

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Enoch Walked with God

"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." (Genesis 5:24)

Genesis 5 is filled with a lot of words like "begot" and names like "Cainan" or "Mahalalel" and "Lamech." People are living hundreds of years. That's distant stuff. But, in the middle of all this is a brief account of a man named Enoch. Not much is given about his life, but one phrase is used that stands out — "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (v. 24). On the surface, that sounds like something we should be able to understand. But the more we think about it, the more distant and bizarre it sounds as well. Of the eleven people mentioned in this chapter, representing hundreds or even thousands of years, he is the only one of whom this statement is made. So, what does it mean?

There are a couple of routes we can take in understanding this. One, that in some unusual way, he more literally walked with God, just as of Moses we are told he interacted with God "face to face" (Exodus 33:11). This seems to have some merit because his passing from this world suggests his exit was rather unusual as well. Repeatedly, we are told of each one listed, "And he died."

Only of Enoch are we told "and God took Him."

Most agree, though, that it simply meant that he was a rare godly man in a world that was slowly spiraling deeper and deeper into unrepentant sin. In fact, when chapter 6 reveals mankind's point of no return, we find the same statement made of Noah (6:9). Different variations of the phrase are found in other passages, either of people or as an admonition to people: Micah 6:8 speaks of walking humbly with God; Deuteronomy 6:8 of walking humbly in His ways; 2 Chronicles 7:17 of faithfully following God. Paul spoke often in his letters of our walk being our way of life (Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10, etc.); John speaks of "walking in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:6-7). If this is the case, then this passage isn't as mystical or other-worldly as it seems at first. It is practical and doable for us as well as it was for Enoch. What does it look like? Walking with God means to be faithful, obedient and committed to Him. Or, as Micah

wrote in Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

So, we have two ways to look at this, both viable possibilities. Either this man was so godly that God had a special and very unique relationship with him. Or, that his walk spoke of his extreme devotion to God. This devotion made him stand out among the peers of his day. Let us determine to walk with God, in fellowship with Him, emulating Him (justice, mercy) and seeking to please Him in everything we do. Let's apply that to our lives.

- Mark McCrary

Covetousness and Its Cure

After one carefully studies the Scriptures it becomes obvious that God wants His people to keep their minds focused on things above.

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4).

When we have such an outlook, we will always be seeking to lay up treasure in heaven where it never can be taken away.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

This doesn't mean that we can't put aside something for a rainy day or have nice things, but it does mean that my life's emphasis will not be on seeking after the material first and foremost to the neglect of the spiritual. God wants His people to seek Him first and foremost knowing that, if we do so, He will take care of us. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:33-34).

The Scriptures warn heavily against covetousness because it is the root cause of spiritual neglect. Jesus made this clear in His parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21). Since covetousness leads to spiritual destitution, the Holy Spirit says such is not fitting for a

Christian and should never be associated with those who claim to follow Jesus. "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;" (Ephesians 5:3). The more emphasis that we place on the material the more likely we are to become idolaters, for covetousness is idolatry. "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5).

The Scriptures do not condemn wealth, for God has blessed some with it and He charges these to be good stewards of it.

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

However, the want and desire for more and more earthly wealth will cause one to seek such first, ahead of God, and eventually, God will be a fleeting thought. Jesus said we cannot serve two masters. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24). Money can be a great servant, but it is a terrible master. The best way to know if I am guilty of covetousness is to honestly ask myself this question, "Do I spend more time and energy laying up treasure on earth, or do I spend more time and energy laying up treasure in heaven?"

The cure for covetousness is contentment.

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

When God becomes the center of our lives, we come to the realization that everything else is going to be okay. Such allows me to understand that God is greater than those things that are here today but so easily gone tomorrow.

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

- Jason Shackelford

Live by the Very Best Standard!

The Christian's Adversary had been at work among the Christians in Corinth tempting them to become proud (1 Corinthians 4:18) and discredit the apostle's authority to speak for Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:3). The way of return to Christ is prescribed for them: "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" (2 Corinthians 13:5a). Paul did speak for Christ, and he left them abundant evidence of that fact, including their own conversions (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:2; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3). It was their responsibility to put themselves to the test. If the truth of the gospel resides in the heart, issuing in right behavior, each individual could determine his standing by self-evaluation. Accurate proof becomes known by comparison of self with the gospel, not other people (2 Corinthians 10:12). Proving themselves to be in the faith would likewise prove that Paul spoke by the authority of Christ.

"Examine yourselves" is a very practical admonition. Maintaining vigilance toward oneself in relation to God is the way our Lord was during His personal ministry: "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (John 8:29). Paul admonished the Thessalonians to do this very thing: "as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more." (1 Thessalonians 4:1). Walking in a manner that pleases God and excelling in that endeavor is proven in testing oneself; it becomes known upon self-examination (cf. 2 Timothy 2:4).

When the Light of Christ resides in the heart and one lives for God's approval rather than comparing ourselves with others to seek their approval, the result is a happier, more peaceful life (Galatians 5:22-23). These have shed the desire to be seen and admired by others. They live without the need to prove their worth to their peers. The Christian's deepest values come from the Lord Jesus – this is what makes life good, peaceful, beautiful and meaningful. The righteous life is formed by commitment to Christ which governs all other decisions.

"Examine yourselves" – measure yourself against the standard of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Where were you last year? We cannot go out of the world (1 Corinthians 5:10), we must reside here for a while (James 4:14). We will listen to the voices of others, but choose carefully the voices you allow to speak to your heart (Proverbs 1:5; 4:10-13). "Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand." (Proverbs 19:21). Approval from others is sweet, but there is no comparison to approval from the Lord (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Corinthians 10:18). With Christ ("full of grace and truth" - John 1:14) we have "the way of God in truth," (Matthew 22:16). The truth will guide you to the very best version of yourself (John 3:21; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Luke 1:79; James 5:19).

Friend, are you in the faith?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Criticism is something one can avoid by saying nothing, doing nothing and believing nothing!"
 - * "The average church has too many bystanders and not enough stand-byers!"
 - * "It is proper to be on the right track, but if you sit down there you'll get run over!"
 - * "If as a Christian, you are too busy to pray, you are *too busy!*"
 - * "Since your life is your message, what message are you sending?"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)