us that "*the wages of sin is death*" and we see this in Genesis 5 as secondly we see that God punishes sin with death.

2. God punishes sin with death (v5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31)

Because we are sinners we are like Adam under curse of death. Remember what God said was the punishment for sin in the Garden of Eden – you will die. This happened immediately in a spiritual sense as Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden and life-giving presence of God, and later physically as Adam died aged 930 years.

Like Adam everyone who came after him dies too. Eight times in Genesis 5 we read the phrase '*and then he died*'. Moses leaves us in no doubt that being in the likeness of Adam means that like Adam we experience death.

Last Sunday was remembrance Sunday, a time when we remember those who have died fighting for this country in the World Wars. You may have bought a poppy to wear. The poppy is reminder of death.

It's all pretty depressing isn't it? So far we've seen that we are sinners because we are made in the likeness of Adam, and like Adam we face death both physically and spiritually as we are born outside the Garden of Eden and the life-giving presence of God. Imagine you've just watch a TV show about where you've come from, and all it tells you that you are a sinner and that you are going to die. What you need to know is how to break this cycle of sin and death, sin and death. That's the third thing we learn from Genesis 5. God give life to people.

3. God give life to people (v24)

I think we see this in three ways. Firstly, did you notice how long people lived for? Adam 930 years. Seth 912 years. Methuselah 969 years. Imagine for instance that you were 950 years old that would mean you were born in 1057. That's before the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Some of these people in Genesis 5 lived a very long time. I don't think it means that everyone around this time lived for a long time. But it shouldn't be surprising that Seth's line, the line that calls of the name of the Lord who is the God who gives life, had long lives.

Secondly, there's Enoch. When you are writing on the computer in Microsoft Word, one of the ways in which you can make certain words stand out is by highlighting them in bold, italic or underline. The way this genealogy is written follows a certain pattern so that something stands out when the pattern is broken. The phrase '*and then he died*' is repeated over and over again until we get to Enoch. Look at verse 24: "*Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away*".

In Genesis 3 God came walking in the Garden of Eden, but his walking partner was nowhere to be found. Here in Genesis 5 we see that God hasn't given up on people yet, and comes walking again and this time Enoch walks with Him. Walking with God is picture of a right relationship with God. In Hebrews 11 we learn that Enoch by faith, walked with God and as a result God took him away. Enoch found life in the midst of death.

God does give life to people. Not to everyone. Not because they deserve it, they are all like Adam and all deserve to die. That was true of Enoch. But to those who call on the name of the Lord and to those who by faith walk with God, God is gracious and gives life. In Romans 10:13 we read that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read that by grace we are saved through faith. That's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection alone; believing and trusting that Jesus alone has taken the punishment of death away that you deserve because of your sin; that Jesus has broken the cycle of sin and death, which is why for Christians the Bible describes physical death as going to sleep, because they will wake up to eternal life.

Then thirdly, look at what is said by Lamech of Noah in verse 29: "*He will comfort us in the labour and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed*". In this verse we are given more details about the serpent-crusher of Genesis 3:15. He is also going to be one who will undo the curse given by God. Noah did provide comfort but only for 8 people who survived the flood. Ultimately this is fulfilled in Jesus who will provide comfort for all his followers, all the offspring of the woman who are those who call on the name of the Lord and who walk with God.

In Genesis 6 'Who do you think you are' has finished and next up is a Sci-Fi movie. I don't like Sci-Fi films or TV shows. In fact if a show or film begins with 'Star', I probably won't like it unless the title finishes with 'Wars'.

The last Sci-Fi film I watch was 'War of the Worlds' where the earth gets invaded by aliens called 'Tripods'. I thought it was rubbish. But at the beginning of Genesis 6 we have a 'War of the Worlds' type thing going on.

Scene #2: 'War of the Worlds' (6:1-8)

Already in Genesis 5 we've seen that humans are like Adam. We see our Adamness clearly at the start of Genesis 6. Being like God and Adam ultimately means that we reject God. That's the next point on your handout.

1. We reject God (v1-5)

In verses 1-4 we read this bizarre story about the marriage between sons of God and daughters of men and the presence of the Nephilim who were giant warriors. Some thing strange and abnormal is happening, and we can't be 100% sure what it is. But whatever it is, one thing for sure the actions are wrong and sinful.

Most likely, the sons of God are fallen angelic beings of some sort and they marry women. In New Testament there are references to angels doing wrong stuff around the time of Noah. This act is a rejection of the boundaries that God has placed on the world, and the language Moses uses to describe the marriage 'saw, beautiful, married' is similar to the sin of Eve where she 'saw, good, took'. It is the same rejection of God here that was there in the Garden of Eden.

And God sees all this going on. Back in Genesis 1:31 after creating man 'God saw...and it was very good'. Now look at what God sees in Genesis 6:5: "*The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*".

God saw good, now He sees wickedness. Look at how serious it is. Every inclination of the heart, only evil, all the time. This what I am like. This is what you are like. We reject God and as a result we are only evil all the time.

2. God punishes sin with destruction (v6-7)

Then look at how our sin and rejection affects God in verse 6: "*The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain*". This same word grieved is used in the Bible to describe how father feels at death of his son, or brother's reaction to news that their sister has been raped, or a wife when her husband deserts her. That's how serious sin is, that's how God feels because we reject Him. It's heart-breaking.

So in verse 7 God says enough is enough. And like a child with Etch-a-sketch when he's had enough of his picture wipes it clean and gets rid of it, so God announces that he is going to destroy the world he has made. That's the next point, God punishes sin with destruction. That's what happens in rest of Genesis 6 and 7.

But there is hope. We've already seen that God gives life to those who call on the name of the Lord, who by faith walk with God. In verse 8 we see finally that God gives grace to people. With this final point we see that once again the pattern of sin – judgment – grace we saw in Genesis 3 and then again in Genesis 4 is repeated.

3. God gives grace to people (v8)

Genesis 6:8: "*But Noah found favour [or grace] in the eyes of the Lord*". God shows undeserved kindness to a man like Adam, who rejects God, who is only evil all the time, and who deserves to be destroyed. Noah like those who came before him like Enoch is given grace and finds life. The line of Seth when God destroys creation will be saved. The offspring of the woman by God's grace will be kept safe and continue after God's judgment.

God offers us this grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who will undo the curse of death. By trusting him we can become on of the woman's offspring and be given life for eternity.

Who do you think you are? The offspring of the woman or the offspring of the serpent.