Background

Chapter 5 is another genealogy, which tends to bore modern readers. However, knowing your family tree was a matter of life, pride and sometimes your job (*Ez 2:62*) at the time the Bible was written (and still is, in some cultures).

Note that most ancient genealogies would only list "important" figures that related to the topic at hand. So, a firstborn child may not be listed if a subsequent child was more related to the story. Or a man may have been said to "father" a grand or great-grandchild if the interceding generations weren't of note. We're going to see this right away in v3 where Adam's first listed child is Seth. This makes sense to the story since:

1. Cain, the firstborn, was disowned and exiled
2. Abel, the secondborn, was dead
3. The line of the promise (i.e., Christ) would come through Seth. (*Lk 3:23-38*)
4. If we listed every child Adam had in his 930 years, the Bible would be too heavy to carry.

The nice part for us readers is that there's a lot of really good information in this genealogy so don't skip it!

Read Genesis 5

v1-2 We have here summary reminders of God's creation of man in His image, genders and the blessings given to man (likely part of why humans were not directly cursed due to sin).

v3 Likewise, Adam is described as producing a child "in his likeness, after his image". We discussed marriage to siblings in the last chapter, so be sure to catch up on the old lessons if you've not already done so.

v5 Every entry in the genealogy ends with the unfortunate reminder of the results of sin: "then he died."

cf. Ro 5:12

v3-32 Since these people had overlapping lifespans (and some may have been skipped, as mentioned in the Background section), we have no idea how much time this chapter encompasses, though it was certainly more than 1,500 years.

Q (v3-32): Some scholars have said that the ages listed here cannot be real and must instead be a sort of numerical representation of the person's importance. Do you agree? Why or why not?
Hint: Does this topic relate to any of our major discussions in previous chapters?

v21-24 Enoch is the first of two mysterious figures in the Bible. All that we know of him is that he had a very close relationship with God (*Heb 11:5*)...so much so that instead of dying, God simply took him away. The only other person that we know this happened to was Elijah (*2 Kings 2:11*).

As we mentioned in an earlier lesson, the stuff God put in the Bible, He put in for a reason. Likewise, the stuff He left out, He left out for a reason. So, as much as our curiosity is piqued, God didn't feel that we needed to know more about Enoch at this time. There was a more recent "Book of Enoch" written (likely compiled), that may have some actual divinely-inspired writing of Enoch in it. However, it also contains a lot of conflicting information with the Bible and the authorship and date of the included writings are highly suspect. For these and other reasons it is considered apocryphal (false, non-canon, excluded) by both Jews and Christians. Stick with your Bible, not the tabloids.

v27 If you ever heard someone or something old called "Methuselah", now you know where it came from. Like his father, there's a ton of tradition as to what Methuselah did in his life, but none is recorded in Scripture, and as such, we must consider it of dubious authority. He died the same year as the upcoming Flood.

v28 In the first Biblically-recorded example of prophecy through a human, Lamech names his son Noah ("comfort" or "rest") in expectation of the change to come to the world that Noah would play a pivotal part of.

Q (v29): Considering Lamech's only recorded words,
       what do you think of mankind's constant search for earthly immortality?
       (e.g. The Philosopher's Stone, The Fountain of Youth, gene-therapy to stop aging, mind-uploading)

v32 Here's the second obvious example of a genealogy being tailored to the author's purpose: Seth was the middle child (*10:21*) and yet was listed first. Why? Because through him, the nation of Israel and Christ would follow. Shem is the source of the term "Semite".