

ADAM'S EXCEPTIONAL SON GENESIS 5

The Book of Adam can be rather monotonous reading. There is a monotony to the pattern that's developed in Genesis 5, the book or genealogy of Adam. You find these things to characterize this record of the sons and grandsons of Adam.

The sons of Adam all inherited his inclination toward sin. While sin was more dominant in its expression in the sons of Adams that were born through Cain, it is still present in the sons of Adam born through Seth. They all shared in the sins of their father, Adam.

The sons of Adam normally married wives and raised families. One thing mentioned about each of them is the birth of a significant son. While they had many sons and daughters, the genealogy of one son is listed because of his significance in God's genealogy of redemption. But life continued in a somewhat normal pattern for all of the sons of Adam.

The normal pattern for the sons of Adam was that after a long life they died. Again and again we hear the refrain, "And he died." Even though they lived so long that it has caused Bible readers in our day to question the trustworthiness of the Biblical text, still they died. There have been many possible explanations for the longevity of their lives

offered, but the simple acceptance of the trustworthiness of the Biblical record seems to be the best explanation. In the beginning of human history human beings just lived longer. The universe in which they lived had not been impacted by human sinfulness quite as much as it had at a later period. This made longer life possible. But still they died. However, as you read through this genealogy of Adam he has one exceptional descendent. He is the seventh generation if you count Adam. It is said of this man whose name was Enoch, "And he walked with God." This descriptive word sets him apart from all the other names that are listed in these early chapters of Genesis. He is by any measurement one of the most exceptional sons of Adam to ever walk on the earth. His life is so exceptional that it merits our study and our attention.

I want us to consider how this exceptional life began, how it continued, and then especially how it ended. There were things that will be helpful to you as a descendent of Adam that we can learn from the life of God's servant, Enoch.

I. THE CONVERSION OF HIS LIFE

One of the things that made the life of Enoch exceptional was a conversion. Evidently at some point in his life something happened that changed the direction of his life. It changed the way he would relate to himself, the world about him, and especially the God above him. Can we discover from the text when and what was involved in this conversion?

There are indications in the text that the conversion took place at the time of the birth of his son. The record reads, "When Enoch had lived 65 years he became the father of

Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years and had other sons and daughters.” There seems to be an emphasis on the birth of his son, Methuselah. Scholars find an indication of what might have happened in the name of Methuselah. While not all scholars agree about the significance of the name of Methuselah a number of trustworthy conservative scholars have felt that the name means literally, “His death shall bring it,” or loosely translated, “When he dies it will come.” Others have seen the name to mean “message,” or “messenger” or “one sent.” We do know from the writings of Jude in the New Testament that Enoch became a prophet to his generation while he was walking with God. His message was one of coming judgment and devastation from the hand of an offended God. Scholars believe that when Methuselah was born that God revealed to Enoch that when Methuselah’s life was ended he would bring judgment upon the world. So, Enoch had the privilege of having a child growing up in his home to whom the end of the world as he knew it was directly related. The world of that day would continue only as long as the life of Methuselah continued.

Something else that would add credence to this view is that the flood came, according to the genealogical numbers found in Genesis 5, in the year that Methuselah died. It is also noteworthy that Methuselah lived to be the oldest man known in the history of man. If the end of the world was tied to the length of the life of Methuselah, wouldn’t it be like God, the God of grace, to extend the life of that man longer than any other man had ever lived? The best explanation for the lengthy life of Methuselah is that God was extending his life because the end of his life was associated with the coming judgment.

So, when God made known to Enoch that judgment was to come upon that world, it caused him to change the priorities of his life. From that day forward there seems to be two priorities in his life. First, it was his priority to walk with God. He made a commitment then to know God and to walk with Him. Second, his priority became the priority of service to the purposes of God. This is why he became a spokesman concerning judgment in that dark day. So, the life of Enoch is a reminder to us that if we are to know God and to walk with God there has to be a point of beginning. There needs to be a place in which we decide we no longer walk in step with the world that is trampling down the broad way to destruction, but rather we choose to walk the narrow way of fellowship and service with the eternal God.

II. THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE.

The expression “walked with God” is so suggestive. It is a figure found often through the pages of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. To walk with God is to be in fellowship with God. It is a picture of two friends walking together, carrying on conversation and communion as they pursue their course of life. The wonder of this statement is that you have a mortal man walking in communion with the eternal Creator, God.

However, it should not surprise us that Enoch was able to walk with God. It is rather obvious in the creation account that it was the desire of God to walk with man. He had the habit of making appearance in the Garden of Eden and walking with Adam and Eve.

It was a source of great disappointment to Him when the man and the woman sinned so that they could no longer walk with him in communion. It should not surprise us that God continued to search among the sons of Adam to see if there was one of his descendants who had a heart to walk with him. He found such a person in the life of Enoch, the seventh son from Adam.

We find explanation for the significance for this course of life in the New Testament. We are told that Enoch walked with God because of his faith in God. The writer of Hebrews says, “By faith Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death; he could not be found because God had taken him away. For before he was taken away, he was commended as one who pleased God and without faith it is impossible to please God, because any one who comes to Him must believe that He exist and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him.” The writer of Hebrews is reflecting the translation of the Hebrew text into the Greek language in the Septuagint. The translators translated the idea of walking with God as pleasing God. So, to walk with God is to please God. To walk with Him is to do the things that bring joy to Him. But the writer of Hebrews correctly understands that the secret for such a course of life is faith. If one is to continue to walk with God then they must walk in faith.

At least two ideas seemed to be in this concept of walking by faith. First, it involves a life of obedience. When God revealed to Enoch that destruction was coming upon the earth, then Enoch lived in light of that revelation for the next three hundred years. He lived every day in light of the fact that the world around him was to be destroyed by water

in the judgment of a righteous God. This was faith. He acted on the word that God had given him.

Second, it involves dependence upon God. The writer of Hebrews explains that he believes that God is the one who “rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” Faith involves seeing God as the source of what is needed in life and then seeking Him in trust and dependence. This was what marked the life of Enoch.

It is worth our remembering that Enoch walked with God for three hundred years in a world that was getting ripe for judgment. He was in step with God, but he was totally out of step with the world in which he lived. It is not necessary to have a perfect environment in order to walk with God. It is possible to stay in fellowship with God in the midst of a generation in which no one has time or place for God. It is also clear from the text that walking with God did not involve absenting himself from life’s responsibilities. The writer, Moses, is careful to record that outwardly in many ways the life of Enoch was in many ways like the people around him. We read that he walked with God, “Three hundred years and had other sons and daughters.” So whatever it meant to walk with God for those three hundred years it did not involve living as a hermit or as someone withdrawn from the responsibilities of life. He walked with God while being a husband to his wife and a father to his children. He walked with God while providing for the needs of those dependent upon him.

This is a tremendous encouragement to all of us who are serious about walking with God. The secret in walking with God is to trust and obey God day by day. If you choose to walk by faith then the course of your life can be one of fellowship with God.

III. THE CONSUMATION OF HIS LIFE.

This really made his life exceptional. It set him apart from every other member of that ancient world. The record is rather clear, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.” From the comments that we find in the Hebrew letter, it seems clear that one day Enoch turned up missing. A search was made but no one found Enoch. That generation was driven to the conclusion that Enoch had been taken home to be with God.

Someone cites a little girl’s telling of this story. She said, “Enoch and God walked together every day. They became real good friends as the years went by. One day they had walked so far that at the close of the day God said to Enoch, “Enoch, we are closer to my house than we are to your house. Why don’t you just come home with me? So, God took Enoch home with Him.” Enoch became one of only two human beings that we know of that went to heaven without dying. Enoch never knew what others in his generation would know in death.

Enoch obviously lived a shorter life than most of the people of that ancient world, but it is not really how long you live as much as it is how well you live. During those three hundred and sixty-five years he knew and enjoyed the presence of God.

What is the significance of Enoch being translated? The word used in the Letter to the Hebrews means to move someone from one country to another country. What is the significance of Enoch being moved from earth into the house of the Father without going through the door way of death? There seems to be at least two lessons we can learn.

First, his translation was a witness to that generation and to the generations to come that there is life beyond this world. There was nothing in the way men died in that ancient world to suggest to them that there was anything after death. But when the Creator moved Enoch from earth into His dwelling without him dying it was a strong witness to the possibility of immortality.

Second, it was a prophetic foretaste of what will happen to a whole generation when the Lord Jesus comes to the earth again. At the coming of the Lord Jesus all of the believers who are on the earth at that time and who are walking with God will be translated from earth to heaven just like Enoch.

Doesn't the record of this man's life stir in you a fresh desire to walk with God? It does in my heart. It also removes so many of the excuses that I use for not walking in fellowship with God. I have sometimes excused myself by referring to the sinfulness of the world in which we live. We do live in a fallen and sinful world. But Enoch is a reminder to us that that is no excuse. You can walk with God even while the world around you is hurling itself toward a certain judgment.

The culmination of this life is a reminder to us that this is the only life that is really worth living. Life finds its real meaning when you and I so relate ourselves to God that we can walk with Him in fellowship every day. I encourage you to take whatever steps are necessary to begin to walk with God day by day in personal fellowship.