

A Walk with God

The Story of Enoch: The man who walked with God

Men used to live a lot longer. Adam lived to see nine hundred and thirty birthdays. His children and grandchildren followed in his footsteps, living 912, 905, 910, 962 years respectively. This first generation lived nearly a thousand years. Why they lived so long is a puzzle. Some suggest that the greenhouse environment lent itself to long life. Why did they live so long? Was it in order to “be fruitful and multiply?” (Gen. 1:28). If their long lives were designed by God as a means to populate the earth, it seems to have failed since that entire generation (except for eight souls) perished in the flood. Since God never fails, I believe there is a great spiritual lesson found in this Book of the Generations of Adam, otherwise known as Genesis chapter five. The successful and productive life is not measured in time but in eternity. It is not how long we live, but how well we live that counts. It is not the length of our life that is important, but rather its depth and width.

The Bible tells us very little about these ancients. They all had one thing in common. They lived “and [they] died.” Again and again we find this sobering reality which God promised would come to pass, came to pass as seen in the words “and he died.” If our lives are like those who have gone before us, our experience will be the same, for we all are included in this story of the Generations of Adam. Although they are our relatives Enos, Cainan, Nahalaleel, and Jared are strangers to us. They may be strangers, but they are our distant relations. For that matter, so is the man next door and the neighbor across the street, the black man who just moved in and the white man who just moved out. If they believed the Bible like I do, they would know we are cousins (although many times removed). If they knew the Second Adam, as I do, they would know we all share relations to the first. Because we are all kin to the first (Adam), in Adam we all die, for in Adam we have all sinned (Rom. 5:12). During what age or era we were born is not the most important aspect of our history. Nor will the numeral etched on our tombstone noting our date of birth and the date of our death be of any great significance. It may tell when we lived, but not how we lived. It is what we do with the days, months and years before we join the myriad of others, and it is also said of us “and he died,” that is important. Again, it is not when we lived, but how we lived that is important.

Every single life is important. Every life counts. Every individual leaves a

legacy. Every man has his own history, his own story to tell. Like mountains, some men stand higher than others. Some men have distinguished themselves and have, as we say, made a mark. History books and family traditions all have their famous and infamous characters. How have some distinguished themselves? Some distinguish themselves, simply by being “first.” Mention the name Adam and immediately he is recognized as being the “first man.” History is filled with names of men whose claim to fame is in their being first. First to sail around the world, first to climb Mt. Everest, first to reach the North Pole, and so on. Many push and press to be the “first” at something, as if being “first” will insure they will have left a mark (however small) upon the pages of history and be proof or evidence that they indeed had lived at all. Adam was first. You may make a mark by going where no one else has gone before, and being the first to get there.

Some are famous not because they were first, but because once getting there they stayed the longest. Their claim to fame is their longevity. They have broken the record. Methuselah is famous for having lived the longest. It was his longevity, which made him famous. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years. Some men don’t get there first, but they stay the longest. Grandma Moses, FDR, and J. Edgar Hoover share the common distinction of longevity.

Some men are great in their capacity to endure. Perhaps your greatness is in your “sticking it out,” your “staying power.” Others would have quit long ago, but not you. Perhaps you are determined to stand your post until God relieves you from your duty.

Some men have distinguished themselves by some great accomplishment. It is their life’s work that has made them renowned. No one talks of Noah without mentioning the Ark. “Noah’s Ark” are two words that will stand side by side forever. This man and his work are one. Perhaps you will accomplish some great thing that will follow you all your days. There is Alexander Graham Bell and his telephone, George Eastman and his camera, Thomas Edison with his light bulb, and Henry Ford and his automobile. Florence Nightingale will forever be imagined wearing her nurse’s cape, and Jonas Salk holding his vaccine. So it goes. Some will accomplish some great task, do a work so great that their name is forever etched upon the human memory. They are distinguished. Let each of us do our work the best we can, that we may be “workman that need not to be ashamed.”

Some men have distinguished themselves by being associated with great men. No one would know who Shem, Ham, and Japheth were were it not for their relationship with Noah. There was Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, Moody and Shanks. Some men were willing to live in the shadow of greatness and by so doing they themselves became great. They seemed to understand their place. While not seeking it, some have found distinction in the ministry of helps.

Some are famous in their infamy. Everyone knows that Cain killed Abel. That mark will never be washed off. God placed a mark on Cain that would distinguish him everywhere he went. The same mark that was a warning, was also a witness. Cain was a “marked man.” Everyone who ever saw him would know, “that is Cain, the one who killed Abel his brother.” Men cannot see them now (for this world is still a very dark place), but the sun shall rise with a blazing and burning brilliance on judgment day, and then man shall see that Cain is not the only one marked. In that light, every unsaved son of Adam shall see that every sin has left its ugly mark and every iniquity its stain. We should not be as concerned with “where Cain got his wife” as we are with “how Cain ruined his life.” Rather than asking “how he found a bride,” people should wonder “did he ever find forgiveness?” From the words of John and Jude we fear the worst for him (1 Jn. 3:12; Ju. 11). Nor should we be as concerned with the mark of Cain, as with our own marks and our own stains. There is only one hope for a marked man. That hope is Jesus. Paul explained it well in his message to the Ephesians as “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” Acts 20:21. The songwriter said it beautifully: “There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.”

The way to get the most out of life and to leave a legacy of triumph and success is not exemplified by those who were first, nor in those who broke records or endured the longest. Nor is the real way to success in doing some great thing or in making some great discovery or invention. Real success and satisfaction is not found in joining a great cause or in associating with important people. The real story of success in this genealogy is found in the person named Enoch, the father of Methuselah. We are not told much about him, yet we are told everything we need to know about success, happiness, joy, courage, and triumphant living. It is all summed up in the briefest of all the biographies of great men ever written. It is simply this: “Enoch walked with God.”

It is a life’s story large enough to challenge any of the world’s greats, and yet it is short enough to fit on a simple tombstone. Never were there more succinct but sublime words written by an historian, and yet here is the secret of a happy and complete life. Here is a legacy to which all should aspire. It would be enough to be said of any man as his body is lowered into the earth and his spirit wings its way into the heavens, “he walked with God.”

If you were to go on a trip around the world and you could choose one companion (who was not a family member) who would you choose? Having a good traveling companion often makes the difference between a wonderful, pleasant, glorious adventure and a painful, arduous journey. Life is a journey. It is a journey no one need take alone. Like Enoch of old, each can choose their traveling companion or companions. Enoch chose to walk with God. I wonder what that was like.

Given the choice, most people going on a long journey would not choose the “preacher” as a traveling companion. As a matter of fact, he would probably be the last choice to bring along on your vacation. What a “wet blanket” he would be. They, no doubt would fear never being able to “let their hair down,” or relax, or “be themselves.” Would walking with God be like having the preacher follow you around on your vacation? I don’t think so. As a matter of fact, I believe most people would not choose God as a traveling companion either, for one simple reason: they don’t know God. Oh, they think they do, or at least they have heard others talk of unpleasant “religious” or “church” experiences, and they would rather catch the flu than have to share a cab ride with a religious cleric. People have all kinds of false impressions and strange ideas about God. This is all very unfortunate because God alone knows how we can get the most out of life, and as we travel, it is only God who knows the way.

While we all have family and friends, and “no man is an island,” each life is unique and special. Each individual is the main character in his own story. The pages are blank at birth (although every story is prefaced with the events in Eden), and every thought, word, and deed spells out the story of your life. Each person is a biography, a mystery, an action adventure. Some are great romances and others heart-rending tragedies. Some are stories of winners and some are stories of losers, some of tragedy and some of triumph. Most have a touch of all these elements. Some stories are “classics” and others are “flops,” and I think I know what makes the difference. God. The genius of the successful life is in giving God his rightful place in the story of your life. A story in which God is absent is a story about nothing. It is a meaningless “sit-com” that is without significance, goal or direction. It is a story about a bubble briefly floating on the surface of a pond and then bursting. No one cares for or will miss that bursting bubble. It is God and only God that gives life significance and meaning. Jesus Christ is called the “author and finisher of our faith.” God wants to help us write the story of our life. Those who wrest the pen from his hand completely, to write independently of him never finish with a happy ending.

Each successful and fulfilled life is the story of God and some man walking along together across this terra firma on their way to the heavenlies. Paradise involved wonderful walks (and talks) with God. It was after Adam disobeyed God that he hid from the Almighty. When God came for his walk with Adam “in the cool of the day” Adam was nowhere to be found. He had sinned, or to put it another way, Adam chose to walk alone. How sad, how sad to hear God calling for his child “Adam, where are you?” How sad, to picture the Almighty standing there at that special trysting place and not finding the one he had given life to.

God still goes for walks every day. He walks in his Omnipresence, and invites all who desire to do so, to privately, and personally enjoy his company. I remember walking with my father. I was around four years old, and I for some reason left my mother and the nest on some special occasion to walk down the streets of New York City alone with my father. There is something special and wonderful in such a relationship and such a walk. I had to

increase my stride and pick up my pace. Walking with my mother was much different than walking with my father. And so walking with God is very different than walking with men. Walking with God is what life was meant to be. It was the story of Enoch's life. "Enoch walked with God."

Walking with God is neither as easy or difficult as most people think. There are conditions necessary. They are:

Faith.

You can't walk with God without faith. The Bible says, "*without faith it is impossible to please him.*" In order to walk with God you must believe in him. I do not mean, "believe in his existence." Only a fool doesn't believe that. I mean believe in him. Believe in him like a child believes in its parent, or like a man believes in his friend. It is a kind a trust and confidence through which you need never be "on your guard."

By "belief" I mean, not only to believe in him (that is: trust him), but also believe him. Faith is convinced. Faith does not question the greatness, goodness, and wisdom of God. If God says something is so—then it is so. It will be impossible to walk with God carrying any doubts or suspicions. They would spoil the walk anyway, as they would encumber and compete for your attention. You must cast all that aside if you would walk with God. Faith trusts God. Faith wants to be with God. It longs to be in his presence. In another place the Bible says, "*He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

But you may ask, "how can I get this thing called faith, without which I cannot walk with God?" There is only one way. "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Faith listens to God's word and simply believes it as the Gospel truth. A man with faith may not understand it all, but he believes it all. God no longer has to "prove" himself to faith. Faith trusts him, period.

Are you willing to take God's Word at face value? Are you ready to believe what God says about life, death, good, evil, everything? If you are, good! Now you are ready to "walk with God."

Action

"Lights, Camera, Action," calls the director of some Hollywood movie. Nothing happens until there is action. Walking with God requires action. If you would walk with God you must step out and go with him. Walking with God does not mean being "religious." As

a matter of fact, you may have to leave your stained glass windows and icons behind. Faith is a living, breathing thing. James, the Apostle, said it well; “*faith without works is dead.*” A body without a spirit is what faith is without works. Works are the pulse that reveals the hidden heartbeat of faith.

Life is a journey. It is a walk through time. Walking with God is an active thing. This does not mean that activity is faith. It is not. It means that if you want to walk with God you must be willing to act. You must be willing to leave where you are in order to go with God to wherever he wants to take you. It is no accident that the story of the church is called the Book of Acts.

The prophet Elijah came right to the point when he said, ”*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him...*” (1Ki. 18:21). Walking with God describes, not only a lifestyle, it describes a life. Jesus challenged a group of religious people who needed to know the difference. He said, ”*Not everyone who saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*” Walking with God is something God and you “do together.”

This is not to say that the life of faith is forever a flurry of outward activity. It is not. Many times the glory cloud stopped in the wilderness and it was then that Israel set up her tents and rested. There are times when we all should be like Martha, working and preparing lunch in the kitchen; but there are other times when it is best to sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus and just quietly listen to and love him.

What are you waiting for? Is there something God has asked you to do? Whatever it is he is waiting for you to take that first step. When you do he will walk you there. That is walking with God.

Submission

If you would walk with God it is important to understand place and protocol. God must be first. Never forget that, although you were made in the image of God, you were made from dust, and when you die, your body will be dust again. Without God you are only dust. Of all of God’s creatures, only man resists God’s authority and will. How foolish. The apostles also note that even the wind and the waves obey God.

God will not follow you. Many religious folk are under the delusion that God must follow their faith. These misguided souls chart their course by their individual choices and then attempt to drag God along by their prayers.

This is why walking with God is so difficult, irregular, and impossible for so many. Walking with God requires your willingness to go where he wants to go. That is submission. Many religious types remind me of the unruly children I saw one day in the supermarket.

Three children and their mother were shopping. Each child was running in a different direction calling for their mother to “buy this” or “buy that.” Two rushed to the cereal aisle. One seized one box, and the other another. Each cried and struggled to bend the mother’s will. All the while a third child was fishing something else off another shelf and would be unhappy and sullen when his mother insisted that he “put it back.” Three very unhappy faces followed one exasperated one as they headed for the checkout line together. That is no description of a “walk with God.”

Walking with God means letting God lead. It means letting God make the choices. It means never forgetting who is the creature and who is the creator. It does not mean we do not have our own opinions, preferences, wants or desires (as a matter of fact, the Bible assures us that God knows what we want even before we ask). It means simply that our will must cheerfully defer to God’s will, and that we are content with the wisdom displayed by the choices he makes and fills the shopping basket of our life.

Attentiveness

Inattention can quickly ruin any walk with God. God may take a turn, and unless you are attentive, you may suddenly find that you are walking alone. You must never lose sight of him in anything you do, or anywhere you go.

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of a time when Mary and Joseph set out for the city of Nazareth forgetting Jesus in Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that they “*Supposed him to have been in their company.*” They traveled for a whole day before they realized their error. They quickly repented (that is, turned around) and searched until they found him.

Many have repeated their error. They were once in God’s company, but soon they became preoccupied with other things. They traveled not a day’s journey, but in some cases months and years before they missed his presence. By then, it was difficult to find where they had left him.

Walking with God means being quick to come when he calls us close. It means stopping when he stops, and going when he goes. Children who play “follow the leader” are always alert to see every step, every move of the leader. If you would walk with God you must be as alert as they. Jesus put it this way: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk. 9:62).

Patience

Sometimes little children want to “break away” from their parent’s grasp and run before them. And sometimes they come running back with bleeding knees. Walking with God requires patience. Heaven has its own speed limits. History is filled with stories of men

and women who tried to go faster than God.

Even the great Abraham and Sarah rushed before the Almighty when they felt he was going to slow. They determined that they would “help” God in fulfilling his promise that Abraham should have a son. Sarah employed the services of a surrogate who conceived and gave birth to what would become Israel’s greatest antagonist. Those hostilities continue today because Abraham became impatient.

If God seems to be walking slowly he does so not in weariness, but in wisdom. When Marry and Martha asked Jesus to come to the aid of their sick brother Lazarus, he disappointed them by delaying for two days. This, they thought, was an emergency that demanded the utmost haste. Or as the doctor says in the emergencey room, “STAT.” Even the disciples seemed to be at a loss to explain the Master’s delay. It would have been foolish, however, for the disciples to rush to Bethany with their first-aid kits. It does no good for us to get there before God. Nothing good will happen until he arrives anyway. To walk with God requires patience.

Are you impatient with God’s delays? Have you rushed off without him to fight some fire, or reap some harvest? Be patient. Go no faster than he.

Perseverance

Walking with God is not a walk in the park. He who walks with God must endure. Enoch endured to the end. He continued until he left this world behind. This world is full of starters and up-starts. The freshman class is always larger than the senior class because human nature tends to quit and give up when things become too difficult.

Jesus made it very plain that to follow him was not going to be easy. *“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay his head.”* This walk with God is no picnic. Paul warned his protégé Timothy that he must *“endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”*

It is easy to be a “sunshine patriot.” It is easy to sail in fair weather. But God never promises walking with him will always be on easy roads or gentle sloping inclines. Sometimes walking with him will require we climb some sacrificial mountain, not unlike Moriah, on whose summit awaits an altar upon which we will be called to present ourselves a living sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul understood that walking with God required perseverance. At the end of his life he was able to say *“Now I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* (2Tim. 4:6-7).

Different

Some people are afraid to be different. Walking with God will make you different. Enoch walked with God. That he did so, made history. It was not a common thing then, and it is not a common thing now.

In every generation the faithful are few. In the days of the Babylonian captivity all of Israel was bowing down before the stature of the king. Everyone bowed down except three young Hebrews named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When the armies of Israel were frozen with fear at the sight of the Philistine giant named Goliath, David dared to face him in faith. The Bible is filled with stories of men and women who dared to be different and “walk with God.”

Are you willing to be different? Paul answered the question for some of us when he said, “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto the Jew first and also unto the Greek.*” Jesus also made it plain, “*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels*” (Mk. 8:38).

Courage

The history of faith tells of many characters that had to face untold hardship, pain and suffering in their journey. Paul told the Philippians “*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*” (Phil. 1:29). Paul later wrote to Timothy and said, “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (2Tim 3:12).

In the face of much danger, and dire circumstances Paul gave this personal testimony “*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*”

The writer of Hebrews described the struggles of many of the saints as: “*tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword...*” (Heb. 11:35-37).

Where did these great men and women find the courage to face such terror? The answer is simple. There was an Unseen Presence at their side. When we walk with God it matters not whether he takes us with him into the fiery furnace or through the valley of the Shadow of Death. In all circumstances we can say with David, “*I will fear no evil for thou art with me.*”

Repentance

Amos chapter three and verse three disqualifies many from walking with God. Amos asked a question. “How can two walk together except they be agreed?” The answer is quite clear from this and a hundred other Scripture texts, you cannot. In order to walk with God you must agree with God and man in his fallen state is not in agreement. Sin causes us to be against, rather than with God.

In order to agree with God we must “turn” or “repent.” The voice of the prophets has called attention to this sad situation in every generation. *“Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.”* (Mi. 6:2).

Every man is born with this controversy. Every man born is born in sin. *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). To repent is to end our rebellion against God and to surrender to his authority.

Even the Apostle Paul (as religious as he was) was fighting against God without realizing it. That is what Jesus meant when he said, “It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.” Jesus came to die on the cross to save you. You must stop resisting that truth. You must stop protesting. Repent and believe the Gospel.

Love

It would take a lifetime to describe this aspect of walking with God, but it will suffice here to say that if you are walking with God you will love. To walk with God is to walk in the light of his love. *“If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* John continues by saying, *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”* (1Jn. 1:7; 2:9).

God is light. You cannot walk with God and walk in darkness. To walk with God is to love. One clear sign that you are not walking with God is your unwillingness to forgive and love someone. Jesus said, *“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; the love ye have for one another.”* When hatred, envy, rage, and wrath floods our emotions be assured we have stepped out of the sunlight and are walking in the shadows. Should this happen, quickly forgive the offender, hurry back into the light, and walk with God.

Eternal Life

The Bible says, “*Enoch walked with God and he was not for the LORD took him.*” Of everyone else it was said “*and he died.*” This was not the case with Enoch. He did not see death as we know it. I find here a wonderful truth about walking with God in these words, “*and he was not.*”

People often talk about “going to meet their maker.” Enoch did not have to “go anywhere to meet his maker,” he walked with him every step of the way. He who discovers what it means to “walk with God” need have no fear or concern about death. As these two friends walked along enjoying each others company they simply came to the end of one road and turned to take another. From our point of view “*he was not,*” he was gone, he vanished; but as far as Enoch was concerned he and his Holy Companion merely continued their walk; and this walk suddenly found him in heaven.

Do you know where you are going? Does each step take you closer to heaven, or further away? The Bible is clear. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Life was meant to be a walk with God. A walk with God leads to heaven and life eternal. Walk with God.

Beginning the Journey

Anyone reading the story of Enoch cannot help but to sense that this wonderful walk had a beginning. Every journey must have a first step. With every saint it is different. Usually it is some crisis, some difficulty, or some problem that makes them aware that they need a change of direction. With Enoch it seems to have been the birth of his son Methuselah.

How was it with you? Was there a day when God stopped you in your tracks through some experience of event? Perhaps it was not a birth; perhaps it was a death. Perhaps it was the death of a loved one, or a dream or a hope. Whatever it was see it as an invitation to walk with God.

It is an amazing thing to think that God would want our company. He does. He welcomes all who want to walk with him.

We begin our walk when we turn (that’s repentance) and go back. We walk with him when we believe him and accept his Son, Jesus Christ as the way. We walk with him when we submit to his way as the truth and the life. We walk with him as we give him our attention and study his ways, which are always so much better than our ways. We walk with him when we patiently allow him to set the pace, moving neither faster nor slower than his will. We walk with him as we resolve by grace to continue no matter what and persevere. We walk with him even if no one else does and we dare to be different. And should we to the world appear foolish or brave, it is just the same to us, for it is enough to know that he is at

our side. And as we walk toward eternal life we walk in love, for he is love itself.

Life is a journey. Enoch walked with the one who knew the way. The story of that journey will be our legacy. The Prophet Micah summed it up like this: “He hath shewed thee, O man what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Mi. 6:8)