

Enoch

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1. The Family of Seth

There was once a man named Enoch, and two things describe his life: “He walked with God,” and “He was not, for God took him.”

It was a sad world in which Enoch lived. The multitude walked in “the way of Cain” who slew his brother, and who, for this reason, was driven from God’s presence, and organised the world as we see it today. When Eve listened to the words of the serpent, and the first man fell, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life found a dwelling-place in man’s heart (Gen. 3:6; 1 John 2:16). It was thus, as to its principles, that the world was formed. Shut out from God’s presence, Cain organised it by building the first city, and thus gathering men together in society with all the advantages of wealth, commerce, art, and pleasure (Gen. 4:17, 22). Doubtless this city was possessed of some sort of religion, for Cain was a religious man in his way (Gen. 4:3). What is the difference, let me ask, between Cain’s world and the world of today, unless it be that now the world is fully manifested as the enemy of God, consequent upon the murder and rejection not of Abel, but of the Son of God Himself?

In the days of Enoch, many hundreds of years after the murder of Abel, wickedness had increased on the earth. Men had become ungodly, openly defying God, and their words and actions bore out this impression (Jude 15). A few centuries later, and the earth, “corrupt before God and filled with violence,” was ripe for judgment (Gen. 6:11). Thus we see that even before the Flood there had been phases in man’s history. Between the Deluge and the final judgment by fire there are further phases. Cain’s family, once destroyed, is seen again in its moral characteristics after the cross of Christ, and according to Jude’s epistle it has three successive stages: the “way of Cain,” the “error of Balaam,” and lastly the “gainsaying of Core,” or the open defiance by apostate Christendom of the person of Christ.

Amidst the ruin of Cain’s family, God appoints to Eve in the person of Seth, another seed, instead of righteous Abel whom Cain slew (Gen. 4:25). Seth became the head of a new race, linked by God, not with Cain, but with a slain Abel. He and his descendants were like a resurrection of Abel, the just one. Cain was “of that wicked one” (1 John 3:12), and his family became the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15); but, blessed be God! the death of Abel, as did later that of Christ, bore fruit, and there was then as now a family of God on the earth, created and preserved by Him.

Now let us look at the moral characteristics of the family of Seth. We are told that “to

him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos”—i.e., man, mortal (Gen. 4:26). In thus naming his first-born son, he acknowledged that the judgment of God rested on all men, and that death, the fruit of sin, was their due. Cain admitted this judgment, but did his best to forget it, whereas Seth proclaimed it. To acknowledge oneself to be a lost sinner is faith's first movement.

There was a second trait belonging to Seth's family: "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord." This is a sign of faith. It is written, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14).

To call on the name of the Lord is in the first place to find salvation by faith, with all the countless blessings therein contained. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). But when I possess salvation, then I call upon the name of the Lord to worship Him, and this is the meaning of the expression, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Thenceforth there were worshippers on earth of the true God, and every man of faith in the Old Testament called upon the name of the Lord. Abram built an altar at Bethel, and called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:8). David built an altar at Moriah, and called upon the Lord (1 Chr. 21:26). Elijah built his altar, and called upon the name of the Lord (1 Ki. 18). One might multiply examples. To call upon the Lord is to worship Him, and according to these passages, worship is connected with sacrifice. We become priests unto our God, in virtue of the slain Lamb who is Himself the subject of our adoration before God. "We have an altar. . . . By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. 13:5).

By these two traits we can recognise the family of Seth. Not that all who were born to this man of faith and to his descendants were saved,[At any rate, if I understand the passages rightly, it looks as if the heads of families were men of faith; "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), and "Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5).] for the household of faith at the time of the Flood was reduced to eight persons; but in this descent the link with God was recognised. Nevertheless, as we have seen, death existed, the terrible result of sin. The words "and he died" recur like a funeral dirge all through this chapter. Lamech died five years before, and Methuselah the very year of the Flood, as if the Lord wished to take His own to be with Himself before the great cataclysm. Enoch was born to the family of Seth.

2. Enoch Walked with God

Let us now look at the two things which characterised Enoch, as before mentioned.

The first is that he walked with God.

The principle of his walk was faith, for “without faith it is impossible to please Him,” or to walk with Him. Everything depends on faith, our salvation as well as our conduct. It is a fatal mistake to leave out faith; one grain of it gives life and strength, and the words “Arise, take up thy bed and walk,” remain as evidence of the immediate results of faith.

But Enoch did not merely walk, he walked with God. And here let me observe that to walk with God is quite another thing to God walking with us. The first is the fruit of faith and faithfulness; the second, of redemption. Israel was hardly redeemed out of Egypt when Jehovah began to walk with them, associating Himself in the cloud and in the tabernacle with the wanderings of a people who had found grace in His sight, and whom He had made fit for His presence (Ex. 33:16; Lev. 26:11-13; Deut. 20:4, 31:6). No sooner was the work of redemption accomplished on the cross, and sealed by resurrection, than the Lord drew near to walk with the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:15). It is a striking fact that He associates Himself with them, because He had made them fit to be His companions. Truly these two were not possessed of any great faith or intelligence, their very journey was distancing them from Jerusalem, but Jesus could walk with them, when they were far from qualified to walk with Him. Let us never doubt the truth of this. Our assurance springs from what God is for us, and what He has made us for Himself, and although our enjoyment depends on the measure of our faithfulness, still He who has made us “accepted in the Beloved” can never turn away His face from us.

To walk with God is another thing. To walk with some one necessitates our being together. Enoch, though on the earth, walked in company with God. He lived a heavenly life outside the principles which govern men’s conduct. His walk was characterised by principles which flowed from communion with God in heaven.

Communion is inseparable from a walk with God. “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). When we walk with God, there is unison of thought, conduct, and aim between us and Him.

The immediate result of a walk with God is, as before stated, to reproduce down here the divine character and heavenly principles. One man alone has carried out this in perfection, and His walk must ever be the absolute pattern for ours; but having the same life, the same love, the same spirit, we can more or less perfectly copy the pattern. To walk with God, my heart must have an object, God Himself, as He has revealed Himself in Christ I am occupied with Christ as He is in heaven, and I reproduce in my walk this heavenly man as He was in this world. Thus my life is the manifestation of that which I possess in Christ in heaven, and the life of Jesus down here is my example.

How is it possible to enumerate the varied characters of Christ as man? His whole life, His every word, step, and action, are the demonstration of the heavenly life, for "He went about doing good." Psalm 16 depicts the manifestation of the divine life in Him in the pathway of service. He walked with God in perfect holiness, having no other object but Him. Confidence, dependence, humility; finding His delight in those who pleased God absolute separation from evil; seeking His portion in God only; entire satisfaction with the lot that had fallen to Him; praise, assurance, and joy; hope, prospective enjoyment of the glory—all this and much more was seen in Christ. Let us read, too, Psalm 17, which is the path, not so much of the saint, as of the righteous one; righteousness of speech, heart, and conduct (vv. 1-5). Is it not wonderful? There has been a man, Jehovah's "fellow," a man whose "fellows" we have become, who has walked with God in absolute perfection. If we want other passages to show it, let us read the gospels, and worship as we trace His footprints. Let us watch Him in the expression of His love, His inexhaustible love, yet never belying Himself. His every act was love, and even when He proclaimed judgment, we can see how His love suffers. "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:36-37).

Was He not also the expression of God's word to man? "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). And again this word addressed to Levi: "The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Mal. 2:6).

May we have grace to walk in the steps of this beloved Saviour, to be imitators of God as dear children, and to walk in love as Christ has loved us.

Enoch walked with God three hundred years. During three centuries his character of a heavenly stranger was maintained. Those who bring divine principles amongst men are always strangers. As a new-born babe, Jesus was a stranger in the inn; later on He had not where to lay His head; the Pharisees said of Him, "We know not whence He is;" and the people said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Finally, in that solemn hour, when all God's glory was manifested in His sacrifice, they say, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

His course of thirty-three and a half years was morally of infinite length, and far more complete than Enoch's three hundred years, because it was the Lord Himself, God become man, who accomplished it. How humbling it is for us to see how far short we come even of Enoch, we who walk with God perhaps only one day, and on the morrow have lost sight of our object, and forgotten that we belong to heaven!

The expression (Heb. 11:5) “walked with God” is quoted in the Septuagint version as “pleased God,” for these two things go together as we see in Colossians 1:10, “That we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” If we walk in the footsteps of Christ, we must please God, for He has said, “In Him is all My delight.” God can find His delight in us also to whom He has given faith and a nature capable of loving and serving Him. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” By faith Enoch drew nigh to an unseen God, realised His presence, and walked with Him, looking to the future for a reward. Scripture not only says that he pleased God, but that before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. His translation was not the testimony, neither is it recorded that God gave him a bright testimony before the world, that being reserved for a future day; but he received the testimony that he pleased God, like Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. This suffices to a faithful soul. “If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17). The heart has the witness in itself of a favour consequent on faithfulness.

3. Enoch: His Testimony

Not only did Enoch receive a testimony, he rendered one. Doubtless his life as a heavenly stranger in this scene spoke for itself, but before his translation he was permitted to witness publicly for the Lord, in whom he believed. Like Abraham, the friend of God, he became the depository of God’s hidden counsels, and in proclaiming them before the world, he was the first of the prophets.

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints” (Jude 14-16). The Lord is the principal subject of his prophecy, as indeed with all the prophets. He shows that the Lord is on the point of claiming His rights, and that He will come in glory with His own to execute judgment. Such was the hope of this man of faith. He received a revelation, which though not actually the mystery of the rapture of the Church, yet forms part of it: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all.” Also in 1 Thessalonians 4, before speaking of the rapture of the saints, the apostle says, “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”

Some have objected that these myriads of saints are simply angels, as in the passage, “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance” (2 Thess. 1:7), or, as in Deuteronomy 33:2, “He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of His saints.” But without excluding angels, other passages in the Old and New Testament show us who they are who will come with the Lord at His appearing. “The Lord my God shall come, and all

the saints with Thee” (Zech. 14:5). “At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (1 Thess. 3:13). “And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean.” “The fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:14, 8). It will therefore be the saints who will accompany Him, “when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day” (2 Thess. 1:10), the day when He will be revealed with His mighty angels.

Such was the testimony which Enoch rendered to the Lord, and in so doing he publicly affirmed his hope, and at the same time proclaimed the judgment reserved for the world. His prophecy was not confined to the men of his day, for Scripture is careful to tell us that “no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,” and all prophecies carry us on to a future period. Besides it says, “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying” (Jude 14). Who are “these”? The ungodly of the last days, belonging to Christendom. “These,” says Jude, “are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear” (v. 12). “These are murmurers” (v. 16). “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves” (vv. 17-19).

Enoch in his short prophecy went beyond the limits of the revelation made to all the prophets of Israel. He did not look at judgment as confined to Israel and the nations in the future, but as applying to men in our day, who have been depositaries of the truth of God, and who have corrupted themselves, and will form part of apostate Christendom. “To execute,” he says, “judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (v. 15).

4. Enoch: “He was not”

The first thing recorded of Enoch was that he walked with God; the second, that he “was not, for God took him.” And this event was intimately and indissolubly connected with his faith and walk—observe the expression, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death” (Heb. 11:5).

One would rather have expected to read, “By faith he pleased God and then he was translated;” but no, his translation formed part, so to speak, of his course of faith. It was the aim of his life, which reached on to his translation, although probably it was not revealed to him beforehand. But he knew that the Lord would come with ten thousand of His saints, and it was such a reality to his soul, that he said, “Behold the Lord has come” [See J.N.D.’s translation in German, French, and English.] (Jude 14). It

was a thing ever present to his soul, he lived in view of the blessed prospect, and lo, suddenly his faith was confirmed by the event taking place. He was caught up to be with the Lord, and to return with Him. His life on earth, as we have seen, had been a heavenly one; it had begun in heaven and was going to be continued there. His existence was not divided into two parts, earthly and heavenly. His life had brought heaven to earth, and now it carried back heaven to heaven.

Even to think of it is extremely humbling, for this man of God was far from possessing the full extent of the revelations made to us. The eternal counsels reserved for us were hidden from him, he had never known the Word made flesh; he had neither seen, heard, nor touched what the apostles had seen and communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. And yet he had lived three hundred years with one object in view, for the Lord was his object, and he reached his goal without faltering. Could the Lord say of us, "By faith they were translated!" Yet He has said to us, "I come quickly," and we believe it and know it. How are our days spent? To what purpose is our activity? Is a coming Lord the end of our course? Is He the bright guiding-star amidst the darkness? If we were really waiting for the Lord, how clear our testimony would be, for this hope is the spring of all Christian life.

Moreover, even if the believer has, like so many of the saints, to pass through death, to die or live, should not make much difference to him, except that to die is gain. For the apostle Paul, to live, was to live with and for Him. Was not to die, also to live with and for Him?

Enoch did not die; he was translated "that he should not see death." He was the first witness to a power which had during three centuries withdrawn him morally from a region of death to enjoy life with God, and which was also able, instead of raising his dead body, to transport him alive out of this scene, stripping him of everything mortal. Enoch was the first to realise the words, "This mortal must put on immortality." By faith he thus escaped the lot common to man, which is, "once to die." By faith he also escaped the impending judgment which so soon overtook the world, and was kept from the hour of temptation which came upon all the habitable earth (compare Rev. 3:10).

Enoch's faith qualified him to be almost [I say "almost," remembering the call of Rebekah, which is another striking type of the Church.] the only type of the future destiny of the saints, the mystery which was not yet revealed in the Old Testament.

It is said of Enoch that he "was not found because God had translated him" (Heb. 11:5). When he disappeared men sought for him as they did later on for Elijah, but they did not find him. The world had lost Enoch. They had not troubled themselves about him during his life, but once he was gone they would perhaps have liked to

recall him. It was too late. The world will never more see Jesus coming in grace, nor will they see those who, however feebly, have brought them some echo of the grace of Jesus. Christ in the perfection of His character, personally present among men, had shone like the sun over this poor world, and lighted it with the full daylight of His divine beauty. One would have thought that in presence of His perfect grace, the world could not be indifferent; but let us see what they did.

With a few strokes of the axe and hammer they made a common gibbet and nailed Him to it like the vilest criminal, He whose only crime lay in being the personification of beauty and goodness. Next the world invites men to another spectacle which it has been preparing for centuries, a magnificent pedestal of marble, alabaster, ivory, gold, and every precious thing. It already reaches up to the clouds, almost to heaven itself, and when it is completed the world will place its ideal upon it, man filthy with wickedness and hatred, corrupt, belching out infamy, slave of Satan and enemy of God, man whose murderous hands are red with the blood of the Just One. But God, who has highly exalted the Crucified One, will precipitate man from his pedestal. "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors, as a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image."

Yes, the world will not see Christ except in judgment. When once the saints are caught up to be with their Saviour, they will no longer be found. After that, until the final judgment, there will be no sun or light for the world, no beauty or goodness, no rest or peace, no holiness or justice, no love or mercy, nothing, in fact, which has any Divine savour. Alas, alas! What will be left for man? The power of evil and violence, hatred and blasphemy, the reign of all that is subversive of every moral principle, corruption in all its hideousness, revolting even to those who loved it. Nothing to console or ease or attract the heart, only sorrow and anguish and such endless despair that they will seek death a thousand times and not be able to die. It will be the reign of night on the earth, the invasion of the power of darkness.[See the whole of the Apocalypse.]

But of Enoch it was said, "God took him." The friend of God could at length enjoy the full satisfaction of the joy of His face. To this lowly pilgrim the right was given to dwell in the glory even before judgment overtook the world. For Enoch it was the conclusion of a continuous heavenly walk.

May we have a similar history; may our life resemble Enoch's, and may we reach the goal like he did!

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