

THE ANCIENT PATRIARCHS IN GENESIS

by: Bodie Hodge, AiG-U.S., January 20, 2009

Imagine the possible headlines of long ago:

“Methuselah and Adam Have Long Talk”

“Noah outlives great, great, great grandson Peleg”

“Shem and Abraham go fishing”

Many people are unfamiliar with the historical figures in Genesis. It is sometimes difficult to believe that people lived such long lives, too—although they did. (This could be due to the lingering beneficial effects of both humanity's and nature's unfallen state. If the earth's vapor canopy (Gen 1:7; 2:6) remained intact until the Flood (Gen 7:11–24), it may have slowed the aging process by filtering the sun's ultraviolet rays). There is much to learn from these Patriarchs (an early father of the human race).

Many of the ancient people listed in the Bible's genealogies lived very long lives. Methuselah holds the title of oldest-known man at 969 years old. After he died, the Flood came.

After the Flood, we see the ages of these men declining. For example, Noah lived to be 950 years old, Shem to 600, Shelah to 433, and Abraham to 175.

Until the Flood (Noah's day), living to about 900 years old was the norm . . . unless you were Enoch or Lamech. Like Elijah, Enoch was translated without dying (Genesis 5:23; Hebrews 11:5). Lamech, it seems, was a bit unusual by being about a quarter of a century away from making 800.

The book of Genesis spans nearly one-third of world history, but sadly in today's church, much of it is overlooked. Perhaps if we realized the heritage that each of us have from these ancient patriarchs, **we would gain a better understanding of where we came from and where we are going.** Romans 4:3 says: For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

*Surely, there is much to learn from our
ancestors.*