



Lesson 5

The Descendants of Seth

Introduction

In chapter 4 we saw the development of Cain's family. He was a man who went far away from God because of his stubborn pride as did those who descended from him.

Seth's family was different to that of Cain. It is described as *'those who called upon the name of the Lord'* or *'who called themselves by the name of the Lord'* (4:26).

We are given a picture of two distinct families growing and developing at the same time; one was ungodly and went away from God and one sought Godly things. Cain was not interested in worshipping God in the right way. But the name of the Lord and worship of Him was important to Seth and his descendants.

But we are told more than this. Adam lived for another 800 years after Seth was born and had more sons and daughters (5:4). We can see that he would want to tell his descendants about creation and why God had made man and woman. He would tell them about the Garden of Eden, how sin had started and what death meant. So we see why this family consisted of people who *'called themselves by the name of the Lord'* - they were people who had the opportunity to listen to Adam and his teaching and to respond to it. In contrast, Cain had gone away from God and so his family did not have the same opportunities to learn about the Lord God, they became people without God in their lives.

There is a lesson for us in this. Each father has a responsibility in his family. He should teach his wife, children and grandchildren, if he has any, about the Bible and God's message in it so that they all have an opportunity of salvation. This is the most important thing we can do for our families.

The family of Seth

We are given a long list of names of Seth's descendants and see in chapter 5:

- Men lived very long lives before the Flood (but the length of their lives reduced rapidly after it).
- Eight times in chapter 5 it says of these men *'and he died'*. God was reinforcing the message of Genesis 2:17 that the wages of sin is death.

Enoch (5:21-24)

These verses tell us about Enoch.

"When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah.
Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.
Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Genesis 5:21-24

These are difficult words and sometimes they are used to support the view that people go to heaven when they die. From them people believe that, when Enoch died, God took his immortal soul up into heaven.

Whenever we read a difficult verse in the Bible, the first thing to do is to pray to God for help in understanding it. Then use the Bible to see if other passages can help you understand. There are two other passages that mention Enoch, here they are.

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God." Hebrews 11:5
"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." Hebrews 11:13





Hebrews 11 is the great chapter in the Bible about faith. It tells us of the lives of faithful men and women throughout the Old Testament, but it says of them (including Enoch):

“And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”
Hebrews 11:39-40

Enoch was a man who pleased God because of his faith in God and in His promises. He believed that God really did exist and that He would reward him with eternal life at some future time. But we also know from the book of Jude (Jude verses 14-15) that he was one of God’s prophets and he spoke of the day of judgement that would come upon all ungodly and wicked men. He was hated by such people because of his message.

Enoch was hidden from someone who was looking for him and could not find him; he was taken away by God. We cannot be sure what exactly happened to him but eventually he died and has still not received his reward of eternal life. We know this must be true from the lessons we have already looked at. We have seen that death is a punishment for sin and at death all of Adam’s descendants return to the dust as he did.

All the faithful people who have ever lived will receive their reward of immortal life at the same time when Jesus returns to the earth.

Methusaleh (5:25-27)

Enoch had a son whom he called Methusaleh. His name means ‘*when he is dead it shall come*’. It is a strange name to give to a son. God told Enoch that, when his son died, something would happen and we know that just after Methusaleh died, the Flood came in the earth. Enoch is an example of a prophet, a man sent by God with a warning about the future. He told of God’s judgements on a wicked world (read Jude verses 14-16).

But did you notice that Methusaleh lived longer than any other man – he died when he was 969 years old. God waited as long as He could after the preaching of Enoch before He destroyed the world in the Flood for the Bible tells us that ‘*God is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish (die forever), but that all should reach repentance*’.

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned the following key points.

- The separation from God that sin brings is a very serious thing in the sight of God.
- God will only accept worship of Him when it is done according to His ways; this includes an understanding of what is correct Bible teaching.
- Sin can only be forgiven through sacrifice and the shedding of blood.
- Above all, what God wants from us is faith in Him and His promise of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Sin is like a great power that threatens to take over our lives if we do not try to resist it and put God first in our lives.
- It is the responsibility of a father to teach his family about God’s ways and to bring them up so that they become people who call upon the name of the Lord.
- Whatever happens in the life of true believers, even if they die at an early age, we know that God is in control and will reward them with immortality when Jesus returns.
- Although God is patient and does not want anyone to perish, He will judge the world and punish the wicked as He foretold through Enoch and Methusaleh.

