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STUDIES IN THE GENEALOGIES

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01 -- INTERESTING LISTS OF NAMES

Some Comparisons and Deductions from the Genealogies of the Cainites and Sethites

To the casual reader perhaps no more monotonous portion of the Bible is found than the genealogies of the descendants of Cain and those of Seth, given respectively in the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis. The careless reader might not stop to think but that these chapters are to be considered end to end: that is that the events of chapter five follow after the events of chapter four. But careful study shows that probably we have in verses 16 to 24 of chapter four a record of the

Cainites carried clear up to the flood. Then chapter five backs up to Adam and carries the history of the Sethites also up to the flood.

* * *

The Genealogies Compared

Comparison of the names in these genealogies shows similarities, in some cases even identicalness of names. The question at once suggests itself, Why these similarities? And the suggestion comes that one side may have imitated the other in names. If so, which side originated the names and which side copied them? Ancient names meant something, not being, like modern names, mere appellatives to distinguish one person from another. Examination shows that the names of the Sethite list all have a definite meaning of a religious character. "Seth" means "appointed," this son being appointed to take the place left vacant by the murder of Abel. "Enos" seems to mean "mortal." "Cainan" means "possessor." "Mahalaleel" means "praise of God." "Jared" means "descent." "Enoch" means "weapon or dart." "Lamech" means "overthrower." And "Noah" means "comfort."

Now these names have meaning when used in connection with the faithful patriarchs of the Sethite line. In fact a Christian Jew I once knew constructed the following sentence from these names and their meanings: "Man having been made mortal, blessed God came down to send, by His death, to the oppressed, comfort." While this may seem a little fanciful, yet careful study of the shades of meaning reveals some sanction for the translation. It will be seen that the sentence gives the Gospel in a nutshell.

But what possible meaning can they have in the genealogy of Cain? Their use there must have been by imitation rather than by origination. And why imitation? Just as Cain's useless and bloodless offering was an imitation of Abel's effectual offering, so throughout the period before the flood this race of bloodless religionists pretended to the things possessed by their brother race, using the same or similar names for their children as a profession of the things possessed by the other race.

If this suggestion is correct, Cain's descendants were not named, and therefore not born, until after the persons of the other race of the same names were already in existence. This synchronizes the two genealogies rather surprisingly as to results, as will be seen by the following table.

-----ADAM-----

.....	father's age...A.M.	
Cain.....	Seth.....	130.....130
.....	Enos.....	105.....235
.....	Cainan.....	90.....325
.....	Mahalaleel.....	70.....395
.....	Jared.....	65.....460
Enoch.....	Enoch.....	162.....622
Irad.....	Methuselah.....	65.....687

Mehujael. Lamech.....	187.....	874
Methusael.....Noah.....	182.....	1056
Lamech.....Shem.....		
Jabal--Jubal....Ham.....		
Tubal-cain....Japheth.....	500.....	1556
.....FLOOD.....	100.....	1656

The first row of figures shows the father's age when the son was born. The second row the time from the beginning.

This hypothesis gives ample room for all the Cainite generations named, and, incidentally, throws a flood of light on the difficulty, or supposed difficulty, of where Cain got his wife. Naturally the daughters of Adam would have been reluctant to be the wife of such a man, and the Sethites would doubtless have shunned him. So it is easy to believe that Cain went without a wife for a long time; but as time went on and the line between the races was less marked, approaching that time before the flood when the races seem to have freely intermarried. Cain finally succeeded in inducing some woman of the Sethite line to marry him, as there were no women in his race until after his marriage. By this time there were five generations in the Sethite line from which to secure a wife. As suggested above the Sethite Enoch was probably born before the Cainite Enoch, the latter being named in imitation of him. Notice also the other imitations, nearly or exactly. But in the last generation all attempts at imitation seem to have been abandoned, and all resemblance ceases. The races had practically mingled together, with the possible exception of Noah's family, and there was nothing more to imitate. Noah was "perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6.9).

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02 -- AN OLD TESTAMENT CEMETERY

Some More Interesting Things About the Genealogies of the Cainites and Sethites

Having made some comparisons of the names in the genealogies of the Cainites and the Sethites, the former recorded in the latter part of the 4th chapter of Genesis, and the latter in the 5th chapter, we will now consider some contrasts. It is essential to remember, as mentioned last week, that these two races run side by side, and both terminate at the flood.

* * *

Some Accomplishments of the Cainites

We find that Cain undertook to perpetuate the name and memory of his son Enoch, who we suggested last week, was born about the time of the Enoch of the Sethite line, by building a city and naming it after him.

We find also among his descendants men who were great cattle men, perhaps managing the ranches of the ante-diluvian world. They also invented the harp and organ, at least Jubal is

recorded as being "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." Others worked as founders, Tubal-cain being "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron."

This race of Cain evidently made a good deal of this present world, and well they might, for it is quite evident they had little hope of another world. Great men came of their race, great as this world reckons, and when, in the days when the flood drew near, intermarriages took place between them and the Sethites, as we infer from the first few verses of the 6th chapter, the result, as given in verse 4 was, "There were giants in the earth in those days ... the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Another difference that we note about the Cainites, which can hardly be called an accomplishment, was that there is evidence of the practice of polygamy among them. It is said of the Cainite Lamech that he had two wives. There is no record of this kind regarding the Sethites.

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Some Peculiarities of the Sethites

Turning to the record of the descendants of Adam through the line of Seth we immediately notice great differences. Here is an orderly chronology by which time can be reckoned from Adam to the flood to the exact year. While no ages and no time is stated in the record of the Cainites.

There is no mention of cities, musical instruments, workers in iron, or great men, or earthly possessions. No accomplishments are named about any of them. Instead three great facts are recorded of each: the date of his birth, the date of the birth of his covenant son, the date of his death. Incidentally it is also stated that they had other sons and daughters. So regularly does the phrase "and he died" occur that it seems like walking through an ancient graveyard to read the fifth chapter of Genesis.

But there is a notable exception. Concerning one of these patriarchs there is no record of death. There is, as it were, one grave in the list without a victim. It is recorded of him that while he lived, after the birth of Methuselah, he "walked with God," with the climax, "he was not, for God took him." From the New Testament record (Heb. 11:5) we know the manner of his taking: "Enoch was translated that he should not see death."

But why, in a record so brief, should so much be made of the fact that these patriarchs died? There is no such record of the Cainites, though we know death reigned from Adam onward. May it not be because, as written in Prov. 14:32, "the righteous hath hope in his death"? There was no hope in the Cainite death, so it is not mentioned. It was doubtless a subject not dwelt on by them. Again it is written in the 11th of Hebrews: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

The Cainites behaved as dwellers on the earth. Neither the date of their arrival or departure is recorded. But the Sethite patriarchs, those who are named in the fifth chapter, note when their pilgrimage began and ended.

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03 -- THE ROYAL LINE OF CHRIST

Why Some Old Testament Names are Prominent in Genealogies

Though we have given two previous chapters to the genealogies of Cain and Seth in the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis, there yet remains much that might be said on the subject.

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Why These Names and Not Others?

Without further attention at this time to the names in the Cainite list, let us give close attention in this article to the names in the Sethite list. We read regarding every one of these patriarchs, except Noah, that they "begat sons and daughters." The inference is that each of these patriarchs was the father of a very large family.

But, in spite of the large families these patriarchs evidently reared, we have but a single son named in each case, except in the cases of Adam and Noah, the men at each end of the genealogy. In the case of Adam there are reasons why more than one son is named, and later we may be able to find a reason for naming three sons of Noah.

The question naturally arises, in view of the large families reared by these patriarchs, why has but a single man of each family come down to us in the sacred records? and why these particular names? Were these the oldest sons, or is there some other characteristic that determined that their names should be recorded in this oldest genealogy in the world?

* * *

The Evident Reason Plain

One who has never examined this list of names might be puzzled for a long time in trying to discover a reason for their presence in the sacred record. Probably the average Bible reader passes them by with little thought. But here is an inspired record, the oldest list of names in the world, handed down from generation to generation, written by Moses fifteen centuries before Christ, copied in the book of Chronicles, and copied again in the New Testament. And strange to say, not one other name of any other son or daughter of any of these patriarchs has come down to us. All the other names perished with the records of the world before the flood. But here these names stand an unbroken line from Adam to the flood, by which the 1656 years of the ante-diluvian period can be measured to the year.

An examination of the list as it is copied backward in Luke 3:36-38 ought to open to us the secret of these names. They are the names of the men who were the ancestors of Jesus Christ from Adam to the flood, as the other names in the list of Luke Chapter 3 bring the record the remainder

of the way across the centuries to Christ. The promise was given to Eve that her seed should bruise the serpent's head, and she was on the lookout for that seed. Cain might have been the progenitor of that seed in his generation, but his bloodless religion with its offering of the fruit of the ground made him unfit for the deposit with him of the seed that should eventually, after many generations, foster the promised Seed, the Son of God.

* * *

What Determined Which Son?

The first answer to this question would naturally be that these sons are the first-born of their respective fathers. But this cannot in every case be true. We know that it was at least the third son of Adam who comes in the ancestral line of Christ, and there may have been reasons why the first-born in other cases did not qualify for the responsibility involved.

Reference to Noah's family, who is the only other one besides Adam who has more than one son named confirms the suggestion that it is not always the oldest son that is named in the genealogy. Noah's sons are named in the order Shem, Ham, and Japheth; but Gen. 10:21 mentions Japheth as the elder, and Gen. 9:22-24 shows Ham to have been the younger son, leaving Shem to be the middle son of the three, but he, as the covenant son, is named first.

Examination of the ages of the patriarchs when their named son is born confirms this view that the first-born was not always the one whose name has come to us. Whereas Mahalaleel was sixty-five when Jared was born, Jared sixty-two when Enoch was born, and Enoch 65 when Methuselah was born; Methuselah was one hundred and eighty-seven when Lamech was born, and Lamech one hundred and eighty-two, and Noah was five hundred when it is stated his sons were born. Is it not likely that, while high hopes would center on the first-born in each case, as in the case of Cain, nevertheless these hopes were often disappointed until a later son came into the family that inherited the covenant position?

Does not this explain how these patriarchs before the flood were among those mentioned in the eleventh of Hebrews who "all died in faith"?

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04 -- FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD

Some Observations Concerning the Span of Years Covered by the Ages of the Patriarchs

It might seem that we had said all that was interesting and profitable about the names of the patriarchs before the flood, having dealt with the subject in three preceding papers; but, like all the Bible, one can never say all that might be said. That so much is wrapped up in a mere list of names, with the briefest biographical sketches possible, suggests how rich we may expect the more interesting portions of the Bible can be made if carefully studied in detail.

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Two Men's Ages Span the Period

People are sometimes puzzled to know how, without a Bible, or other written record, the memory of Eden and the dealings of God with the race in its infancy were kept fresh in the minds of succeeding generations. This genealogy answers the question. Adam lived 930 years of the 1656, and Methuselah 969 years of that period. Their combined ages were 1899 years. Adam lived from the beginning of the period, and Methuselah died the last year of it. As their combined ages equal 1899, and the entire period was only 1656, therefore Adam and Methuselah were on the earth together for 243 years. Here was ample time and opportunity for Methuselah to learn from Adam all the details of God's early dealings with the race.

Since Methuselah lived until the flood, and Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood, therefore Noah had 600 years of opportunity in learning from Methuselah what had taken place from the time Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden to the end of his life. Noah in turn lived after the flood 350 years, and could have told several succeeding generations all the history of the world before the flood only at third hand.

In tracing this we do not mean to infer that Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible, including this interesting record of the world before the flood, obtained his information by this means. Moses, left to himself, would not have known what of all the interesting things brought down to this day, as they doubtless were, was profitable for the purpose of the Bible and was not. He wrote by inspiration of God and thereby not only was he guided what to write, but was also he was preserved from recording any mistakes that might have crept into the oral account handed down from generation to generation. On the other hand, had Moses concocted the story out of his own mind, there would have been those even in his day who would have detected the spuriousness and discarded it. It could never have become an acceptable history for Israel if it had been a fabricated story.

* * *

None of These Patriarchs Drowned

To one who has never thought of it, it is rather remarkable, considering the great ages to which men lived before the flood, and how often there were several generations living at the same time, that none of the patriarchs were drowned in the flood, and that Noah was the only one [of the patriarchs] in the ark.

Whereas in the year 900 there were nine of these patriarchs living, including all from Adam to Lamech, the father of Noah; in the year 1656, Noah was the only ante-diluvian patriarch living, Methuselah dying that year before the flood came. How faithful is the New Testament record, "These all died in faith." A wicked world was overwhelmed, and doubtless millions perished in the flood, but not one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ before the flood was involved in it.

* * *

Christ in You the Hope of Glory

In the New Testament (Col. 1:27) we read "Christ in you the hope of glory." The hope of coming glory on the part of these patriarchs was that Christ was in them seminally; but the hope of those since Christ has been made flesh is that He dwells in our hearts by faith. As these ancient ones in whom Christ thus dwelt (and they also had faith) escaped the Judgmental flood of water in the days of Noah, even so those in Whom Christ now dwells shall escape the Judgmental flood of fire at the Second Coming of Christ.* Not one will perish in it.

Even this list of names is made an incentive to faith.

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*I have edited this sentence to bring it into line with what I believe to be a more Scriptural prophetic statement. -- DVM

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THE END