

Gen. 5:1 – 6:8 - Adam's generations, the Nephilim

Genesis 5:5 - And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

Jewish tradition says Adam lived 930 years so it would be just short of 1,000, which is "as one day with the Lord." Thus, when God said "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," it was proved true for Adam. (Genesis 2:17)

Psalm 90:4 - For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by,
Or as a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8 - "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Did people really live that long?

In Genesis 47:9, Jacob, a later patriarch, speaking to Pharaoh, said: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

Luther takes these as literal ages and states that these patriarchs had a better diet, more sound bodies, and experienced a less developed impact of sin on the physical creation. Josephus (although supporting a literal view) comments on the number and longevity issue by stating, "let everyone look upon [these matters] as he thinks fit."

A modern version of this argument is that today there is a genetically programmed "upper limit" on our age, which appears to be 120 years or so. This is displayed in our telomeres—a marker of cellular aging. Shorter telomeres mean a shorter lifespan. Experiments in 2016 show multiple stressful events during childhood may have a greater impact on telomere length in adulthood compared to stressful events faced during adulthood. While the accumulation of stressful events throughout life increases the chance of having shorter telomeres later in life, adversities experienced during childhood appeared to have the greatest effect on these chromosome caps. (See The Scientist, <http://buff.ly/2exwnDu>)

If stress and other factors can shorten life, then God's protection and blessing could certainly extend it.

This would not mean, though, that everyone lived that long.

Not literal, but evidence of respect

There was an ancient Near Eastern tradition whereby eminent individuals were glorified by being accorded larger-than-life existences. This was customary in ancient Egypt,

where the greatest accolade that could be bestowed upon a deceased man was the ascription: "He died aged 110" (cf. Gen 50:26; Josh 24:29; Judg 2:8).

Cultural differences?

An ancient Chinese practice deemed a baby to be one year old on the day it was born. Some months later the baby was accorded its second birthday, and by the time that it was biologically about seven years of age by occidental reckoning it could be regarded locally as being fourteen or fifteen years old. On such a basis of computation it would be comparatively easy for a survivor of seventy biological years in western terms to be deemed by the traditional way of reckoning to be at least twice that age. Some primitive people measure their age not from the time of their birth, but from the time they produce offspring, or are accepted as an adult in the community in which they live.

Comparison with the Sumerian King List

The Sumerian king list composed during the reign of Utu-hegal of Uruk (2119–2112 BC) showed pre-flood kings ruling an average duration of 30,150 years.

One theory: It is suggested that the Sumerian scribe that composed the original antediluvian list had available a document (possibly a clay tablet) containing numerical information on the ages of eight of the patriarchs similar to that of the Genesis record and that he mistakenly interpreted it as being written in the sexagesimal system (rather than the decimal base 10). A Sumerian scribe looking at a document containing the Genesis total would have interpreted the signs as sexagesimal. It is also written in a different style than the rest of the Sumerian epic that it appears in. If you work back from that assumption, the numbers in the king list correlate as a numerically rounded, incomplete version of the patriarch's ages in the Genesis account. (Ancient Ebla and Mari also used cuneiform writing, but not the 60-based number system, which only Sumeria used). Both lists exhibit a shared appreciation of the sexagesimal system, the number seven, and the span of five years (which is to be noted, 60 months).

[See <http://buff.ly/2ePzOc8>

and <https://bible.org/article/ages-antediluvian-patriarchs-genesis-5>]

There is a biblical predilection for number symbolism

Some suggest that, according to the Babylonians, there was a connection between age and astrologic periods. For example, 777 (the years of Lamech) would be related to the cumulative synodic periods of Jupiter and Saturn; 962 (of Jared) would be related in the same way to Venus and Saturn. A synodic period is the number of days it takes for a planet to orbit the sun and return to the same position.

Symbolic or rhetorical significance for the original audience?

The numbers for the Patriarch's ages don't appear to be random. Each number in Gen 5 (except Methuselah's 969 years) ends in either a 0, 5, 2, 7, or 9, which can be thought of as a factor of 5 (0 or 5) and at times adding 7 (e.g. 5 + 7 = 12). You might not think

that is too remarkable until you realize that it eliminates half of the possible numbers. In fact, the odds of getting all thirty numbers to end with just these “approved” digits in a random distribution of ages are about one in a hundred million. The chance of this happening without deliberate alteration is essentially impossible. Something else must be going on here. All of the 30 numbers can be expressed as combinations of the two “sacred” numbers 60 and 7. The truth is that we don’t really know what it meant to the ancients to attribute these numbers to lives of the patriarchs. But that is not necessary to understand the spiritual significance of Genesis 5. Not everyone needs to get a PhD in Ancient Near Eastern studies in order to read Genesis. [<http://buff.ly/2essTUT>]

Enoch

Enoch is much more significant in understanding the New Testament than I ever thought.

Genesis 5:21-24 - “And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

Hebrews 11:5 - “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

Jude 1:14-15 - “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (Jude 1:14-15)

The third-century BC translators who produced the Greek Septuagint rendered the phrase "God took him" with the Greek verb metatithemi (μετατίθημι) meaning moving from one place to another. Sirach 44:16, from about the same period, states that "Enoch pleased God and was translated into paradise that he may give repentance to the nations." The Greek word used here for paradise, 'paradeisos' (παράδεισος), was derived from an ancient Persian word meaning "enclosed garden", and was used in the Septuagint to describe the garden of Eden. Later, however, the term became synonymous for heaven, as is the case here.

In the Sefer Hekalot, Rabbi Ishmael is described as having visited the 7th Heaven, where he met Enoch, who claims that earth had, in his time, been corrupted by the demons Shammazai, and Azazel, and so Enoch was taken to Heaven to prove that God was not cruel.[11] Similar traditions are recorded in Sirach. Later elaborations of this interpretation treated Enoch as having been a pious ascetic, who, called to mix with others, preached repentance, and gathered (despite the small number of people on Earth) a vast collection of disciples, to the extent that he was proclaimed king. Under his

wisdom, peace is said to have reigned on earth, to the extent that he is summoned to Heaven to rule over the sons of God. In a parallel with Elijah, in sight of a vast crowd begging him to stay, he ascends to Heaven on a horse.

Watchers and Fallen Angels

Gen 6:1-4 - There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

In the Book of the Watchers, an Enochic apocalypse from the third century B.C., the "sons of God" of Gen 6:1-4 are accused of corrupting humankind by illicit sexual intercourse with women, and through their teachings of metalworking, cosmetology, magic, and divination. Their liaisons with human women beget Giants — an evil race with physical bodies and immortal souls. God sends a great flood to kill them all, but their souls survive and haunt the earth as evil spirits. The Watchers themselves are imprisoned under the earth to await judgment.

A Satan-like figure named Asael, leader of the Watchers, is blamed for introducing sin into the world.

1 Enoch 9:6 - "You see what Asael has done, who has taught all iniquity on the earth, and has revealed the eternal mysteries that are in heaven..."

However, he is bound up until the Judgment with the other Watchers, according to Enoch, and is no longer free to act as an adversary to humans and therefore cannot be the fallen angel of later Christian tradition.

A rewrite of the Enoch story known as Jubilees (c. 100 B.C.) gave an alternate version of these events, painting the Watchers in a better light but introducing a new devil-like figure: Mastema, the leader of the evil spirits after the Flood. At Noah's request, God cleanses earth of most of the spirits plaguing it after the flood, but Mastema persuades him to leave ten percent under Mastema's authority in order to tempt humankind. At one point, Jubilees appears to equate Mastema with Satan (10:11). But in this version of events, Mastema/Satan is an evil spirit, not a fallen angel.

New Testament References to Enoch

The Epistle of Jude (1:14-15) attributes to "Enoch, the Seventh from Adam" a passage unknown in the Old Testament. The quotation is believed by most modern scholars to be taken from 1 Enoch 1:9, although it seems the verse itself is a midrash of the words of Moses "he came from the ten thousands of holy ones," from Deuteronomy 33:2.

If The Book of Enoch is authenticated in some way by being quoted by the Apostles, then we should look at it more closely. Christian themes and concepts like the Son of Man, Paradise, fallen angels, and the day of Judgment all owe a great deal to the Enochic literature. The references are about matters of doctrine, not simple literary

allusions.

Here is an interesting comparison of references to Enoch with New Testament passages:

<http://buff.ly/2eB3BR0>

Many of these references are in Revelation, for instance:

Enoch 46:1-3 - "There I beheld the Ancient of days, whose head was like white wool, and with him another, whose countenance resembled that of man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels."

Revelation 1:13-14 - "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire,"

The phrase "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" is used three times in the New Testament (Revelation 17:14, Revelation 19:16, 1 Timothy 6:15). The importance of this is that other than in the Book of Enoch this phrase is not found in the Old Testament. (but see Deuteronomy 10:17 - "God of Gods and Lord of Lords")

The Books of Enoch were well known enough apparently to influence the imagery and phrasing of the New Testament writers and the thinking of the populace in general. They understood these references.

Book of Enoch after the first century

The early second century "Epistle of Barnabas" makes much use of the Book of Enoch. Second and Third Century Church Fathers like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origin and Clement of Alexandria all make use of the Book of Enoch. Tertullian (160-230 A.D.) even called the Book of Enoch "Holy Scripture". The Ethiopic Church even added the Book of Enoch to its official canon. It was widely known and read the first three centuries after Christ. This and many other books became discredited after the Council of Laodicea. And being under ban of the authorities, afterwards it gradually passed out of circulation.

The return of the long lost Book of Enoch to the modern western world is credited to the explorer James Bruce, who in 1773 returned from six years in Abyssinia with three Ethiopic copies of the lost book. In 1821 Richard Laurence published the first English translation. Since then, fragments of the work in its original Aramaic have been discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Portions of the text in Greek and Latin have also survived.

For Christians, the most important section is The Book of Parables (Chapters 37-71). It is primarily concerned with a figure called "the messiah"; "the righteous one"; "the chosen one" and "the son of man." Chapter 46:1-2, "There I beheld the Ancient of days

whose head was like white wool, and with him another, whose countenance resembled that of a man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels. Then I inquired of one of the angels, who went with me, and who showed me every secret thing, concerning this Son of man; who he was; whence he was; and why he accompanied the Ancient of days. He answered and said to me, This is the Son of man, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed: for the Lord of spirits has chosen him; and his portion has surpassed all before the Lord of spirits in everlasting uprightness."

So who were the ‘Sons of God’?

Genesis 6:4 - There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

1 Enoch directly links the activities of the fallen angels (Watchers) to the flood of Noah, which was needed in order to eliminate the offspring of the Watchers. 2 Peter includes this association between the imprisoned angels and the Flood

See “The Book of Enoch as the Background to 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude”
<http://buff.ly/2eB8mKd>

Jude 7 - Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as [the angels], indulged in sexual immorality and went after other flesh, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

The Old Testament tends to describe the sin of Sodom in terms of injustice and inhospitality, later apocryphal writings 1 Enoch and the Book of Jubilees emphasize sexual immorality. Jude adopts this latter approach, explicitly associating their wickedness with that of the fallen angels in 1 Enoch.

Jude 8-9 - “Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the Glorious Ones. But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”

Jude lays against the false teachers the curious charge of “slandering the Glorious Ones” — distinctive language copied in 2 Peter 2:10-11, but found nowhere else in the New Testament, although similar phrases appear in 1 Enoch and other apocrypha. (The expression “glorious ones” also appears in 2 Enoch.)

Imprisonment of the Fallen Angels

The imprisonment of the fallen angels in 1 Enoch is quoted by Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4a

“Fetter him hand and foot and cast him into darkness... And on the day of the great judgment he will be led off to the blazing fire.” (1 Enoch 10:4b, 6)

“Bind them for seventy generations in valleys of the earth, until the great day of their judgment...” (1 Enoch 11:12)

“And I asked the angel of peace who went with me, “For whom are these chains being prepared?” And he said to me, “These are being prepared for the host of Azazel, that they might take them and throw them into the abyss of complete judgment, and with jagged rocks they will cover their jaws, as the Lord of Spirits commanded.” (1 Enoch 54:4–5)

“...an everlasting judgment and the time of the great judgment will be exacted from all the Watchers of heaven.” (1 Enoch 91:15)

Tartaros, where the Titans were imprisoned in Greek mythology, is also mentioned in 1 Enoch 20:2.

Apocalyptic Imagery

The idea of a new heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:13), which is probably based on Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22, is a theme present in 1 Enoch as well:

I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light; and I will transform the earth and make it a blessing; and I will cause my elect ones to dwell upon it; but sinners and evildoers shall not set foot thereon. (1 Enoch 45:4b–5)

The first heaven shall pass away, and a new heaven shall appear. (1 Enoch 91:16a)

1 Peter 3:18–20 describes Christ as having “made a proclamation” to the disobedient spirits who were in prison during the days of Noah. Most scholarly commentaries on 1 Peter acknowledge that Christ is being described as a type of Enoch, since Enoch is given the task of delivering God’s proclamation to the imprisoned Watchers during the time of Noah in 1 Enoch 11–13.

1 Enoch 12:4–5, 13:3 - “Enoch, righteous scribe, go and say to the watchers of heaven —who forsook the highest heaven, the sanctuary of their eternal station, and defiled themselves with women. As the sons of earth do, so they did and took wives for themselves. And they worked great desolation on the earth— ‘You will have no peace or forgiveness.’ Then I went and spoke to all of them together. And they were all afraid, and trembling and fear seized them.”

The awkward wording of verse 19, “in which also he went...”, is just one letter away from containing the name “Enoch” in Greek. (Adding a xi to ΕΝΩΚΑΙ, “in which also”, produces ΕΝΩΧΚΑΙ, “and Enoch”.) It has been suggested that the original text had Enoch visiting the spirits in prison, creating a string of segues linking Christ’s spiritual resurrection to Enoch’s spiritual underworld voyage, Noah’s flood, and finally baptism.

Later, either accidentally or on purpose, the reference to Enoch was eliminated by a minor scribal edit.

Methuselah

Genesis 5:27 - And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years

His name means "his death shall bring judgment." Tradition said he died seven days before the beginning of the Great Flood.

Enoch (as the narrator) tells Methuselah his son of the coming worldwide flood and of the future Messianic kingdom. He is known to have a great sword (Sword of Methuselah) that conquers evils and ghosts. The Book of Jubilees names Methuselah's mother and his wife – both are named Edna – and his daughter-in-law, Betenos, Lamech's wife.

The Sumerian king list mentions a character named Ubara-Tutu who seems almost identical to Methuselah. He was the son of En-men-dur-ana the Sumerian Enoch, and king of Sumer until the flood swept over the land. Although their ages are different their father and year of death remain the same. "...a flood [will sweep] over the cult-centers; to destroy the seed of mankind; is the decision, the word of the assembly [of the gods]."

Introducing Noah

Noah = "Nuakh" = to rest, resting place, quiet

Genesis 5:29 - And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.

Rashi interprets his father's statement of the naming of Noah "This one will comfort (in Hebrew— yeNaHamainu יְנַחֲמֵנוּ) from our work and our hands sore from the land that the Lord had cursed", by saying Noah heralded a new era of prosperity, when there was easing (in Hebrew – nahah – נָהַה) from the curse from the time of Adam when the Earth produced thorns and thistles even where men sowed wheat and that Noah then introduced the plow.

Genesis 6:8 - But Noah found grace/favor in the eyes of the LORD.