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The Seed of the Woman

Genesis 4:25 – 5:32

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After Adam and Eve had sinned, they went from life to death, but God made a promise that He would get them back to life, and because of that, Adam named his wife Eve, which means the mother of the living. But we understand that the mother of the living would live in the land of the dying.

That isn't hard for us to realize. Last weekend I spent a couple hours by the bedside of Paul Heffelfinger and, very aware that unless God brings a miracle in a couple days, he will be gone from this earth. I walked away from that reminded that we do live in the land of the dying. I went home and made a phone call that same weekend to a hospital in Omaha. I talked to Jim and Darcy, who have just found out their son has very serious diabetes. He's three years old. For the rest of his life they will have to check his blood sugar about 7 or 8 times per day and give him 3 insulin shots per day. I hung up the phone and was reminded we live in the land of the dying.

Probably every person could talk about someone they know who's struggling with those issues related to disease or maybe even just the process of aging that reminds us that we do, indeed, live in the land of the dying. Annie Dillard tells the story of being at the graveside of the funeral of one of her friends when the pastor, in his message, quoted from 1 Cor. 15 when Paul says "O death, where is your sting?" And she says she answered in her head, "Well, just about everywhere that you look, now that you ask." And I understand what she's saying. What God wanted was life and God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the very breath of life. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God and went from life to death. Not just physical death but a spiritual death – a death that can last forever.

God made a promise through the seed of a woman that He would send what was necessary to once again take us from death to life. The difference between eternal life and eternal death centers around one very simple question: Who will be God?

Who will be God? The serpent was in the very presence of God and believed that he could ascend to the place where he could be God himself, and God cast him out of His presence. The next thing you know he shows up in the garden of Eden and uses the same line on Adam and Eve. He said "You can be like God. Decide for yourself what is right and wrong." Adam and Eve believed that lie and plunged themselves and the human race into sin and death. It's the same thing that Cain was struggling with in Genesis 4. Cain was struggling with whether or not he was going to worship God as God, and in New Testament language, understand that he had a need for a Savior: the seed of the woman, the only way to go from death to life through what God would do for us. Or whether Cain was going to try to be God and decide for himself what was right and what was wrong.

It isn't a case of Cain being an atheist. That isn't the problem and is not what we're talking about. The Psalmist in Psalm 14:1 says "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." But literally it reads, "The fool has said in his heart, 'No God.'" That doesn't mean

he was an atheist; it means he was simply unwilling to let God be God. He was unwilling to allow God to run his life. God was a non-factor in how he lived his life. That was the heart of Cain. Cain believed there was a God; Cain brought an offering to God. But what Cain brought was the offering he wanted to give, rather than the offering that God wanted to receive. And those are two very different things. Cain decided, “I will choose what I give.” And God said, “I won’t take that.”

Cain and Frank Sinatra could sing a duet. Together they would sing, “I did it MY WAY.” And Jesus said the majority of people that draw breath on this earth will do it that way. They will believe that they can be God; that they can decide for themselves and do it their way. God says that is the way of eternal death. Genesis 4 traces the line of the seed of the serpent: the ungodly line of Cain – those who determine for themselves that they will be God and will suffer an eternal death.

But there is another choice. There is an alternative and that is the way of life. That is through the seed of the woman – understanding that God made provision for us to go from death to life – to those who call upon the name of the Lord. Genesis 5 tells us all about going from death to life. As a matter of fact, I’m convinced that the Apostle Paul clearly understood the theology of Genesis 5 when he uttered those words in I Corinthians 15, “O, death, where is your sting?”

Technically, I think Genesis 5 really begins in verse 25 of chapter 4. Chapter 4 outlines the seed of the serpent, the ungodly line of Cain, and it concludes with Lamech. From verse 25 we go to Lamech back to the beginning. It’s important to understand we’re not going on from Lamech; we’re going back to the beginning and we’ll study a line that comes up parallel alongside the line of Cain. But these are those of the seed of the woman. In Genesis 3:15 we were told that there would be this battle between the seed of the serpent and his line and the seed of the woman and her line.

We’ve gone through the line of the seed of the serpent, now we’re going back to the beginning and trace through the line of the seed of the woman: those who have decided to worship God as God. That really begins in verse 24 of chapter 4. It says, “And Adam had relations with his wife again and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth. For she said, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him.’” In Chapter 4:1, Eve’s statement: “I have gotten a man child with the help of the Lord” could actually be translated, “I have created a child just like the Lord.” I think that is the correct translation: that Eve is saying she has created life. I believe she is still dealing with the fact that she can be like God: “I’ve created life. This is the seed of the woman. This is the one who will be that promised child.” Eve is still determined to do it her way.

What we see in verse 25 is that Eve makes a very different statement now. Eve basically makes a statement that this is now God’s appointed child. What she’s saying is “I tried it MY WAY, now I’m going to do it GOD’S WAY.” One of the ways you see that is in the fact that she names the second son Abel. The name Abel means vanity – it means breath. It basically means to be of no account. When you read through the book of Ecclesiastes and you see the word vanity (“Vanity of vanities all is vanity.”) – that is the Hebrew word for Abel. It’s the exact same word as the name Abel. Why would you name your child, “You don’t matter”? That’s basically what he was named: “Vanity Breath You don’t matter..... You won’t amount to anything.” I think, in Eve’s mind, Cain was that promised

seed and she was saying, “I have produced life. It’s going to be Cain, therefore Abel doesn’t matter.” And so thus he was named. Now she is saying, “God, I did it my way. I thought the promised seed would be Cain. That was my plan. But Cain was a murderer. So now, God, we’ll do it your way.” The name of this son that replaces the son named “Vanity” is a son whose name means “appointed by God.” Now what’s being said is, “God, this is your plan. This is your appointed one. Now we’re going to do it your way.”

It’s also interesting to notice this is the first place in Genesis 4 where the name God (Elohim God) is reintroduced into the text. All through Chapter 4 we see the use of the word LORD, because He is close and intimate. But we don’t see the word God (Elohim – Creator God) because He isn’t being worshipped as God. It’s not until Eve makes that change that the writer reintroduces the concept of Elohim God as a way of saying she’s learned a lesson and now she’s realized God will be God. It will be His way. It will be His plan. This is His appointed one. (v25)

Verse 26: “And to Seth, to him also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh.” The names get very confusing here. The first son of Cain was Enoch. Now the first son of Seth is Enosh. Soon there will be another Enoch and a second Lamech, and it all gets quite confusing. But I think there’s a reason for that. When it gets confusing, the only way to resolve the confusion is to basically draw out the two different lines and make a comparison. I think that’s exactly what God wants. God wants a comparison between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. A comparison between those who go the way of Cain and those who choose to walk with God. Because there are two paths that we can travel and there’s no middle ground. Either we will go one direction and decide for ourselves that we will be God, like Cain, and run our own lives and make our own rules. Or we will decide to go through the seed of the woman and cry out to God and worship God as God. So even the confusion of the names forces us to compare the two, which is what God wants us to do – to understand our two choices.

The end of the verse is a very significant statement. “Then men (or people) began to call on the name of the Lord.” To call on the name of the Lord means all that He is; all that He represents. In other words, to cry out to God and say, “God, you’re God. I’m not God and, in New Testament language, we would say that we acknowledge our need for a Savior. That only through Jesus can we go from death to life is what the phrase is speaking of.

With all of that in mind, we are introduced to the genealogy, this lineage, in Chapter 5. This is the book of the generations of Adam. Beginning in Gen. 5 it reads:

In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

Again, we’re not going on from Lamech, we’re going all the way back to the beginning and picking up the story with Adam and Eve and tracing a totally different lineage. We’re tracing now the seed of the woman: those who committed to worship God as God. I find it interesting that we’re in the 5th chapter of Genesis, but we go all the way back to Genesis 1.

Here the writer reminds us that we are made in the image of God, because that’s where everything starts to fall apart in the misuse of that image. So we’re going back and understanding that, as people made in God’s image, the greatest expression of that image is to be intimate with God. That is characterized by the male/female reminder in that verse: “He made us in His image male and female.” This is the picture of intimacy, so it’s talking about

being intimate with God. The greatest abuse of the image is to take that image and say “I can be God myself,” which is chapter 4.

So after the failure of chapter 4, we’re going back to the beginning and re-establishing critical theology. We’re re-establishing some of the most important things we can believe about God, and at the foundation (cornerstone) of all that, is an understanding that He’s God; I’m not. He says, “And by the way, I named you man, which means from the dust.” He re-established the fact that “Don’t forget your name. I’m Creator God. You’re from the dust. I’m God. You’re in my image. I’m God. You’re not.” Because that is what was forgotten; that is what was rebelled against in chapter 4. So it’s all the way back to the beginning to re-establish theology. And, by the way, this is the wrestling match from Genesis to Revelation and the wrestling match in any one of our lives all the time. Who’s going to be God? Is it going to be God, or is it going to be us? Is He going to lead, or are we? Is He going to call the shots and we obey, or are we going to run our lives ourselves? We wrestle with that all the time. That is what He is going back and establishing. “I’m God. You’re dust. Let’s not forget that. OK?” (v1-2)

Given that, starting in verse 3 he goes through the lengthy genealogy. You might be interested to know that in Luke 3 this same genealogy is given when Jesus was baptized. Jesus was clearly identified as that seed of the woman that would bring life to death, the promised seed from Genesis 3:15. To do that, the writer Luke records the genealogy that we have here. He starts with Jesus and works his way backward all the way back to Adam, just the same way it is here in Genesis 3.

The genealogy reads:

When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. And Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh. Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. And Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan. Then Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died. And Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalelel. Then Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he became the father of Mahalelel, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died. And Mahalelel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared. Then Mahalelel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Mahalelel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died. And Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch. Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. And Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech. Then Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed.” Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Ten generations from Adam and, at the end of eight of those, were the words: “And he died.” There is a reminder that we live in the land of the dying. Mortality reminds us that we are not God. One thing you find from Genesis to Revelation is that people keep dying. God is eternal. Because He is God and we are not, and mortality reminds us of that. Now if all there is is only **this** life and, if evolution is true and we’re here as products of chance, then let’s eat, drink and be merry. Let’s party. Let’s go for the gusto. Let’s get all that we can out of life because that’s all there is that matters.

But the problem is that still doesn’t bring happiness. That still doesn’t bring joy. It just doesn’t work. In the children’s movie “Toy Story” there is an episode where Buzz Lightyear claims he can fly and Woody challenges that notion. So Buzz decides to show him and bounces around the room and looks like he’s flying. In the end he lands and Woody has to give a response to that. He says, “That isn’t flying, it’s just falling with style.”

That reminds me the way a lot of people are living life. The best they can do is they are dying with style. They try to see how many material things they can collect; how much of a name they can make for themselves; how much pleasure they can enjoy. They’re going after the things of this world but, in the end, we realize they are doing nothing more than dying with style. To which I respond, “Who cares? What’s the point of that?”

Genesis chapter 5 is telling us there is more to life than that. There is a life which is eternal. There is a life that goes on forever and that is what matters. We can do better than just dying with style. As a matter of fact, have you ever thought about the fact that death, in some way, is also a manifestation of God’s goodness? Isn’t it interesting at the end of Genesis 3, when God chases Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden, that His concern is that they would eat from the tree of life and would live forever. What God is saying is, that in a sense, death is a reflection of His goodness. Because what is implied in that is that they will live forever in their sins. They will live forever in this land of the dying. Death is a reminder. It is an imagery. It is a picture of a greater death which is a spiritual death. And because we live in the land of the dying there is a reminder that there is a greater death and that we need God.

Death reminds us that He is God and we’re not. Therefore we cry out; we call upon the name of the Lord. So in some ways, death is an act of God’s goodness to remind us of a greater death – that we not live forever in that state of spiritual death. Many of us would say that it has been in moments of struggle and disease and fear of death that we have cried out. That was the time when we became aware of the fact that we are **not** God, that we need help, and we called upon the name of the Lord. But it’s also true that death is an act of God’s goodness because we don’t want to live on this planet cursed with sin forever. I don’t want to live on this earth the rest of eternity. In a sense, death is the end of our journey on this sin-cursed earth. It is the end of the journey, in the land of the dying, to live forever in the land of the living. I don’t want to live here forever. As a matter of fact, I don’t want to even live to be 700 years on this planet, and don’t ask me why they lived that long, because I don’t know. But death, in a way, is God saying, “This is the closure to your journey in the land of the dying to go on to live forever in the land of the living.” So death is really a closure. It’s an act of God’s goodness that we might get back to Genesis 2 – the paradise, the garden of His grace that He always wanted for us.

This is beautifully illustrated in the very strange record of Enoch. Look at what it says about Enoch in v24. It says “And Enoch walked with God and he was not. For God took him.” Over and over again we read “and he died and he died and he died.” But we don’t read that with Enoch. Enoch simply went on into the presence of God. He didn’t die. He’s one of two people recorded in the Bible who didn’t die. They just simply walked with God right into the very presence of God. The reason for that is a picture for us – that there is life after death, and for those who believe. Those who go down the path of the seed of the woman. Those who call upon the name of the Lord. There is life beyond the grave – a life that lasts forever. Enoch really illustrates the fact that life just goes on and there is victory over death.

The difference between Enoch and us is not all that great. If Enoch would have simply died of a heart attack instantly, he would have gone right into the presence of God just the same. There would have been very little difference in that. If I’m driving home today and I get hit by a car and I’m killed instantly, I will go directly into the presence of God, just as Enoch did. There is very little difference. But God did it differently with Enoch just to make a point. That there is victory over death. That the head of the serpent has been crushed by the seed of the woman. That there is life that lasts forever. It was as if God was saying, “I’m going to show you that. I’m going to take somebody right into my presence who just lives forever with Me.” It’s not saying that everyone in this line died an eternal death; it’s simply saying that they were mortal and they died, but because they believed in the seed of the woman, they went right on to live with God. Life was brought out of death. It’s a beautiful, beautiful picture.

It’s also interesting that Enoch is described as someone who “walked with God.” What do you think of when you think of “walking with God?” What do you suppose Moses, the writer, intended by that phrase? I think he obviously intended the picture he created in Genesis 3:8. It was just a couple chapters previous to this where he talked about God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening. What’s implied is that it was the time of the evening when God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, and it was a time when they just enjoyed each other. It was a time when they fellowshiped together, and it was a time when they took pleasure in one another. It’s a beautiful picture of the intimacy we can have with God. But when Adam and Eve sinned, God came to the garden for their evening walk and Adam wasn’t there and He cried out, “Adam, where are you?” That’s the imagery He has in mind when He says Enoch walked with God. When they were in the garden they were intimate with God. Enoch, also, was intimate with God. Enoch walked with God. Enoch experienced that closeness with God.

There’s a difference between saying that “Enoch walked with God” and “God walked with Enoch.” I think Cain wanted God to walk with Cain. In other words, Cain decides what path they would travel. Cain decides the pace of the walk, Cain decides where they are going, and God can walk with him if He likes. Let’s face it, that’s the way most of us live our lives. We just do our thing and we hope God blesses us along the way. But what’s being described here is that Enoch walked with God. God chooses the path. God chooses the pace. God chooses the direction. I take God by the hand and where He goes I go. God sets the direction and the pace. He’s God. I’m not. And I obey. That’s what it means to walk with God. And that’s what Enoch did. It’s a reference to this beautiful intimacy that God has always wanted.

Do you wonder why God lists all these names in this chapter? Do you wonder why you have to even read through all these? We're reading through our Bible in our quiet time and we get to Genesis 5 and we skim through it and say, "Maybe there'll be something meaningful tomorrow in chapter 6." Why does God list all those names? Just because those people don't matter to us doesn't mean they don't matter to God. It's because God is intimate, and God knows their story, and that's God's way of saying, "I care about these people. They walked with me and I know them and I know their story." This is God's journal.

Suppose you were to go to a school band concert tomorrow night, and you didn't know anyone in the band. You'd get a program that would list all these names, and you'd look at it and probably just glance through the names and close the program. There's a name. Big deal. Now what difference does it make? But if your child is in that band, what do you do? You look for their name. It matters to you! Leave some kid's name out and you'd find that out.

Last summer we were in Washington D.C. and we went to the Vietnam Memorial. It is staggering to see the columns of names that are on that Memorial. But 99% of the people visiting simply look at it and walk on, and we were among those. But it was very interesting. There was a small percentage of people who were not just walking by. They went up to the monument and placed their hand against a name, and most of them were crying. Because for them, that name mattered. It wasn't just a name. There was a story. There was a person. There was some connection between them and that name, and they realized that's what it represents. To them it was a very moving, emotional thing. That's what Genesis 5 is for God. We can slip through those names and just go on. But this is God's way of saying, "These people walked with me and they mattered to me. And I'm recording some of their stories here to tell you that I care, because they were intimate with me." This is God's way of saying that he cared about these people and their walk and their journey.

It's a beautiful description: "Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him." In v22 it's interesting the way the writer indicates that it was when Methusaleh was born that Enoch really became serious about his walk with God. "Then" Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methusaleh. What was it about Methusaleh that caused Enoch to be so deliberate, so intense in his walk with God? Some people think the name Methusaleh actually means "when he dies it will come", referring to judgment. I don't find a lot of evidence to support this, but I do believe that God did communicate that message to Enoch. I don't believe the name necessarily means that, but there was a message that was communicated to Enoch "that when this son dies, I will send judgment." And it's interesting that if you add up the numbers, the very year that Methusaleh died was the very year that the flood came. Enoch understood that. Enoch understood that judgment was coming.

When you read the book of Jude it talks about Enoch and says that he was a preacher of righteousness. Enoch understood what it meant to walk with God and proclaim a message that there is life out of death, for those who will call upon the name of the Lord. He was very motivated because he knew that judgment is coming. In Hebrews 11 it also talks about Enoch and it says "Enoch pleased God because he was a man of faith." Enoch believed God when God said that, through the seed of the woman, He would bring life from death. Enoch believed God when He said there is coming a judgment. And he believed that by faith. If you were to ask me if I could prove to you that there is a judgment coming, I'd have to say, "No I

can't." Can I prove to you that Jesus is the Savior of the world? No, I can't. I take it by faith. I believe that God has given us His Word, and in His Word He has revealed the truth, and I do take that by faith. But there is an alternative. You can choose to be God yourself and you can say, "I'm going to decide what's true; I'm going to decide what I'm going to do. Rather than believing what God said, I'll define it myself." Chapter 4 defined that as the way of Cain and it's the way of eternal death. I think God has warned us. God has made His message very clear. It's up to us to choose to believe it or not. We can go down the path of the seed of the serpent or down the path of the seed of the woman.

Methusaleh lived to be 969 years. I've known that since I was a child. It's a great trivia question. But God didn't give it to us as a trivia question. God gave that to us as a picture of His grace. Because it's interesting that the child who, when he died judgment would come, lived longer than any person recorded in the Bible. And that's God's way of saying, "I stretched this out as long as I could. I waited as long as I could. I drew his life out longer than any life ever recorded in the Bible, as a way of saying: 'That's my grace.'"

Enoch was a preacher of righteousness and Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but they wouldn't listen. And there came a time where God stepped in with judgment. Why didn't Jesus come back yesterday? I wish he would have. I was having a conversation with a family at the end of last week and we all agreed, "Wouldn't it be great if Jesus came back today?" But he didn't. Why didn't Jesus come back yesterday? God didn't come back yesterday because someone isn't yet ready. That's the grace of God. God may or may not come back today. I don't know. I do know that as long as you can choose, this is the time of grace. But that day will end and it will be judgment.

We all make the choice of whether we're going to go the way of Cain or whether we're going to go the way of Enoch. Whether we're going to worship God as God and call out to the Savior who died on the cross in payment for sin, the seed of the woman, to bring us from death to life. That is quality of life now and a life that lasts forever. Or whether we will choose the way of Cain to do it our way and suffer an eternal death. What will that choice be for you?

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