

Who was Methuselah in the Bible?

Genesis 5 tells us about Methuselah, who was the son of righteous Enoch. Enoch is one of only two people in Scripture who did not die but were transported miraculously into heaven (Genesis 5:24). The other, Elijah, was taken up to God in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). When Enoch was 65, he became the father of Methuselah, who lived to be the oldest person on record in human history, at 969 years old.

Methuselah had a son named Lamech who became the father of Noah (Genesis 5:26-29). It is interesting to note that both Lamech and Methuselah were alive when Noah was building the ark, but they both died before the flood. Some have suggested that Noah's grandfather Methuselah died the week before the flood, citing the fact that God told Noah and his family to enter the ark seven days before the rains came (Genesis 7:1, 10). It has been speculated that this seven days was a period of mourning for Methuselah, as was common in humanity's early history (see Genesis 50:4; 2 Samuel 11:27).

While we cannot know this for sure, Scripture does seem to say that, when the flood came, no righteous people were left on the earth except for Noah and his family (Genesis 7:1). Because Methuselah was raised by righteous Enoch, and Methuselah's grandson Noah also walked with God, it seems likely that Methuselah himself was also a godly man. Lamech, too, may have obeyed God and even helped his son build the ark. This family line from Enoch to Noah, descended from Adam's son Seth, appears to have been God-honoring and the only ones through whom God could work His plan to save the world.

Whether Lamech and Methuselah helped to build the ark, we don't know. But we do know that there is much more to the lives of the people we read about than the Bible tells us. They were real people with real relationships and real struggles just as we have.

There is also much more to the story of Noah building the ark than we are told. He worked for many years to build it, and it is doubtful that he worked alone. Was Noah preaching truth to the neighbors who helped him (see 2 Peter 2:5)? Did his father Lamech and grandfather Methuselah help?

Methuselah would have known about God's coming judgment and the reason for the ark, yet he is not mentioned by God as a possible occupant of the ark. He must have also known that he would die before the flood came. He must have understood that the Lord knows the ones who are His and delivers them from His judgment (Malachi 3:16-18). We may not live to be 969 like Methuselah, but, if we belong to God, we can have Methuselah's peace concerning God's coming wrath upon the world.