

Ministry to Generation Z

Generations from a Biblical Perspective

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I. Generations in Scripture

- A. Throughout Scripture, the Israelites were to transfer their faith in God from generation to generation so that the next generation could be faithful to God (Psalm 78:6-8).
- B. The first occurrence of “generations” is *tō·wl·dō·wt* (Genesis 2:4). This refers to people with a familial bloodline connection.
- C. The second occurrence of “generations” is *dōr* (Exodus 3:15, Psalm 100:5). This refers to an age or a time in history.
- D. The third occurrence of “generations” is *wā·dō·wr* (Psalm 33:11, Lamentations 5:19). This refers to a circle of time or a cycle.

II. Generational Timespans in Scripture

- A. Adam lived to be 930 years old (Genesis 5:5).
- B. Seth lived to be 912 years old (Genesis 5:8).
- C. There were nine generations from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5). The transfer of faith and confidence in God was evident from generation to generation.
- D. There were eleven generations from Noah to Abram (Genesis 10-11) and fifty-six years that overlap between Noah’s life and Abram’s life.

III. The Importance of Future Generations in Scripture

- A. Abraham was entrusted with the task of transmitting his faith to the next generation and future generations that would follow after him (Genesis 18:19).
- B. Moses was to teach the Israelites the responsibility of transferring their faith, obedience, and confidence in God to the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:1-7).
- C. Joshua taught the Israelites how they were to teach the next generation, and the nation of Israel faithfully served the LORD during his life (Joshua 24:31).
- D. After Joshua’s death, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not successfully transfer their faith to future generations (Judges 2:10-11; 21:25).
- E. Samuel was called to serve God at the age of eight and served the LORD as a prophet and judge all of his life (1 Samuel 3; 32:19-20).

- F. David was anointed as the second king of Israel at a young age. He was old enough to be entrusted with caring for the sheep but young enough to not serve in the military. God was interested in the next generation (1 Samuel 16-17).
1. In Psalm 71:17-18, David wrote that he had proclaimed God's works to the next generation from his youth and he would continue to do so until his death.
 2. In Psalm 78:5-7, Asaph also stressed the importance of reaching the next generation with faith in God so they would be a generation faithful to God.
 3. In Psalm 145:4, David wrote that one generation has the responsibility to transfer faith to the next generation.
- G. Josiah was made king of Israel at eight years old and he ruled righteously by seeking God. He made sure that the people of Israel—including the young children (*qā·ṭān*)—heard the Law read (2 Chronicles 34:1-5, 29-30).
- H. After the people of Israel returned from being in captivity for seventy years, the older generation lamented when they saw the new temple that was built, but the younger generation rejoiced (Ezra 3:12-13).
- I. Generations during the earthly ministry of Christ
1. Matthew 1 includes a genealogy of Jesus' biological father, Joseph. There were forty-two generations from Abraham to Jesus.
 2. Luke 3:23-28 includes a genealogy of Jesus' biological mother, Mary. There were seventy-seven generations from Adam to Jesus.
 3. Mary knew the importance of generations when she praised God (Luke 1:46-50).
 4. Jesus taught about generations during His earthly ministry, and called them various things, including "an evil and adulterous generation" and "a faithless and twisted generation" (Matthew 16:4; 17:17; Luke 17:25).
 5. In Matthew 18:1-6, Jesus used the illustration of a little child to teach His disciples that children could come to Him. This passage shows that Christians have a solemn responsibility to reach the next generation for Christ!