

A Hidden Message

The Gospel in Genesis

by Chuck Missler

Note: Due to the unusual interest in this article, it has been reprinted and revised to respond to your many inquiries.

We frequently use the familiar term, gospel, or good news. Where is the first place it appears in the Bible? The answer may surprise you.

An Integrated Message

The great discovery is that the Bible is a message system: it's not simply 66 books penned by 40 authors over thousands of years, the Bible is an integrated whole which bears evidence of supernatural engineering in every detail.

The Jewish rabbis have a quaint way of expressing this very idea: they say that they will not understand the Scriptures until the Messiah comes. But when He comes, He will not only interpret each of the passages for us, He will interpret the very words; He will even interpret the very letters themselves; in fact, He will even interpret the spaces between the letters!

When I first heard this, I simply dismissed this as a colorful exaggeration. Until I reread Matthew 5:17 and 18:

“Think not that I have come to destroy the Torah and the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (A jot and tittle are the Hebrew equivalent of our dotting an i and the crossing of a t.)

An Example

A remarkable example of this can be glimpsed in Genesis Chapter 5, where we have the genealogy of Adam through Noah. This is one of those chapters which we often tend to skim over quickly as we pass through Genesis it's simply a genealogy from Adam to Noah.

But God always rewards the diligent student. Let's examine this chapter more closely.

In our Bible, we read the Hebrew names. What do these names mean in English?

A Study of Original Roots

The meaning of proper names can be a difficult pursuit since a direct translation is often not readily available. Even a conventional Hebrew lexicon can prove disappointing. A study of the original roots, however, can yield some fascinating insights.

(A caveat: many study aids, such as a conventional lexicon, can prove rather superficial when dealing with proper nouns. Furthermore, views concerning the meanings of original roots are not free of controversy and variant readings.)

Let's take an example.

The Flood Judgment

Methuselah comes from *muth*, a root that means "death";¹ and from *shalach*, which means to bring, or to send forth. The name Methuselah means, "his death shall bring".²

Methuselah's father was given a prophecy of the coming Great Flood, and was apparently told that as long as his son was alive, the judgment of the flood would be withheld; but as soon as he died, the flood would be brought or sent forth.

(Can you imagine raising a kid like that? Every time the boy caught a cold, the entire neighborhood must have panicked!)

And, indeed, the year that Methuselah died, the flood came.³

It is interesting that Methuselah's life, in effect, was a symbol of God's mercy in forestalling the coming judgment of the flood. Therefore, it is fitting that his lifetime is the oldest in the Bible, speaking of the extensiveness of God's mercy.

The Other Names

If there is such significance in Methuselah's name, let's examine the other names to see what may lie behind them.

Adam

Adam's name means **man**. As the first man, that seems straight forward enough.

Seth

Adam's son was named Seth, which means **appointed**. Eve said, "*For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*"⁴

Enosh

Seth's son was called Enosh, which means **mortal, frail, or miserable**. It is from the root *anash*, to be incurable, used of a wound, grief, woe, sickness, or wickedness.

It was in the days of Enosh that men began to defile the name of the Living God.⁵

Kenan

Enosh's son was named Kenan, which can mean **sorrow, dirge, or elegy**. (The precise denotation is somewhat elusive; some study aids unfortunately presume that Kenan is synonymous with Cainan.)

Balaam, looking down from the heights of Moab, uses a pun upon the name of the Kenites when he prophesies their destruction.⁶

We have no real idea as to why these names were chosen for their children. Often they may have referred to circumstances at birth, and so on.

Mahalalel

Kenan's son was Mahalalel, from Mahalal which means *blessed or praise*; and El, the name for *God*. Thus, Mahalalel means the **Blessed God**. Often Hebrew names include El, the name of God, as Dan-i-el, "God is my Judge", etc.

Jared

Mahalalel's son was named Jared, from the verb *yaradh*, meaning **shall come down**.⁷

Enoch

Jared's son was named Enoch, which means **teaching, or commencement**. He was the first of four generations of preachers. In fact, the earliest recorded prophecy was by Enoch, which amazingly enough deals with the Second Coming of Christ (although it is quoted in the Book of Jude in the New Testament):

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." Jude 14, 15

Methuselah

Enoch was the father of Methuselah, who we have already mentioned. Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah.⁸ Apparently, Enoch received the prophecy of the Great Flood, and was told that as long as his son was alive, the judgment of the flood would be withheld. The year that Methuselah died, the flood came.

Enoch, of course, never died: he was translated⁹ (or, if you'll excuse the expression, raptured). That's how Methuselah can be the oldest man in the Bible, yet he died before his father!

Lamech

Methuselah's son was named Lamech, a root still evident today in our own English word, lament or lamentation. Lamech suggests **“despairing.”**

(This name is also linked to the Lamech in Cain's line who inadvertently killed his son Tubal-Cain in a hunting incident.¹⁰)

Noah

Lamech, of course, is the father of Noah, which is derived from *nacham*, **to bring relief or comfort**, as Lamech himself explains in Genesis 5:29.

The Composite List

Now let's put it all together:

Hebrew	English
Adam	Man
Seth	Appointed
Enosh	Mortal
Kenan	Sorrow

Mahalalel	The Blessed God
Jared	Shall Come Down
Enoch	Teaching
Methuselah	His Death Shall Bring
Lamech	The Desparing
Noah	Rest, or Comfort

That's rather remarkable:

Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow; (but) the Blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring (the) despairing rest.

Here's the Gospel hidden within a genealogy in Genesis!

(You will never convince me that a group of Jewish rabbis conspired to hide the Christian Gospel right here in a genealogy within their venerated Torah!)

Evidence of Design

The implications of this discovery are more wide spread than is evident at first glance.

It demonstrates that in the earliest chapters of the Book of Genesis, God had already laid out His plan of redemption for the predicament of mankind. It is a love story, written in blood on a wooden cross which was erected in Judea almost 2,000 years ago.

The Bible is an integrated message system, the product of supernatural engineering. Every number, every place name, every detail every jot and tittle is there for our learning, our discovery, and our amazement. Truly, our God is an awesome God.

It is astonishing to discover how many Biblical controversies seem to evaporate if one simply recognized the unity the integrity of these 66 books, penned by 40 authors over thousands of years.

It is remarkable how many subtle discoveries lie behind the little details of the text. Some of these become immediately obvious with a little study; some are more technical and require special helps.

Many of these discoveries are described in our Briefing Package, [Beyond Coincidence](#). Several are also highlighted in our recent book, [The Creator Beyond Time and Space](#).

Look behind every detail: there's a discovery to be made! God always rewards the diligent student. What other messages lay hidden behind the names in the Bible? Check it out.

Notes:

1. *Muth*, death, occurs 125 times in the Old Testament.
2. See Pink, Jones, and Stedman in the bibliography.
3. Methuselah was 187 when he had Lamech, and lived 782 years more. Lamech had Noah when he was 182 (Genesis 5:25-28). The Flood came in Noah's 600th year (Genesis 7:6, 11). $600 + 182 = 782$ nd year of Lamech, the year Methuselah died.
4. Genesis 4:25.
5. Genesis 4:26 is often mistranslated. Targum of Onkelos: ...desisted from praying in the name ; Targum of Jonathan: surnamed their idols in the name... ; Kimchi, Rashi, and other ancient Jewish commentators agree. Jerome indicated that this was the opinion of many Jews of his day. Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishna (a constituent part of the Talmud), a.d. 1168, ascribes the origin of idolatry to the days of Enosh.
6. Numbers 24:21, 23.
7. Some authorities suggest that this might be an allusion to the Sons of God who came down to corrupt the daughters of men, resulting in the Nephilim (Fallen Ones) of Genesis 6. These were discussed in our article last month (January 1996), and are also reviewed in our briefing package, [The Flood of Noah](#).
8. Genesis 5:21, 24.
9. Genesis 5:24.
10. Genesis 4:19-25; rabbinical sources, re: Kaplan, et al.

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5. Missler, Chuck, Beyond Coincidence (audio briefing package with notes), Koinonia House, Coeur d Alene ID, 83816, 1994.
6. Rosenbaum, M., and Silbermann, A., *Pentateuch with Onkelos's Translation* (into Aramaic) and Rashi's Commentary, Silbermann Family Publishers, Jerusalem, 1973.
7. Stedman, Ray C., *The Beginnings*, Word Books, Waco TX, 1978.

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