

Meet Nabi Tajima. She is from Japan and on the 15th of this month she became the oldest person living in the world today whose age can be verified. She was born on 4th August 1900, which makes her an amazing 117 years and 50 days old.

She has a huge family of more than 140 descendants, including 28 grandchildren, 56 great-grandchildren, and 35 great-great-grandchildren.

But she has a while to go before she matches Jeanne Calment who is the oldest person on record. She died on 4th August 1997 at the ripe old age of 122 years and 164 days.

Interestingly, Jeanne also outlived a Mr Raffray. When Jeanne was 90, Mr Raffray bought the apartment she used to live in on a contingency contract. This meant that he would pay her the equivalent of about €400 a month until she died, and then the apartment would become his.

He thought that he was getting a bargain. But when Raffray died at the age of 77, he had paid more than \$180,000, more than double the apartment's market value.

It is amazing that some people, mostly women of course, can live for so long. And yet, compared to the people that we're going to read about this morning in Genesis 5, even their lives are incredibly short. But within this passage is the hope of a life that goes on forever! Genesis 5:1-27: ["This is the written account of Adam's line."](#)

[When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man".](#)

[³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. ⁴ After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.](#)

[⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. ⁷ And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.](#)

[⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.](#)

[¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.](#)

[¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.](#)

[¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹ And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.](#)

[²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²² And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.](#)

[²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died."](#)

1. Unique Design & Purpose

A couple of months back we noted that the Book of Genesis is divided up into sections by the phrase, "This is the account of..." So our passage this morning begins another of those sections because it begins, ["This is the written account of Adam's line."](#) Genesis 5:1.

Last week we were looking at one branch of this, through Cain. But here the focus is on Adam's descendants through Seth. He was the son granted to Adam and Eve in the place of their righteous son Abel whom Cain killed. He was going to be the start of a new family line that would seek after God.

But before we get into this family tree, this section reminds us of the uniqueness of the design and purpose of human beings.

a) Created By God

["God created man... He created them male and female."](#) Genesis 5:1. We're not here by chance, living out meaningless and purposeless lives, the product of millions of years of random mutations and natural selection. Instead each of us have been carefully designed and created by God. We are God's masterpiece, made with a unique and wonderful purpose and plan for our lives.

b) The Image of God

That's because "He made him in the likeness of God." Genesis 5:1 We are not identical to God. There are many ways that God is so different from us. But we were made to be like him. We were made:

- To resemble God - morally, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, relationally.
- To represent God's rule on earth – taking the responsibility of leadership in this world, caring for this world as God cares for it.
- To reflect God's glory in a unique and wonderful way.

c) Blessed By God

And so God also "Blessed them." Genesis 5:2. God put his divine favour on us in a special way.

d) Even After the Fall

But as we've seen, the sin in the Garden of Eden means that we've all fallen short of this design and purpose. We've rebelled against God. We've messed up our lives and this world.

But amazingly this doesn't mean that God's design and purpose in our lives is completely lost or destroyed. "When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth." Genesis 5:4 Seth was born in the likeness and image of Adam, who was created in the likeness and image of God!

So although sin has deformed and distorted our lives – this passage says we still have the value and dignity of God's image bearers. We're still created in his likeness. We are still called to resemble God, represent his rule and reflect his glory.

2. Unbelievable Ages

But this passage does demonstrate the impact of sin in all our lives. "Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died." Genesis 5:5

The first thing that jumps out of that verse, I think, is that number. Adam lived 930 years. And then Seth lived 912 years, Enosh 905, Kenan 910, Mahalalel 895, Jared 962 and the longest of all Methuselah 969! Are we meant to believe that these guys all lived nearly 1000 years?

Well some people say no, this is a mistranslation. Instead of years, these numbers refer to months. This makes Methuselah 78.5 years old when he died. The problem is that it also makes his dad, Enoch, only 5 years old when Methuselah was born.

Others suggest that these are not the lifespan of individuals but of a dynasty. It's not that Methuselah lived for 969 years, but his clan had dominion for this long. But this isn't what the passage says, and it doesn't make any sense when it goes on to describe what individuals in it did and said.

And then some people just reject this passage as nothing more than the ignorant myth of a primitive people. After all they say, there are other cultures with at least superficially similar stories. For example the Sumerian Kings List is an ancient stone tablet with a list of 8 kings whose lives span thousands of years – followed by a flood.

But those sceptics can't answer why there are such similar myths across so many diverse cultures. Is it not more likely that they point back to some historical truth. And so these myths in other cultures actually support the historical reliability of the Genesis account.

And so Paul wrote: "All Scripture is God-breathed." 2 Timothy 3:16. All of it is inspired by God and so all of it is true. And so when Luke listed the family line of Jesus, he traced it right back to Adam through all these men mentioned here. So I also believe that this chapter is the literal and accurate family line of Adam.

a) Possible Explanations

But is it not just impossible for human beings to live that long? But our problem is that we are basing that conclusion on the evidence of what we can observe today. And today, even with all the benefits of modern science and medicine, the maximum seems to be stuck around the 120 mark.

But we don't know how different life was for Adam and his close relatives. The lifespans recorded in the Bible drastically drop after the flood. Is it possible that the flood caused a catastrophic change in the environment, or a genetic bottleneck with only 8 survivors, that shortened human lifespans?

Others have suggested this these long lifespans were possible because there hadn't been thousands of years of genetic

mutations passed down to them in their DNA. Much of the science of ageing is still unknown, but we do know that even a single point mutation can radically increase the speed of aging. The kids who suffer from progeria, show symptoms which resemble the affects of aging and have tragically short lifespans.

3. Universal Death

But however we get our heads around these long ages, the other part of Genesis 5:5 is more readily accepted. “Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.” Adam and his descendants may have lived for a long time, but they didn’t live for ever. Each of them, apart from one (as we’ll see in a bit) died.

This is easier for us to accept because it matches our experience. This weeks’ news said that people died in hurricanes in the Caribbean, in earthquakes in Mexico, in ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, through another murder in Dublin and another farm accident in the south of our county. But every day it is estimated that 150,000 people die. This is the reality of our world. Death comes to us all. Ecclesiastes 3:1–2 says: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die.”

a) Because of Universal Sin

But that doesn’t mean that death is a natural part of the cycle of life. We instinctively feel that death is wrong. I’ve never stood at the grave of a loved one and thought that their life was long enough, that we spent enough time together.

And the Bible agrees that death is an enemy, an invader in God’s perfect world. “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12 This is why death is our universal experience – because of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, we are all sinners and we have all fallen short of God’s glorious standard, and the wages of our sin is death.

And so this account of Adam’s line is a record of life and death, an ongoing pattern that everyone has to follow.

4. Unexpected Absence

Well nearly everyone. There is one man here whose experience was radically different – and he offers to us all an amazing hope.

a) Walking With God

“After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years.” Genesis 5:22 Becoming a parent is a life-changing moment for many people, and it seems like it was for Enoch. When his son was born, he began to walk with God.

As a result of his sin, when Adam heard God walking in the Garden of Eden, he said, “I was afraid... so I hid.” Genesis 3:10 His rebellion destroyed his relationship of love with God and replaced it with guilt and fear.

And when Cain murdered his brother, he ended up even further away from God as “Cain went out from the Lord’s presence.” Genesis 4:16

But “Enoch walked with God.” Genesis 5:22. The distance and separation as a result of sin was overcome. Communion with God was restored. Enoch lived in the knowledge of God’s presence, in the joy of God’s friendship.

b) Saved By Faith

But how was this possible? How was Enoch able to walk in fellowship and love with God?

Well, this wasn’t because Enoch was perfect or sinless. The Bible is clear, “There is no-one righteous, not even one.” Romans 3:10. We’ve all sinned against God in thought, in word, in action. We’ve all done what we shouldn’t, and not done what we should.

Neither was this because Enoch was religious. No amount of prayers, offerings or ceremonies can overcome the barrier of our sin. “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22 The price of Enoch’s sin had to be paid for – and the price of sin is death!

So how was Enoch able to walk in communion with God? Well, Hebrews 11:5–6 says “He was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Enoch was able to walk with God because of his faith in God. Yes, this changed how Enoch lived his life. This would impact his attitudes, actions and ambitions. This would lead him to seek God each day, spend time in prayer and serve God

faithfully. **“Faith without deeds is dead.”** James 2:26 If our faith doesn’t impact our lives, then it isn’t real, saving faith.

But it was faith that brought Enoch into relationship with God. It was faith that overcame the separation of sin. It was faith that saved him. And it is the same for us. We can only be saved through faith in Christ as **“Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”** Acts 10:43

c) Speaking For God

But Enoch also shows why putting our faith in Christ is so important for each of us. Some suggest that Enoch was warned about the coming flood, because he called his son Methuselah, a name which some people suggest means, “When he dies it shall come.” And through working out the lifespans given here show that Methuselah did indeed die just before the flood.

If that is all true, then we shouldn’t be surprised that Methuselah’s lifespan is the longest recorded in the Bible, as **“He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”** 2 Peter 3:9

But the letter of Jude in the New Testament tells us that Enoch saw even further ahead to a judgement that is still to come. Jude says that Enoch said, **“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done.”** Jude 14–15

And so Enoch’s words are still a serious warning to this world. Yes in mercy God is still waiting, but one day the Lord would come with thousands of his angels to judge everyone and convict all those who stand guilty before God.

It is the warning we need to share with this world. It is the warning we need to heed ourselves. If we’re here this morning and we’re still not walking with God through faith in Jesus, then we mustn’t delay any longer. Judgement is coming.

d) Going to Be With God

But if Enoch’s words are a warning of judgement to come for this world, his experience is a wonderful preview of the life to come for us who have trusted in Jesus. After he lived 365 years, **“Enoch... was no more, because God took him away.”** Genesis 5:24

Unlike all the rest of Adam’s line, Enoch didn’t die. Instead God wonderfully stepped in and saved him from death, and took him straight into the glory of his presence.

And this is the hope for all who have trusted in Jesus. **“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.”** 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

For us who have trusted in Jesus, death is not the end. The grave is not our final destination. Instead those who have died in Christ, will one day be raised. And some who are alive when Christ returns will like Enoch go to be with him forever without even passing through death.

This is the victory that Jesus won for us on the cross. When he died in our place and rose again on the third day, Jesus defeated sin. He broke the chains of death. And he transformed our destiny. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** John 3:16

Conclusion

And so the written account of Adam’s line is not a hopeless catalogue of the impact of sin in this world. Yes for now there is the experience of life and death. Yes for now we struggle and suffer in this fallen world.

But we have this sure and certain hope that sin will not have the final say in our lives.

Because of Jesus we can have the present joy of daily walking in fellowship with God and we can look forward in confidence to that wonderful day when Jesus will come back, when we will see him face to face, and we will go to be with him forever!

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