

January 5-Genesis 5

Genesis 5 is labeled by many as one of “those” chapters. It is a chapter that is often skipped over by Bible readers because it is full of names we can’t pronounce and people the Scripture neglects to speak about except as a representative of their generation in a family tree. Admittedly, we must do some digging in chapters such as Genesis 5, but it is important to remember that 2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” Understanding then that Scripture is divinely inspired and useful, we must do the hard work of asking how this text is profitable for us as modern day Christians.

While there are undoubtedly many truths we could pull out of Genesis 5, one passage is of particular interest as it sets itself apart from the normal flow of the chapter. As you read through Genesis 5, you become used to a specific pattern. In each paragraph you read something to this effect “When _____ had lived ___ years he fathered _____” and then a little later in the text you read “Thus all the days of _____ were ___ years, and he died.” This is the pattern that Moses follows in writing Genesis 5 but in verses 28-31 we read a section that is just a bit different.

Verse 28 begins a section on Lamech and Noah that starts as all the other texts in Genesis 5. Also, verse 31 ends in a normal fashion as well but sandwiched in between these verses is a quote from Lamech that should give us pause. It is found in verse 29 as Lamech says of Noah “Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” The careful reader must pause for a moment and wonder why this quotation is here. The standard genealogy pattern has been broken, and it was broken on behalf of Noah.

Of course we understand now that Noah was a special man in the narrative of the Bible. He is the man that God would eventually use to preserve humanity. Noah’s name in the Hebrew literally means rest and it is reasonable to believe that Lamech believed that Noah would bring rest. We don’t know how or why Lamech believed this, but ultimately we do believe his statement to be true.

Noah did in fact bring mankind rest but more than likely not in the way Lamech anticipated. While Noah’s life included God preserving him while wiping out the rest of mankind on this planet, his life is also part of the lineage that ultimately led to Jesus. In fact, if we read the genealogy of Jesus found in Luke 3:23-38 we find Noah in verse 36! God did indeed intend to use Noah to bring about His plan of salvation and ultimately that plan culminated in the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ the one who said “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

God’s plan is almost always different than the way we may conceptualize it. As Lamech stood over his son Noah and pronounced that his newborn would bring about rest, it is difficult to imagine that he believed this rest to be fulfilled chiefly in Christ. However, God knew that Noah would be used to preserve a remnant of the human race and in due time that remnant would give rise to a Savior who would overcome the sin that marred and cursed creation and create for Himself a people, a godly remnant, that would enter into God’s rest for eternity with Him. Our God is a marvelous and Sovereign God!