

Genesis 052

The Brevity of Life

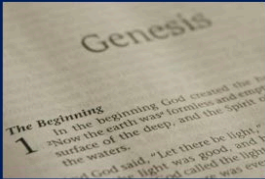
Genesis 11:14-26

September 26, 2021

Dr. Andy Woods

Let's take our Bibles this morning and locate Genesis 11:26. The title of our message this morning is "The Brevity of Life."

GENESIS STRUCTURE



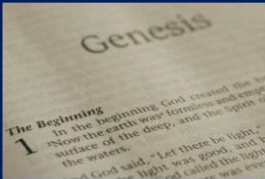
I. Beginning of the Human race (Gen. 1–11)

II. Beginning of the Hebrew race (Gen. 12–50)

The image shows a close-up of the first page of a Bible, specifically the beginning of the book of Genesis. The text visible includes "The Beginning", "1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", "2 now the earth was formless and empty", "3 surface of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters.", "4 God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.", "5 God called the light 'day', and the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day."

We are actually going to finish—I know I have said this for three weeks in a row—the first major section of Genesis this morning. So this will be the last time you have to listen to this introduction.

GENESIS STRUCTURE



I. Genesis 1-11 (four events)

- A. Creation (1-2)**
- B. Fall (3-5)**
- C. Flood (6-9)**
- D. National dispersion (10-11)**

The image shows a close-up of the first page of a Bible, specifically the beginning of the book of Genesis. The text visible includes "The Beginning", "1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", "2 now the earth was formless and empty", "3 surface of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters.", "4 God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.", "5 God called the light 'day', and the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day."

Genesis 1-11, as you know, records four major events. The first event is Creation, Genesis 1-2, the world that God designed as it was intended. Then something went wrong called the Fall, where man used his free will to rebel against God, which brought in consequences. But as these consequences were introduced, God immediately introduced hope—Genesis 3:15—that there is coming one to fix the problem, and that person is Jesus Christ.

Satan, of course, does not like what is coming, and so he worked in history to try to prevent the birth of this Messiah by tampering with the pre-Flood gene pool. It was an experiment that ran awry, as we have studied. It created a group of entities called the Nephilim. Because those angels had left their natural abode and began to interfere with human genetics, God brought the global deluge. You see that in Genesis 6-9.

God starts all over again with eight people. Only eight people were saved in the ark. From those eight, particularly Noah's three sons and their wives, the earth was repopulated to the point where nations are described in Genesis 10.

Outline

- Table of nations (Gen 10)
- Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9)
- Genealogy from Shem to Terah (Gen 11:10-32)



This is where Noah's descendants settled in their different regions or areas. Yet that chapter, Genesis 10, leaves a lot of unanswered questions.

Genesis 10–11 Questions & Answers

- Origin of the nations?
- Dispersal of the nations?
- Corruption of the nations?
- What happened in the days of Peleg? (Gen. 10:25)
- Nimrod's empire in Shinar? (Gen. 10:10)
- How did Nimrod get to Assyria? (Gen. 10:11-12)



Where did these nations come from? Why are they in a state of corruption? These are important questions to ask, because God is going to start a new nation in Genesis 12 to carry forth the Messianic lineage. So what is wrong with these existing nations? Well, the answer to that is the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1-9, as we have studied.

Then what follows is a genealogy. This is the section, Lord willing, we are going to try to wind up today. It starts with Shem and goes to Terah. Why does it start with Shem? Because God said Shem is blessed (Genesis 9:26). In other words, the Messiah is going to come through Shem's line—not Ham's line, not Japheth's line, but Shem's line—Shem being one of the three descendants of Noah.

God's Messianic Purposes Beginning in Genesis

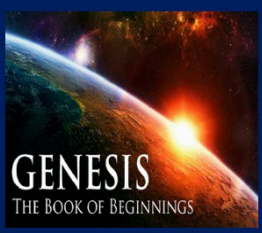
- *Proto-evangelium* from Adam & Eve (3:15)
- Seth (4:25)
- Noah (Gen 5:29)
- **Shem (9:26)**
- Abraham (12:3)
- Isaac (21:12)
- Jacob (25:23)
- Judah (49:10)



This genealogy is going to be traced all the way to a man named Abram, who is going to become a really big deal in Genesis 12, because it is through him and his unique calling that the Messiah is going to come to this world.

Genesis 11:10-26 Outline

- I. Shem (11:10-11)
- II. Arphachshad (11:12-13)
- III. Shelah (11:14-15)
- IV. Eber (11:16-17)
- V. Peleg (11:18-19)
- VI. Reu (11:20-21)
- VII. Serug (11:22-23)
- VIII. Nahor (11:24-25)
- IX. Terah (11:26)



So this is the genealogy that we have been looking at. It starts with Shem and goes all the way to Terah, Terah being Abram's (who was later to become Abraham) father. As we were wrapping up our thoughts on that genealogy, we were making some concluding observations.

Three Concluding Observations

(Gen 11:10-26)



- A. Age of patriarch at birth of seed-son demonstrate no genealogical gaps
- B. Antediluvian and Patriarchal overlap
- C. Shorter patriarchal ages indicate changed world conditions

I do not know how concluding they were, because we have been talking about them for about three or four weeks. But we indicated that one of the things to understand is that in this table of patriarchs, Genesis 11, there are no missing names. There is a lot of controversy on that. But I explained to you why we believe these genealogies, Genesis 5 and Genesis 11, are closed.

That is a big deal related to a big debate that evangelicals have been embroiled in probably all the way back to the late 1800s, determining the age of the earth. So if you are interested in that debate or discussion, I would highly recommend you take a look and listen to the last two or three sermons on that. One of the things I wanted to point out (and this takes us to subletter "B" in terms of our observations) is that there is some amazing overlap that you do not necessarily see at first glance.

In other words, if these genealogies are closed, there is some interesting and amazing overlap between the pre-Flood patriarchs and the group that began to repopulate the earth following the Flood, leading right down to the nation of Israel. There is some overlap there that you may not see.

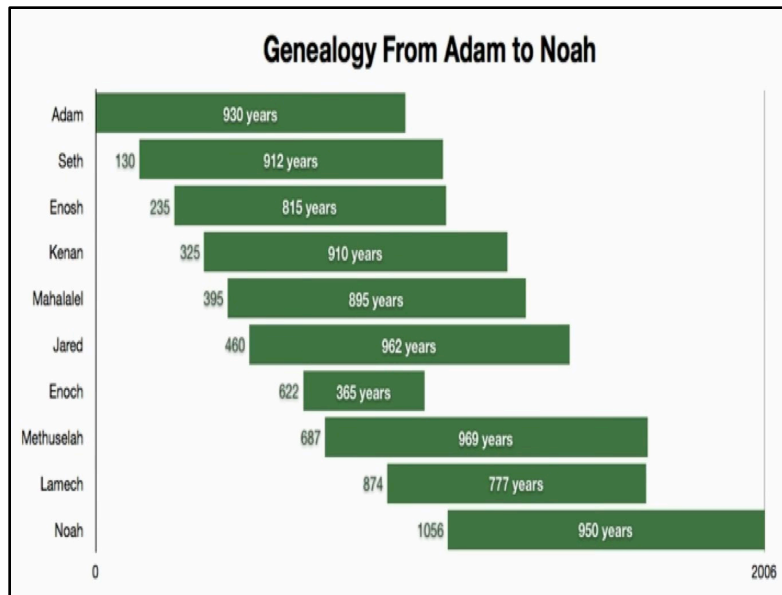
Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum puts it this way in his Genesis commentary, talking about the line from Adam to Jacob, from the beginning of the Book of Genesis to the end of the Book of Genesis:

"...only four life spans link together the continuity of tradition from Adam to Jacob,..."¹

See, we think there is all this time and all this distance between Adam and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. But there are really only four lifespans.

¹ Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 232.

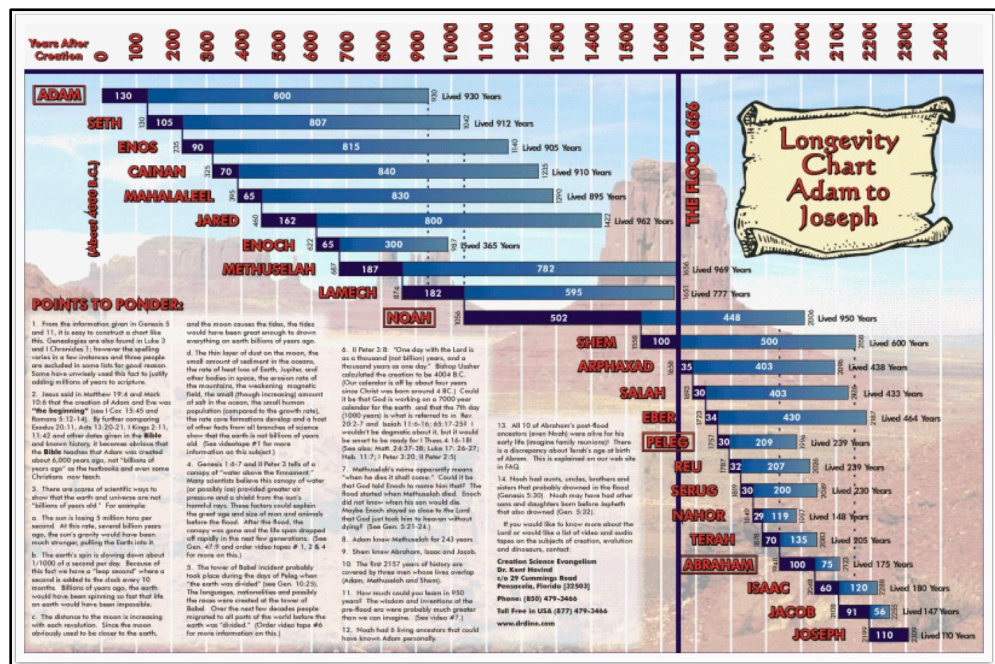
"The four life spans are Adam, Lamech, Shem and Jacob. The three links are from Adam to Lamech, since Adam was living when Lamech was born;..."²



I brought my charts in today. Do you see Adam at the top, and do you see Lamech second from the bottom? When Lamech was born, Adam was still alive. So that is link number one.

"...from Lamech to Shem, since Lamech was living when Shem was born;..."³

Now we need a more complicated chart. I know your eyes probably are not that great to be able to see that, but the second link is from Lamech to Shem, since Lamech was living when Shem was born. You might be able to locate Lamech on



² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

there if your eyes are good, and you will see Noah between Lamech and Shem. You will notice also that Lamech is alive when Shem is born. Interesting.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum goes on and says,

"...since Lamech was living when Shem was born; and from Shem to Isaac and Jacob, since Shem was still living when both Isaac and Jacob were born."⁴

Is that true? Let's look at our chart again. You might be able to find Shem there. Go all the way down to the bottom, and you will see Isaac and Jacob. Sure enough, while Shem is still alive, Isaac and Jacob were born. Why is this significant? It is significant because, Fruchtenbaum says,

"Therefore, there are not many gaps in the tradition to retain the history."⁵

What "A&E" and "Mysteries of the Bible" and the secular universities—and in some cases even, God forbid, Christian universities—will say is, "There are so many links in this chain. How did the tradition of truth get passed down accurately?" As I am trying to show you, it is really no big deal at all.

Fruchtenbaum goes on and says,

"Along this line, the following points should be made: Noah lived until Terah, the father of Abraham, who was 128 years old; Shem and Eber outlived Terah; Eber outlived Abraham; and, based upon when Terah died, Shem died when Isaac or Jacob was 48 years old...So as to the question of how history was maintained and how the tradition was kept, there is really no problem here because quite a bit of overlapping occurs within these genealogies."⁶

It is rather interesting to be alive and want to know what life was like when your parents were of age. So you just go talk to your parents, "Well, what was it like when Grandma and Grandpa were in their prime?" Well, if they are still living, you just go talk to Grandma and Grandpa. "But how about great-great-great-great-great-grandfather? What was life like when he was alive?" "Well, let's pack up the car, kids, and let's go talk to him and he will tell you."

It is so interesting how knowledge is cut when a parent dies. But in this time period here, before death really began to take its toll, the retention of knowledge was no big problem at all. So you can see how the tradition of God was kept, how knowledge was effectively and efficiently passed down from generation to generation. I just bring that to your attention because, by and large, that kind of thing is not brought up in these kinds of discussions.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

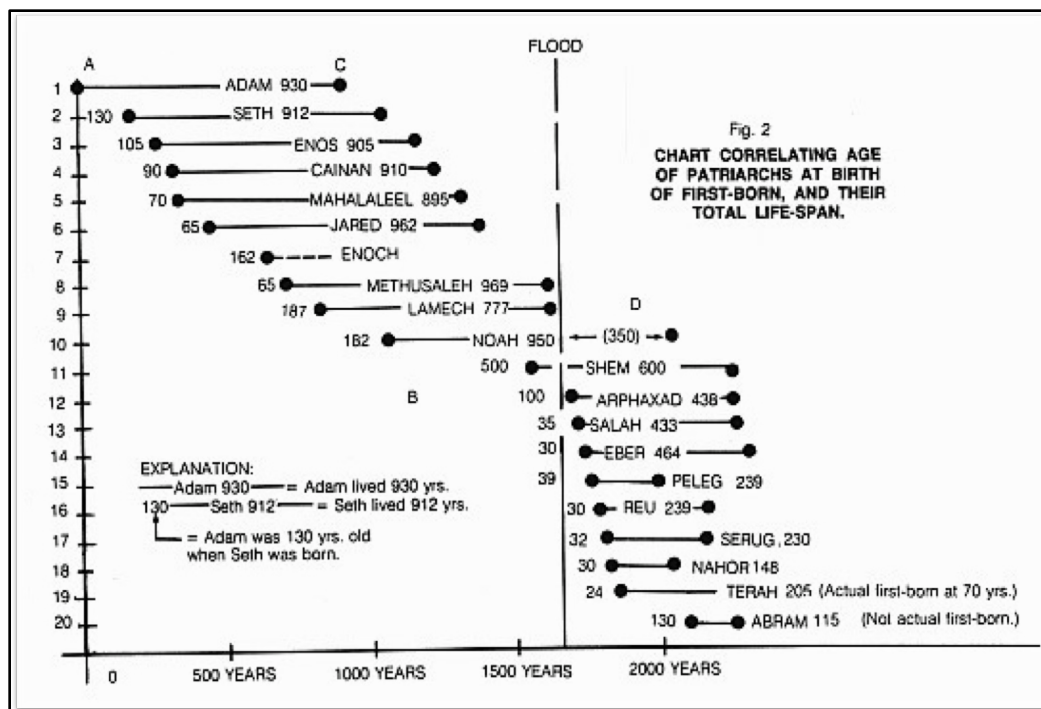
⁶ Ibid.

Let me give you another observation here. I will spend most of the time on this one, and then we will make some concluding observations at the end. One of the interesting things is the giant ages of people. You probably noticed that as you have worked your way through Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 with us. It is very strange that Adam lived for 930 years. Do you know any people that old? (Some people might look that old, but they are not that old.)

Patriarch	Age (in years)	Bible Reference
Adam	930	Genesis 5:4
Seth	912	Genesis 5:8
Enosh	905	Genesis 5:11
Kenan	910	Genesis 5:14
Mahalalel	895	Genesis 5:17
Jared	962	Genesis 5:20
Enoch	365 (translated)	Genesis 5:23
Methuselah	969	Genesis 5:27
Lamech	777	Genesis 5:31
Noah	950	Genesis 9:29

Source: Answers in Genesis

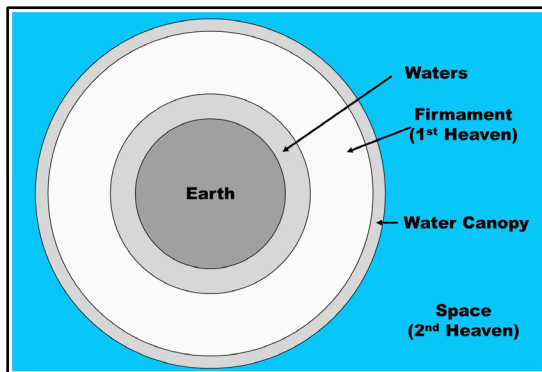
Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived, lived 969 years. You could see in the Genesis 5 genealogy how long these people lived. Lamech only lived 777 years. Too bad such a young man died so early. Enoch lived 365 years, but he was supernaturally taken. I am praying for that for our generation, by the way—the Rapture. I do not have a single problem in my life that the Rapture would not fix.



You see these long ages of people—930 years, 912 years, 815 years—and then all of a sudden you get to the Flood and all of a sudden the lifespans are reduced, not to what

we know them today, but they are reduced considerably. Shem lived for 600 years. Arphaxad lived for 438 years. Salah lived for 433 years. Eber lived for 464 years. It starts getting cut back.

How in the world would we as intelligent, credible people explain this? This is laughable from the secularist point of view. It does not make any sense when you study it in light of the world as we know it today. One of the things I believe—and again, this is controversial, though I do not know if I would start a new church, necessarily, over the subject—is that at one time in history, there was something that enveloped the earth, a water canopy.



There is a potential picture of what it could have looked like. That water canopy had the ability to take the harmful rays from the sun and filter them. You say, "Well, is this biblical?" Well, I think there is actually a reference to it in Genesis 1:6-7.

Day 2 Canopy Theory

(Gen 1:6-8)

- Implied – Gen. 1:6-7; Ps. 148:4
- Explains
 - ◆ Long life spans of early man – Gen. 5:5, 27
 - ◆ Strange beasts – (Gen. 1:24-25; Job 40–41)
 - ◆ Where the flood waters came from – (Gen. 2:5-6)
 - ◆ Why man's post-flood life span cut short – (Gen. 11:24-25)

We have brought this idea out a few times, you might recall. Genesis 1:7 says,

"God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so" (Genesis 1:7).

Genesis 1:6 says,

"Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters'" (Genesis 1:6).

In other words, there was something in the air called "the expanse," called "the sky." Then there was something beneath the sky. We know what that was: that was clearly the oceans. In fact, the whole planet was water. The dry land had not appeared yet. The dry land would appear in subsequent days of creation. But then Genesis 1 makes this very odd and strange reference to the waters which were above the skies.

In fact, Psalm 148:4 makes this point as the different aspects of creation are praising the Lord. It says,

*"Praise Him, highest heavens,
And the waters that are above the heavens!" (Psalm 148:4).*

What in the world were these waters above the heavens? I believe that what was enveloping the earth was this canopy of water. Now, it is a model, and when you adopt any model, you try to adopt the model that answers the most questions. From where I sit, this answers an awful lot of questions.

First of all, it explains why people in Genesis 5 were living so long. Why were they living so long before the Flood? They were living so long because even in their fallen state and with the reality of death, there was something in effect which filtered the sun's harmful rays, allowing people to live what today we consider to be abnormal lifespans. It also would explain why there are so many things in the fossil record that do not have a parallel with animals as we know them today. The name that has been given to these entities is "dinosaurs."

It is interesting to note that the name "dinosaur" was not even used by modern humans until the mid- to late-1800s. It is also interesting that when children are polled concerning why they left Christianity—why are so many of our young people leaving Christianity? The answer that is given might be rather shocking. It is that there is no explanation for dinosaurs.

You would think something as simple as that would not cause someone to leave the faith, but the children go off to the university and they think, "Well, in Sunday School they were just teaching the fairy tale stuff. Here they are going to give me the real history." We do not really have an explanation for dinosaurs, so our children fall under the influence of these evolutionary professors, and they are taught "from the goo to you by way of the zoo over billions of years." That is the explanation for dinosaurs in the fossil record.

Yet in reality we actually have an answer for this. The reason you have large animals in the fossil record is that animals, like humans, lived different lives being sheltered from the sun's harmful rays. The Bible does not use the word "dinosaur," but it mentions, in Genesis 1:24-25, living creatures:

"...cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth...and everything that creeps on the ground..." (Genesis 1:24-25).

It should not be much of a shock, if this canopy idea is correct, to find things in the fossil record that do not mirror animals as we know them today, because prior to the release

of the canopy animals lived larger, and human beings live longer, being in this state of incubation or protection, like a greenhouse effect, in a sense, from the sun's harmful rays.

It is interesting that when you get to the Book of Job, which is the oldest book of the Bible, in terms of date of writing (Genesis, written roughly six hundred years later, records the oldest events, but Job is the oldest book in terms of date or writing)—when you look at Job 40 and 41, it mentions animals that have no parallel to what we know. One of them is called the "Leviathan." The other one is called the "Behemoth." God asks Job, "Do you fear these animals?" And Job is like, "Yeah, I do." And God says, "Who made these animals?"

People really try to come up with an explanation as to what these animals were. Some would say Leviathan was a hippopotamus. It sure does not seem like a hippopotamus to me because its tail was like a cedar tree. Job describes the animals in a way that are not paralleled in our modern world. Who were these animals? I think they were animals in a state of hibernation that Noah took with him on the ark, maybe as babies, and they got out into the post-Flood world, and they lived for a little while, but the conditions were not correct anymore because the canopy had disappeared, and they began to die off.

You say, "Well, pastor, I just do not like your explanation." Well, here is my point: at least I have an explanation. The children are looking to you as their parent and their grandparent to say something. And if you are not being equipped to answer something like this, you do not really have much of a ministry to your children or your grandchildren. At the secular university or at the secular school they sound a lot more erudite and a lot more degreed and professional than you are.

Your kids are going to think that the real history is not found in the Bible, but is found somewhere else—they have to go somewhere else to get the real history. That is why I try to equip you with things like this, because I think that when you think it through, we actually do have answers.

So, the canopy theory explains the long lifespans of early man. It explains strange beasts in the fossil record which today we call "dinosaurs." It explains where the Flood's waters came from. That is a criticism that you will hear a lot from people: "You believe in a global Flood. How ridiculous is that? Don't you know that there is not enough moisture in the clouds to produce a global Flood?"

The answer to that is, "Well, who says God used the clouds? You are assuming God used the clouds because that is what you understand as rain. But there is nothing in the Bible that says God used the clouds." In fact, Genesis 7 and 8 talk about waters being released from above and from below. This group prior to the Flood probably did not even know what rain was, because Genesis 2:5-6 says,

"...the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth,...But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground" (Genesis 2:5-6).

This is why Noah's message seemed so absurd. He was, no doubt, speaking of a coming deluge, and the people on the earth at that time did not even know what rain was. Moisture came differently because world conditions were different from what they are today. It is highly likely that when God brought the Flood, He simply released the canopy, the waters above. With the canopy gone, there was no layer left to filter the harmful rays of the sun. So the life spans of people started getting dramatically curtailed. You do not see, for example, in Genesis 11:24-25, people living into their seven hundreds, eight hundreds, and nine hundreds.

However, the canopy theory still does not answer all the questions, because people in the post-Flood world were still living to the age of 600, 438, 433, 464, 230, etc. Why did they not have lifespans like we have them? Because the judgments of God kept on coming. That is why. It is interesting that when you study the difference between generation one and generation two—that would be the difference between Shem and Arphaxad—the years this individual was living were 600 years, and then all of a sudden you read this number "438." We just saw a shift from 600 to 438 years. That is quite a shift.

What happened in between those generations? The deluge happened. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says,

"...there is a gradual decrease in the age of man. A sharp drop occurs between Shem and Arphaxad, between the first and second generations, during which time the Flood occurred. What probably caused the sudden decrease was the Flood. This was part of God's divine judgment on humanity."⁷

But again, that still does not answer all the questions because now you have someone living for 464 years after the Flood. In between generation number four and five, Eber to Peleg, there is another drop of years from 464 years to 239. That is a big drop. What happened in between Eber and Peleg? Judgment number two, which was the Tower of Babel. I do not know if I can explain everything that happened at the Tower of Babel other than what the text says, but it was a judgment of God.

It was God's ruling and God's decree on something that everybody wants today: globalism and one-world-ism. We are told to act locally and think globally. And after all, COVID obviously is a global pandemic and we need a global government to solve the global pandemic—whoops, excuse me—pandemic. So globalism is the solution to everything today. If there is a problem in the world, globalism or one-world-ism is the answer.

God ruled on that subject in Genesis 11 because the people on Earth were trying to build a stairway to heaven. It was the beginning of the New World Order, a one-world system of economics, politics, and religion that excludes God. You know the story. God

⁷ Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 231.

confounded the language so that the builders could not cooperate with each other and the building project was stopped dead in its tracks.

That judgment occurred between Eber and Peleg, and that judgment, however it manifested itself, could explain also the subsequent shortage of years that people were living after Eber.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes this:

"A second sharp drop occurs between Eber and Peleg, which are the fourth and fifth generations. It was between the fourth and fifth generation that the Tower of Babel event occurred. Therefore, with these two divine judgments, a sharp drop in the longevity of man occurs. If the canopy theory is correct, that might account for it. However, even without the canopy theory, divine judgment will easily account for this decrease, because it is following the divine judgments that the sharp drops occurred."⁸

You have to understand something biblically: we are living in a world thrice, or three times, removed from how God intended it. That becomes very important because when you evangelize. The response you are going to get from people as you share your faith is, "Well, you are talking about a God of love, and one of my best friends died of cancer. Where is your God of love now?" You had better have something to say by way of response. This is what we call "apologetics": defending the faith. "Apologetics" is derived from the Greek word "apologia" (ἀπολογία), which is found in 1 Peter 3:15, where the Apostle Peter writes these words concerning the defense of the faith:

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;" (1 Peter 3:15).

The goal of apologetics is not to beat people so far into the ground that they can never see the light of day again. It is to give them a reasonable or credible defense of our beliefs so that they might consider the claims of Christ. Nobody is going to consider the claims of Christ if they think that the Bible is just a bunch of fairy tales. They are being told through the educational system in the media that what is in this Book is just fairy tales.

Also, most churches in Christendom today are not set up as teaching churches. Most churches today are not set up to teach—I am convinced of it. The sermon is exceedingly short, at least by my standards, and there is such a—dare I say—dog and pony show up front that by the time you actually get to the teaching, it is reduced to twenty minutes. Now, some of you may be praying for that to happen one day, but I would not pray too much on that because it is not going to happen here.

So you have a situation where Christians, week after week, are going to places that I would characterize as pep rallies, motivational talks. But the pastor ought to be an

⁸ Ibid., 231-32.

equipper. That is the pastor's calling (Ephesians 4:12). It takes time to equip the sheep. That is why we at Sugar Land Bible Church are a teaching church. Our goal is not to bore you with data, but to equip you in such a way so you can fulfill 1 Peter 3:15 in the lives of your children and your grandchildren, and so that Christianity, if the Lord tarries, can make it into the next generation.

The answer to where is God and His love when there are so many problems in this world is very simple: the world that we are living in has been altered three times, and it was not God who wanted it altered—it was the consequences of sin. Alteration number one was the Fall itself. See, everybody today is talking about ecology and the environment. Do you understand that the greatest ecological disaster that has ever hit Planet Earth was the Fall of man in Genesis 3.

Nobody wants to talk about ecology anymore, but the Bible is environmental and ecologically conscious. If you want to know what is wrong with the environment, look at Genesis 3, which curses the very ground itself. The next judgment hit in Genesis 6-9 through the global deluge. That is where you put the fossil record and explain it. So many fossils do not give the impression of billions and billions of years, because they are caught in a state of judgment—these animals with one animal consuming another, and the spine bowed back—not billions of years there. This is a sudden judgment.

Then judgment three hit—the Tower of Babel, upon which judgment the world was changed again. Where is your God of love? Answer: the world has been changed three times by the rebellion of the creature against the Creator, and God bringing consequences because of man's rebellion against God. Do not blame the problems of the world on God. Blame them on man, who decided to use his free will in such a way as to rebel against God.

With the canopy released and subsequent judgments, the age of man just kept getting rolled right on back to what we see it today. The oldest psalm in the Psalter is Psalm 90, written by Moses. Moses there articulates the normal life span of people. He says,

*"As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,
Or if due to strength, eighty years,..." (Psalm 90:10).*

In other words, if you make it to seventy, that is considered normal. And if you make it into your eighties, boy, you have really got a lot of strength. I was listening to Billy Graham talk about this—I found an older sermon of Billy Graham, and he was talking about Psalm 90:10. He was talking about how the lifespan of an average American is basically into their early seventies. In America, with all of its technological advances—America, with its thriving economy—what is the average lifespan? It is just a bit over seventy. And that is exactly what God said.

So with this point concerning the dropping lifespans of people. I would like to make three observations. Number one, sin has a price tag. Romans 6:23 says,

"For the wages of sin is death,..." (Romans 6:23).

"Wages"—that is a price. That is a toll. That is a consequence. That is a tax. That is a cost. And I will tell you one thing: when the serpent beguiled our forebearers, that was not articulated to them by him. He wanted them to think they could just go ahead and do whatever they wanted to do with no consequence at all.

Do you realize that we are living amongst a generation of people who think they can sin and experience no consequences? Why do they think that? Because they watch TV, and on TV and in the movies, people sin all the time and there is never a consequence. And those watching have seen it with their own eyes. Yet what is the biblical reality of the situation? Sin is always going to have a price tag. I am not saying that God is not loving or that God is not redeeming. He is. But rebellion against what He has said brings a price tag—right down to today, when people live seventy to eighty years at best, instead of the six hundred to the nine hundred years they were living prior to these judgments.

God warned at the beginning that this would be a problem. God said this to man in his pre-sinful state:

"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'" (Genesis 2:16-17).

I guess they did not believe that was true, because if they believed that was true, they would not have listened to the serpent. They listened to the serpent and they began to die. And guess what? Exactly what God said started to happen. Genesis 3:19 says,

*"By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).*

Here we are living in this world three times removed from its original design of God, where death is a normality. The mortality rate is still one hundred percent. Didn't we hear about it in the announcements? Brother Earl Chandler—here and then gone. He was a godly man, a man that I can recall conversing with not long ago on our elder board. I remember his saying, "I am not feeling so well." Back in my mind I was saying, "Well, he will just go check in to medical authorities and he will be back to normal," and then he was gone. That is the kind of world that we are living in.

First Corinthians 15:21-22 says,

"For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

Romans 5:12 says,

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12).

We are living with a terrible, terrible consequence. We consider it normal because it is what we know, but it is not what God designed. I preached a sermon here a few Christmases back on the eight reasons Jesus came into the world. (Do not panic—I am not going to preach that today.) These reasons are all found, by the way, in Hebrews 2:5-18.

Why God Became Man

(Heb. 2:5-18)



1. To restore God's original purpose for man (5-8)
2. To taste death for every man (9)
3. To bring many to glory (10-13)
4. To break Satan's rule over humanity (14)
5. To remove the fear of death (15)
6. To become our merciful high priest (16-17a)
7. To make a complete purification for sin (17b)
8. To sympathize with those tested (18)

Adapted from J. Dwight Pentecost, *Faith that Endures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2000), 60-71.

One of the reasons—number five—is to remove this issue of death by tasting death in our place. Hebrews 2:15 says,

"and [that Jesus] might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Hebrews 2:15).

That is the panic button of the world, because they do not have an answer for death. They do not have an answer to why death is happening. They do not have an answer of what to do about it. They just know that it is happening. And here is little ol' you with your New Testament and Old Testament (Hebrews Bible), and you know exactly what the issue was.

In fact, I remember—and I do not know how much I want to say about it, because I do not want to divulge family members and things like that—that there is a member in my extended family and his son was very little and panicked over death. His son started to understand that we live in a world where people die. And I remember this particular extended family member giving the totally the wrong answers. Now, I was not even a born again, saved person at that point in my life, but I knew that all of this worldly wisdom coming out of the mouth of this adult was completely and totally wrong.

So when your young ones are panicked about death, you have an answer. You have an answer to why it came into the world. You have an answer to why it is occurring. And you have an answer concerning the solution. The fear that people have been under

from the beginning of man's Fall is death—what happens after the grave exactly? Jesus, Hebrews 2:15, came into the world to rid us of that fear.

Paul the Apostle had absolutely no fear of dying, because he said in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

In fact, he said in Philippians 1:21-23,

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

He says, "It would be better to depart, for that would be much better." Then he kind of gets mad at the Philippians. He says, "Well, for your sake, I will stick around, I guess, but I would rather just die and be with the Lord." There was a man who was living completely consistent with his privileges in Christ. If the fear of death dominates you, you are living beneath your privileges. You can live that way if you want to, but you do not have to, because Jesus came into the world to fix this problem.

Observation number one is that sin has a price tag. Is it not interesting that when God recreates the world there is the eternal state, Revelation 21-22, where God puts everything back together according to what it was like originally. Genesis 1-2 is normal. Revelation 21-22 is normal. Those chapter pairs represent the world before sin entered the picture (and after sin exited the picture). What happened in between is an abnormality.

To my understanding, we Christians probably hold the only worldview that teaches this. Evolution does not teach it. They think that death is progress. Reincarnation does not have it right. Only the Christian who believes his or her Bible can tell people that what is happening right now is a bizarre, strange abnormality that God never intended. If you want to know what is normal, it is Genesis 1-2—that is normal—and Revelation 21-22—that is normal.

By the way, that is eschatological hope. There was this situation last week in Tennessee where a guy got fired from his job, went into his place of employment, and just started killing people. Then he killed himself. Over what? A lost job. What was wrong with that situation? You are dealing with someone who had no hope. They thought that what is happening now is the way it has always been, and the way it will always be. But the person who understands their Bible does not think that.

When God recreates everything, guess what is not going to be there? Tears are not going to be there. Mourning is not going to be there. Crying is not going to be there. The first order of things, subsequent to the Fall, is not going to be there (Revelation 21:4). What will also take an exit? Death itself.

"and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

What is the first observation as we look at the world after this genealogy (Genesis 11)? Sin has a price tag that Jesus fixed. The second observation is that life is short. Nine

hundred years is short. Four hundred years is short. Seventy years—or, if you are fortunate, eight years—is short. Psalm 90:10 says,

*"As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,
Or if due to strength, eighty years,..." (Psalm 90:10).*

Do you realize how small of a time period we are dealing with here? Seventy to eighty years. People told me that when I was twenty. They said, "It is going to go by fast." I did not believe them. Guess what? They were right. I turned fifty-five this week. Fifty-five minus twenty equals thirty-five years, according to my old math. Where did it go? It went by so fast. It went by so quickly. Why is that? It relates to this reality that we are living in a created order that is three times removed from God's design. God never intended it to be this way, but that is the post-Fall, post-Flood, post-Babel effect.

Psalm 103:15-16 says,

*"As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,
And its place acknowledges it no longer" (Psalm 103:15-16).*

Psalm 144:3-4 says,

*"O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You think of him?
Man is like a mere breath;
His days are like a passing shadow" (Psalm 144:3-4).*

Then there is my favorite verse. I call this my "Starbucks verse." No, I am not promoting Starbucks. It is just an analogy. Let's get Starbucks off the title here. It is my "coffee verse." You get your coffee in the morning. You are looking at your coffee and you see the steam rising off it, and you see that it just dissipates so fast. That is what life is like in our world which is three times removed from God's design. James 4:14 says,

"Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

Observation number one: sin has a price tag. Observation number two: life is very short. It does not feel short, but it is. Observation number three: eternity is long. Man and woman have not been around forever, but at the point of creation, God gave them something called eternity. In other words, they will exist forever from the time of their creation. It is part of the fact that we are made in God's image.

Think about that: we are the only entities that God has ever made in His image. What does it even mean, that we are made in His image? Well, the first thing it means is that we have value to Him. You determine value by price. Look at the price God was willing to pay to redeem us in our fallen state. It also means that we have something called choice—volition. When you think about that, that is the most powerful attribute you

possess. You can use that choice any way you want to use it. But use it wisely, because you are living in a world where we are passing away just like a vapor (James 4:14).

It is like having five dollars, twenty dollars, fifty dollars, or a hundred dollars in your wallet. You can spend it however you want to spend it, but you do not get a chance to spend it again. That is volition. A person can spend their life rejecting Jesus Christ, and many do. A person can spend their life being busy, and they can be busy and go right into hell, and God will respect their decision. For God to override the decision would be for God to disrespect how He has manufactured us.

God is not going to take a gun to your head and force you to get saved. Islam will do that through their religious system, but not Christianity. Christianity believes in volition. The truth of the matter is that whatever choices that we are making, those consequences are going to follow us around for a long, long time. A hundred years from now, you are going to be alive somewhere. A thousand years from now, you are going to be alive somewhere. A billion years from now, you are going to be alive somewhere. A trillion years from now, you are going to be alive somewhere.

Why is that? Because of who you are as an image bearer of God. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says,

"...He has also set eternity in their heart,..." (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

That is why death seems so weird to us, so strange and abnormal: because it is not God's original design. The soul or the "psyche" (ψυχή), which one day will be reunited with a resurrected body, will last forever and ever and ever and ever.

Number one: sin has a price tag. Number two: life, three times removed from creation and from God's design, is short. Number three: eternity is long. That is a very natural and logical segue, is it not, into the gospel? We are just wrapping up studying Creation, Genesis 1-11. Did you know that Genesis 1-11 is not the only creating that God is doing today? He did all that in the past, but now He is doing a new work where He makes us into a new creation.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says,

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I cannot think of a better time, as we wrap up our thoughts on Creation, to become a new creature in Christ Jesus, circumventing the curse and the brevity of life and all of the problems that we live with. Jesus allows us to live with Him forever. Jesus, as we tried to explain earlier, came into the world to fix our greatest problem, which is what I am talking about here: the consequences of sin—the consequences of Adam's rebellious race—which brought death. Jesus fixed that by tasting death in our place.

By simply trusting in what Jesus has done for us, we can have the gift of eternal life. You can have it right now, as I am speaking, within the quietness of your own heart by believing, which is another way of saying "trusting," in what Jesus did for you. It is more

than intellectual assent. It has with it the ingredient of reliance. You are depending on Jesus through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to fix this most basic problem that we have: the reality of death, the price tag of sin, the shortness of life, and the length of eternity.

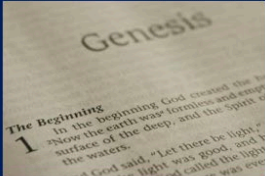
It is something you can do without walking an aisle, joining a church, filling out a card, or giving money, because God has given it as something free to the human race. The world of religion will charge you for it. They will make you do something to get it. But we do not really care what the world of religion thinks. We care what God says. God says there is no price tag. If you are thirsty, you can come drink of it freely. Salvation is what we would call non-meritorious. The only way to receive a gift from God, Romans 4:4-5, is to fulfill a single condition: belief.

So we conclude, then, this genealogy. Some of you are praising the Lord internally. We conclude the four major events of Genesis 1-11, Creation, Fall, Flood, and national dispersion. Now we are in a position to move into the second half of the Book of Genesis.

GENESIS STRUCTURE



- I. Beginning of the Human race (Gen. 1–11)
- II. Beginning of the Hebrew race (Gen. 12–50)



The change really happens right there in Genesis 11:27. For now, we have a focus on a family, a man who is the inheritor of the Messianic blessings that flowed from Adam and Eve to Shem, and ultimately to Terah, and ultimately to Abram himself. The whole focus of the Book of Genesis changes. We are no longer focused on four events. We are focused on four people prominent in the beginning of the nation of Israel: Abraham, then Isaac, and then Jacob, then how God got Israel out of harm's way through Joseph.

GENESIS STRUCTURE



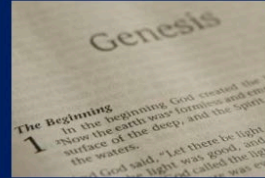
II. Genesis 12-50 (four people)

A. Abraham (12:1–25:11)

B. Isaac (25:12–26:35)

C. Jacob (27–36)

D. Joseph (37–50)



God now is doing something new. He is starting a brand-new nation. In Isaiah 43:1 God is going to address Jacob, or Israel, as the one who created them and formed them. This man Abram is going to be called forth from idolatry, from Ur of the Chaldeans, and told to walk by faith. Through that walk of faith is going to come a new work of God, a new nation through which the Messiah is going to be born.