

# Genesis (4) Toledoth



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## Teledoth

Genesis 5 begins with these words, “this is the written account (heb. *Toledoth*) of Adam’s family line” (5:1).

In the whole book of Genesis, the word toledoth (translated as “generations,” or “account,” or “genealogies”) appears 11 times<sup>i</sup> - indicating that such account of the life of the patriarchs is an important part of the book; or in fact one theme which enjoins the whole Book of Genesis. This was the story of salvation, the story of how the promise of God actually came to the patriarchs, and ultimately, to culminate in the birth of Jesus Christ.

We shall begin our discussion today from **Genesis 4:16-5:32**. This is because, before detailing the lineage of Seth, the Book of Genesis first gives us the lineage of Cain. The Table (below) gives us the summary of the descendants of Seth and Cain from Genesis 4 and 5:



Now, these seem like merely a list of names, with little significance. But in fact, there is a great significance that we shall uncover today. I have counted above the seventh generation from Adam, both on the line of Seth, and on the line of Cain. Why do I do that? Because the Scripture gives a special significance to this seventh descendant; and we see this in **Jude 14**, “*Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness and*

*all of the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’ These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”* The number seven, by the way, is used to signify perfection and completion.

So, the seventh from Adam from the line of Seth was Enoch, about whom we are told that he “*walked faithfully with God 300 years*” (5:21); and who prophesied the coming judgment of God, which we know was fulfilled in the days of Noah. We shall come back to Enoch and see what actually have happened.

### ***Line of Cain; the Seed of the Serpent***

But if we similarly count the seventh from Adam, but this time from the line of Cain, we would get to Lamech. And Lamech was the only descendant of Cain whose life was given in a greater detail to us. The seventh from Cain similarly received special attention, and special significance. However, whereas Enoch’s life was especially positive, Lamech’s was especially negative. In fact, Lamech repeated the sin of Cain, and took it to a new level. If Cain murdered Abel, Lamech not only murdered someone; but he also boasted about it to his two wives. He paraded his sins and felt no shame. And he said that if Cain was avenged seven times, he would be avenged seventy-seven times (4:24), indicating the completion of the depravity of the line of Cain.

The times look bleak, and the situation dire as we are presented with the descendant of Cain who took evil to a whole new level. But chapter 4 did not end with a hopeless tone. Before shifting attention to the line of Seth, Genesis gave a preview. In this preview, we are presented with Seth, and then the son of Seth, Enosh. And at the time of Enosh, we are told, “*at that time people began to call on the name of the Lord*” (4:26). We are thus left expectant about this line of Seth.

The contrast, though, seemed intent to show how the line of Cain was to bring the seed of the serpent as revealed in **Gen 3:15**. The wicked people belonging to the evil one.

### ***Line of Seth; the Seed of the Woman***

Chapter 5 shifts our attention to the chosen descendant of Adam. But note that it is not given as an alternative to Cain’s lineage; but rather as Adam’s family line, as Adam’s toledoth. This was the chosen line; and thus the only lineage that matters, especially when we consider the history of salvation. This lineage of Adam and Seth will ultimately climax in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (see **Luk 3:23-38**). And we will once again hear the names of the line of Adam through Seth; and see the same names that were mentioned in the toledoth of Genesis 5, that Jesus was the son “*so it was thought, of Joseph.... The son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalael, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*” Though it was not yet clear in Genesis 5 why Moses had to list down in such great detail the lineage of Adam through Seth, we the New Testament readers are very clear how this would all climax in the birth of Christ.

So, the line of Seth was indeed the chosen line, the line from whom the Seed of the woman (Jesus Christ) would come. And from this line, God was preserving some righteous people; and the descriptions given are indeed encouraging:

- **Seth.** Was the son given by God “in place of” righteous Abel (**Gen 4:25**).
- **Enosh.** Was somehow connected with the people calling upon the name of the Lord (**4:26**), probably indicating corporate worship.
- **Enoch.** Was someone who walked faithfully with God for 300 years (**5:22**). Now, Enoch is of special interest here because the New Testament further reveal something the Book of Genesis did not. In **Jude 14**, Enoch as the seventh from Adam prophesied about a coming judgment, which most probably referred to the Flood that would destroy the world which would happen at the time of his great grandson, Noah. Enoch gained this knowledge from God, most probably during the time of the birth of his son Methuselah. I say this because of the meaning of the name Methuselah; and the fact that after Methuselah was born, Enoch started walking faithfully with God for the rest of his earthly existence. We will discuss this next.
- **Methuselah.** The name Methuselah was derived from the Hebrew words *muth* and *shalach*. Muth is a root word that means “death,” whilst shalach means “to bring.” So Methuselah means, “his death shall bring.” The fact that Noah named his son Methuselah, then, indicated that Enoch knew something would happen right after the death of his son. Given his prophecy of a coming judgment, then, it is highly probable that Enoch knew the judgment would come at the moment of Methuselah’s death. This knowledge was probably what motivated and encouraged Enoch to walk with God for the rest of his life. And the Bible actually tells us that the very year of Methuselah’s death was also the year in which the Flood happened. I could give a more thorough calculation of this fact; but for this purpose a simpler calculation would suffice. See, we are told that Methuselah lived on for 782 years after he became the father of Lamech. And when Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of Noah. So, the simple calculation of  $782-182=600$  gives the time of Methuselah’s death. Methuselah died when Moses was 600 years old. Now when did the Flood happen? Yes! It happened when Moses was 600 years old (**Gen 7:6**)! In fact, Methuselah outlived Lamech; who died when Noah was 595 years old (**5:30**). Now, this could only mean that Methuselah died in the flood; or that he died in the same year of the flood, but before it happened. Looking at how Enoch prophesied about the judgment, and then named his son “his death shall bring” makes me favor the second interpretation. Methuselah died, and then the flood happened; thus sparing both he and his son Lamech (who died before him) from the judgment.
- **Noah.** Well, needless to say, Noah and his family was God’s remnant. The only person who lived in an utterly depraved generation to still love by faith. It was through him that God preserved mankind; which would otherwise have perished in the Flood.

## ***The Descent toward Evil; and its Cause***

Although the line of Seth was the chosen line; and the line of Cain the corrupt lineage; Seth's descendants made a grave error that eventually caused their demise:

*“When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose” (Gen 6:1-2).*

Now, this is a disturbing verse, to say the least. Many struggled to interpret what these ‘sons of God’ and ‘daughters of humans’ meant. Some thought that the sons of God were angels, who then married human females. But I do not find such explanation to even be slightly possible. Even the Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that angels do not marry (note the implication of **Luk 20:35-36**).

But a contextual reading of the chapters preceding Genesis 6 will give us the answer:

- **Genesis 3** – Tells us that there will be a lineage of the serpent, and a lineage of the woman; and that they will be at constant warfare with each other.
- **Genesis 4** – Gives us one lineage of Adam; through Cain. Given the description, we know that the lineage of Cain was the seed of the serpent; as we have explored above.
- **Genesis 5** – Gives us the other lineage of Adam; through Seth. Given the description, we know that the lineage of Seth was the seed of the woman; again as we have explored above.
- **Genesis 6** – Gives us the narrative that the sons of God married the daughters of humans; and they were not supposed to do so.

The only conclusion that can be deduced here, is that the sons of God were the descendants of Seth; who married the descendants of Cain. They were not supposed to do that, because the descendants of Cain were wicked; and this is the earliest example of how bad company corrupts good character (**1 Cor 15:33**). This interpretation is further strengthened when we consider how the genealogy of the line of Adam through Seth is given to us in **Luk 3:23-38**. Look at the terminology, “... *the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*” Adam was herein called the son of God. But the lineage which can be thus called is the lineage through Seth; and not Cain. Therefore, the lineage of Adam through Seth is herein called the sons of God.

Furthermore, the message that stems from this story becomes consistent with the whole Bible. When we think about it, what was wrong with the sons of man marrying the daughters of humans was the corruption of purity. Throughout the Old Testament, we are told of how intermarriage with non-Israelite (and this, non-elect) was forbidden (eg. **Deut 7:2-6; Josh 23:12-13**). Similarly, in the New Testament, we are told not to be yoked with unbelievers (see **2 Cor 6:14-16**). The reason in every case was because we are to live our lives as the chosen people – as God's own people and as God's own sons (see **Deut 7:4-6** and **2 Cor 6:16-18**). In Deut 7, the reason is “*for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession.*” In 2 Cor, the reason is the exact same, that God has called us to be His people (**2 Cor 6:16**), that He has called us out to be separate and holy (**6:17**), and that He has called us out to be His sons and daughters (**6:18**).

Therefore, the final exhortation was that we, as God's elect, should live our lives as one who has been called out from the world. That we should resist the temptation of being yoked with unbelievers and from being conformed to the pattern of this world. That we should live this live worthy of the calling we have received; giving God glory.

Soli Deo Gloria!

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<sup>i</sup> Toledoth of the heavens and the earth (2:4); Toledoth of Adam (5:1); Toledoth of Noah (6:9); Toledoth of the sons of Noah (10:1); Toledoth of Shem (11:10); Toledoth of Terah (11:27); Toledoth of Ishmael (25:12); Toledoth of Isaac (25:19); Toledoth of Esau, or Edom (36:1); Toledoth of Esau, father of Edomites (36:9)