

Enoch, the Godliest Man You Never Heard Of. Genesis 5:18-29, Hebrews 11:1-5

For those who wish to read through the entire Bible, there are two places that can really war against their dedication. First there is Leviticus, the handbook of the priests, with all its strange rules and rituals that can be real difficult to get through. Then there are the family genealogies, found in various places, which are just plain boring.

The story's told of an old Scottish minister who was reading the genealogies from the opening chapter of Matthew. He started reading, "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah..." Then it suddenly occurred to him how long this list was and, not certain he wanted to read all of that, he looked up from his text and said "and they kept on begetting one another all the way down this page and halfway into the next."

But even in these portions of scripture, if you come with a open heart for what God wants to teach you, you can learn a lot. Because even the genealogy lists, such as the one we have before us today, are part of God's inspired word and do have something to give us.

For example, in the middle of this list from Adam to Noah which comprises all of Genesis, chapter 5, we find **Enoch**, who the Bible describes as a great man of faith and the very first prophet of God; one of his prophecies is later quoted in the NT book of Jude. We also meet his son **Methuselah** who at 969 years old won the Biblical record for longest lived. From these two people, along with their grandson Lamech and great grandson Noah, we can learn a lot about what it means to "**walk with God.**" But to put their story in perspective let's go back where we left off last week with the birth to Adam and Eve of a third son whom they named "Seth" as a replacement for their murdered second son.



The first two children born to A&E were **Cain** and **Abel**. We can only guess at what had happened through their childhood to make these two brothers grow up so differently. We do know that Abel, with his sacrifice, came to God in faith and was thus declared righteous. But Cain's faithless offering which was rejected by God made him so angry that he murdered his brother then tried to lie about it. After which, having earlier warned Cain to resist the hatred in his heart and then having confronted him with the murder of Abel which he unrepentantly denied, God sentenced Cain to a cursed life of homeless wandering and scrounging for food that the ground would no longer provide for him.

Cain then responded by rejecting God's rule over his life (*Cain went away from the presence of the Lord.* Gen 4:15). In opposition to God's decree Cain settled down, built a city, and began to sire a race of people who continued moving further and further away from God; as exemplified by a man named **Lamech**, the seventh descendant from Adam

through Cain, who was not only a polygamist but liked to brag about murdering another man for simply striking him; Lamech had no shame and no fear of God or anyone.



Now contrast these godless descendants from Cain with the godly line of people, born to **Seth**, who are described as beginning “*to invoke the name of the Lord*” (4:26). When we get to the seventh descendant from Adam through Seth – as compared with the murderous Lamech who was probably a contemporary – we find **Enoch**, the first prophet of God. We also learn that Enoch so faithfully “*walked with God*” for 300 years that he never saw death; God took him directly to Heaven.

The only other person our Bible ever describes as having “walked with God” would be his great grandson **Noah** (6:9). And the only other person, whom God would later take directly to Heaven was the prophet **Elijah** (2 Kings 2).

The only other fact we know about Enoch, comes from the “faith chapter” in the NT Letter to the Hebrews, giving God’s reason for bringing Enoch directly to Heaven which was that his steadfast faithfulness, in an age of otherwise great evil and general faithlessness, had “*pleased God*” (11:5).



We do know a bit more about the evil days in which Enoch lived, because in his two letters the Apostle Peter twice refers to a group of pre-flood fallen angels who during Enoch’s time disobeyed God by committing sexual sins comparable to those of Sodom & Gomorrah. Jude also refers to these same fallen angels and their sin in his letter (1 Pet 3: 19-20, 2 Pet 2:4-10, Jude 6-7).

About these fallen angels, Genesis only discreetly mentions at the beginning of chapter 6, that

*When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the **sons of God** saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ... who bore children to them, **nephilim** and the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown* (Genesis 6:1-4).

That’s not much information to go on, however we can learn more about these fallen angels and their evil progeny from the **First Book of Enoch**, a non-biblical but apparently well respected text in Jesus’ day – which both Peter and Jude were referring to and quoting from. This ancient book of unknown authorship recounts in detail Enoch’s bold face-to-face confrontations with and prophecies against not only these fallen angels but also their half-human descendants who were described as both giants (best translation for *Nephilim*), and a race of demi-god human heroes. Both groups of which were counted among the reasons why God would soon send a cleansing flood.

Surprisingly the only prophecy of Enoch which gets repeated in the book of Jude, was not about the impending flood of his day but rather about **Christ's return at the end of time to execute judgment on all who through the ages have rejected God.** Jude would comment...

It was also about these [current treacherously sinful people] that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'See, the Lord is coming with tens of thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' Jude 14-15

Apparently even from the earliest beginnings of the human race, Enoch was already preaching about what would happen at the end of our days. And why should that surprise us because God has always declared His plans for the end of times from the very beginning (Isaiah 46:9-11).

I will not be bringing you any future sermons on these antediluvian fallen angels, or the Nephilim, or their other half-human descendants, but we will talk about such this coming Tuesday at 4:30 during our regular Something More gathering (*how's that for enticement to make it to Bible study*). Because, next Sunday, we need to turn our attention to Noah and the Ark and the promised flood.

So for today, let us continue to focus on what we can learn from Enoch, the godliest man you had never heard of. Apparently early in his life Enoch had learned of God's intentions to soon destroy most all of humanity with a flood and it was this knowledge that caused Enoch thereafter to faithfully walk with God as his prophet and preacher. How did Enoch come to know of this impending flood nearly 1,000 before it would happen? That is what Paul Harvey would label as "the rest of the story."

As we had noted earlier, while Cain's descendants continued to move further away from God, Seth's children continued to call upon the name of the Lord, but apparently they also kept to themselves and out of the way of Cain's people as best as possible. Then sometime around Enoch's days or even before, the angels whom we would assume were supposed to be protecting the good people, left their posts to join in humanity's sin and subsequently birth giants and other evil beings. This was the world Enoch was born into.



Then when Enoch was 65 years old his first son was born and he named him **Methuselah**. This was not a name that Enoch had dreamed up. It had to be given to him in a vision from God to place on his son as a form of living prophecy. Because the name Methuselah, read one way simply means "man of the spear," but read it another way and it means:

"When He Is Dead It Shall Be Sent." (https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Methuselah.html#_XjGdffFKhRY)

For the next 300 years according to the book bearing his name, Enoch then personally confronted these angels, giants, and certainly also the children of Cain with their need to repent and return to God. And there would be Methuselah standing beside him serving as a human time clock; when this one dies the flood will come.

As a living reminder of his father's prophecy, Methuselah must have also enjoyed God's protection as well everyone else's fear that what his name implied might just come true, because Methuselah got to live to the ripe old age of 969 years. I can just imagine as Methuselah was getting on in years that his neighbors brought him lots of chicken soup.



Methuselah's first born son, Enoch's grandson, was also named Lamech. But unlike that descendant of Cain who first wore the name, this Lamech believed Enoch's prophecy. Because when his first son came along he named him **Noah**, meaning "rest," saying, *'out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.'* (Genesis 5:28-29). We do not know how soon Noah took up his great-grandfather's preaching ministry, but 120 years before the flood is when God then ordered Noah to beginning building the ark; another very visual sermon illustration. But that is next week's message. Let us finish up today with what we can learn from Enoch.

So far everything you have learned about Enoch and the days in which he lived should give you a winning head start at your next game of Biblical Trivial Pursuit. But what can we learn from Enoch's life that will change the way we live tomorrow?

What we know, is that in the most ungodly age that perhaps ever existed, Enoch boldly and faithfully walked with God serving as his prophet for 300 years giving warning to those around him of God's impending judgment. **So what does it take to faithfully walk with God, even in the worst of times?**

Our first clue comes from Hebrews, chapter 11, that cited Enoch as an example of **great faith**. Even more specifically a faith that not only believes in God's existence but also His ability to protect and provide for those who follow Him. As scripture warns us..

Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach Him must believe that he exists and that He rewards those who seek him.
Hebrews 11:6

Apparently in Enoch's day as is again happening in ours, in spite of all the evidence both around them and in their hearts, people were no longer believing in God's existence or His ability to provide for those who by faith came to him. Enoch not only

believed, he daily depended on God's protection as he personally challenged these formerly godly beings who had chosen to follow their lusts rather than the God they had been created to serve. If I knew I was going to be preaching to fallen angels, giants, and other evil people, I too would want to be faithfully, walking very close with God and dependent upon His protection (something we should all be doing anyway, right?).

A second requirement for walking with God is a spiritual mindset: **learning to think the way God thinks about things.** Scripture urges us to

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on earth
Colossians 3:2

for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient (Colossians 3:2-6)

for Christians, "*your mind is like the rudder of a ship. Whether the flesh or the Spirit controls the rudder determines the course your life will take.*" (Bruce Ferris, Thomasville Baptist Church, What's Your Mindset?). In order to faithfully walk with God, Enoch had see his world the way God saw it, and steer away from all the worldly temptations that continue to this day, seeking to derail us in our walk with God.

A third requirement for walking with God is **a strong desire to live this godly life with God.** Strange as this may sound even for Christians, there can be a difference between knowing what we ought to do versus what we want to do. Our heads and our hearts need to be united in following God. As the Prophet Amos would remind us, *can two walk together unless they are in agreement?* (Amos 3:3).

There is in scripture a hint that for the first 65 years of his life, until Methuselah was born, Enoch did not follow God as faithfully as he did for the rest of his life. Certainly the world in which he lived was the same both before and after Methuselah's birth. But only after receiving a vision from God of what was to come did Enoch decide thereafter to faithfully follow where his mind had all along told him he needed to be.

In the pivotal verse of his letter to the Romans, Paul writes

In view of the mercies of God, present your bodies
as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God ...
Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

Knowing what God had done and now knowing what God was going to do, Enoch got his beliefs and his attitude together and decided for the rest of his life he needed to be serving as God's messenger to his generation.

This verse in Romans also brings up one last requirement for following God which is not only having a knowledge and desire for a close relationship with God but also growth in that relationship. **“Walking” implies progress and growth; forward progress.**

Paul's next sentence reads

*And **do not be conformed** to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God is –
what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2).*

Walking with God implies continual growth in our faith. In his second letter Peter contrasted those ancient fallen angels, who had deserted their relationship with God, with Noah the only other person who “*walked with God*” (2 Peter 2:4-10, Genesis 6:9). That letter opens with these instructions....

*God's divine power has **given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him** who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature.

*For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. **For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Peter 1:3-8)*

This is what Paul meant by our need to be "transformed." I certainly would like to be as effective and fruitful in my life as Enoch was in his. We know what happened to those who ignored his message. Perhaps only in heaven will we learn of and get to meet with those who heeded his message and also dedicated their lives to walking with God; Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, and only God knows how many more.

If you want to walk with God

1. you need to believe that He exists and will reward your efforts in seeking him.
2. You must become spiritually minded, learning to view this world from God's perspective
3. You must want to walk this walk by aligning your desires with your beliefs.
4. And you must do all this in a growing relationship with God in order to be effective and fruitful in that relationship.

If you think this is too much to ask of a mere Christian like you and me think of the rewards God provided for those who did.

- Methuselah and Lamech got to see the fulfillment of God's promises to cleanse and refresh the world by a flood; while saving their own descendants in the process.
- And Noah after his own 120 years or more of preaching and building the ark, got to save his entire family from the judgment that came down upon the rest of those antediluvian inhabitants.

And what about Enoch? As one young Sunday school girl explained: "*Enoch was a man who learned to walk with God, and they used to take long walks together. One day they walked so far that God said, 'Look, Enoch, it's too far for you to go back; just come on home with me.'* So he walked on home with God." <http://pbc.org/dp/stedman/hebrews1/0094.html>

Let's pray that our own walks will always lead us home to God.