

Read Your Begats

Gen 11:10

**10 These are the generations of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood.
(KJV)**

Family trees can be pretty dry stuff. However, we need to pause here and learn some lessons. The Holy Spirit has breathed these words that we might find some profit in them. His desire is to ultimately introduce us to Abram (Abraham), but He cuts no corners! He would care to have us know and appreciate a few things related to Abram's "roots". I would have you take, perhaps for the first time, an avid interest in the "begats".

Many years ago, during my original study of these verses, I took the effort to graph the lives of each of the ten men along a time continuum. I found the results to be both interesting and beguiling. Shem is of particular interest! Notice that he lived the first ninety-eight years of his life in the old world! The next fact requires some calculation, but when this is done, we find that Shem's long life was such that it unfolded concurrently with the lives of the next nine generations (Abram outlived him). I imagine Shem and Abram living in the same neighborhood. If this were the case and Abram had access to pop into Shem's house (tent) from time to time, one wonders what stories the old man might have told. Certainly, he had seen things that no other person in all of remaining time would ever witness again. What great creatures had Shem beheld? He could have told Abram of a world without rain and seasons. He could have related his reaction the first time that he witnessed snow fall from the heavens. What might he have had to say concerning the goodness and severity of God? What names and faces would he have carried to his grave knowing that these had disdained the mercy of their Creator and that no kindness would ever again be offered them? What thankfulness would he have felt for the extraordinary mercy shown to those who were inside the ark when the door was shut?

I would have you notice a few additional things: Ten generations are called out in the context of our verse. Shem very nearly outlived them all. From this fact we may understand that our race was severely injured as a consequence of the fall. Within Shem's era, the lifespan of our race had already been diminished by a little more than two-thirds (Shem lives to be 600 hundred years and Abram 175). Shem stands upon the threshold of a new world. He had witnessed the old crushed and washed away by the judgment of God. Together with the last of his generation they stand as great redwoods - witnesses if you will - upon the horizon of time. They were the only living beholders of a world now effaced and gone forever!

Next, I would have you see that we have come to Abram in the scriptures and we have not yet been introduced to the Jews. That is because, though the Jews are in Abram, they are still two generations from being! The Jews are quick to claim Abram as their father and they are right to do so! However, he is also the father of many other nations. This is

an appropriate fact since we are told that he is also the father of ALL THE FAITHFUL (Rom. 4). I get a blessing from this truth!

On this brief visit we have looked at some of the detail. From such do we learn the minuteness of the Father's interest in us. The Lord knows each individual. He recounts the years of each life and enumerates and names each child. Though men die, the Lord of all life lives on. He both causes and notes the coming of each new shoot and bud. He knows us!

Read your begats!

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