

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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Lessons from Bible Characters: Enoch – Walking with God

Introduction

When I hear the name Enoch two people come to mind. One is a politician and the other is the man of Genesis 5. Somewhat surprisingly, I find there are some similarities between these two people!

Enoch Powell, the politician, was intellectually an exceptional person. Enoch was extremely well qualified and he excelled in the occupations of education, the armed forces and as a politician. Enoch Powell is probably most remembered as a politician and for one particular speech. In 1968 at Birmingham, Enoch made a speech, which covered race issues applicable at that time. Afterwards, the speech became known as the “River of Blood” speech. To this day, it is still considered unwise in political circles to imply that any current race issue is proving Enoch Powell right.

Politically, Enoch Powell was in advance of his time. His solutions to government issues were “Thatcherite”, but Mrs Thatcher was some years off being Prime Minister. It was the same with the 1968 Birmingham speech which, God forbid, might still come true. In which case, Enoch Powell may yet be considered a prophet!

Enoch, of Genesis 5, was a man who excelled in his day. Enoch was a man with a reputation and he was a prophet. As a prophet, Enoch’s prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. During the next few minutes, I would like to look at this amazing Biblical character under the following headings,

- The man of history
- The man and his testimony
- The man and his prophecy

As we consider Enoch we will endeavour to see challenges for ourselves. Enoch is very much a man for our time.

The man of history

Let us read from Genesis 5:18-24: “Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died. Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

If we read the earlier verses in chapter 5 we would see that Enoch can trace his ancestry, through Seth, to Adam. I say this so as not to be confused with the Enoch who was the son of Cain, the man who murdered his brother Abel.

Looking through the genealogy in this chapter the first distinguishing feature of Enoch is his age. In the pre-flood age the people lived considerably longer than we do today. Enoch was one of a few who married and started a family at the then relatively early age of sixty five. Additionally Enoch’s life was much shorter than anyone else, only 365 years! However, the most distinguishing feature is the last 300 years. In Genesis 5:22 we have stated that Enoch “walked with God”.

What does it mean to “walk with God”? It means that between Enoch and God there was no distance. There was nearness and togetherness and by implication, we see that a close relationship had developed between them both. In Genesis 3 we read of the Lord God walking in the garden looking for Adam and Eve. We may imply that God did this on regular occasions to converse with both Adam and Eve, the people He had created. Let us notice, it is Enoch who walks with God, not the other way round. Is there a distinction? I believe so. God would not come as He had done with Adam and Eve. It was the responsibility of each individual to seek after God. This is what Enoch did; he desired to walk with God. Enoch desired God’s company. If there is to be a togetherness for Enoch, then his behaviour must be acceptable to God. If there is a relationship then there must be common ground on which that relationship can flourish. God does not lessen or lower His standards, Enoch fellowships with God on God’s terms.

If we are to enjoy fellowship with God then it must be on God's terms. The initial step in the right direction is to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour. Having made that life changing commitment, we must then understand the implications of the decision we have made. We no longer continue with our previous lifestyle. That way of life is to end completely. Satan would encourage new converts to change just a little, if at all. The last thing that Satan wants is a lot of people like Enoch, walking with God in this world!

What are the changes that should be in a Christian's life? Let us read from 1 Peter 1:13-16, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

The Apostle Peter writes to Christians stating clearly that they are to give up their former way of life. A holy life is one which is not polluted by the sin dominated life of pre-conversion days. The Apostle Paul has similar teaching for the Christians at Corinth, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What was true then is still true today.

The next statement in Genesis 5, which mentions about Enoch walking with God states, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." After 300 years, there had been such a change for the better. Enoch's walk with God had developed so much that his life was now suitable to go direct to heaven – God took him! Enoch disappeared from this world. There was no warning that he was going to go. This is quite different from Elijah who was taken to heaven in a whirlwind accompanied by a chariot and horses of fire, see 2 Kings 2:11. Also, Elisha was standing witnessing the whole event. The sudden disappearance of Enoch will be repeated one day. In 1 Thessalonians 4 we read of a similar event when believers will be suddenly caught up to heaven. Paul repeats the same event to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Are we seeking to live our lives in such a way that when we arrive in heaven and stand before the Lord Jesus, and as He assesses our lives, there is nothing to be discarded? Only if our life has been lived for His honour; only if we have walked with God in this world. Where does this assessment take place? Let us read from 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." When we are caught up to heaven, at the rapture, as Enoch was, one of the first activities will be the judgment seat of Christ. This is not to do with punishment for sins; we have been completely forgiven the instant we trusted Christ as our Saviour. This event has to do with how we lived our lives for Christ.

To find out what is being assessed let us read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." What we do in this world is like material, which either endures fire or does not. The Lord expects us to produce quality work like gold, silver and precious stones.

One example of good works is helping believers grow and develop in their faith. Let us read from 1 Peter 1:7, "The genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter teaches us that a believer's faith is valued highly by God. Sometimes, we are placed in circumstances that test our faith. Peter likens the test to fire. In such circumstances we may well find the experience unpleasant. The Bible is full of examples of faith being tested, Abraham who was told to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22 is one such example.

Let us learn the lesson, that God wants us to be living a godly life.

The man and his testimony

The next mention of Enoch in the Bible is in Hebrews 11. He is the second person in this chapter. First is Abel, whose life was cut short because his brother murdered him. Enoch's life is cut short in a different way, because God wanted to take him to heaven! Let us read from Hebrews 11:5-6, "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he

pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

If we thought that Enoch in Genesis might have led a secretive kind of life and nobody knew of his close relationship with God, then Hebrews 11 puts the record straight. Enoch had a testimony or reputation. What kind of reputation do I have? We can all ask ourselves that question. Here is something to which all Christians can aspire. Enoch pleased God. Remember Enoch did this for 300 years. Can we do this for the rest of our lives?

In Hebrews 11 there are two things that enabled Enoch to achieve this reputation. First, he believed that God is. Secondly Enoch knew that God rewarded those who diligently sought after Him. This second point has been covered already. But, believing “God is” is important. It is believing in the existence of God, that He has always existed and will always exist. This phrase is simply stating that, all that God has made known about Himself, He is altogether exactly that. It includes the fundamentals, that God is both holy and loving. Believing “God is” is really the corner stone of faith. Everything that is written about God in the Bible can be depended upon. Because Enoch believed this, he was able to walk with God. His belief was real and lived out before family, friends and every one he met. No one had any doubts where he stood in relation to his faith, which was of prime importance. This was how Enoch had a testimony that he pleased God. Such a testimony was demonstrated every day. Enoch was a believer who puts others to shame. If Enoch could live that way, then so can we.

Do we desire a testimony that we are the kind of person who walks with God?

The man and his prophecy

We come to the third and final reference to Enoch in the Scriptures. Let us read the verses from Jude 11-16, “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’ These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.”

There are a number of points in this prophecy, which need to be considered. A warning, “Woe to them”. In this expression, Enoch, identifies with the sorrow and grief that will be experienced by the ungodly. It is especially distressing because of their destructive behaviour among the people of God. We do well to remember that God desires people to be saved and to come to understand the truth, see 1 Timothy 2:4. The other ungodly people referred to, Cain, Balaam and Core were all self centred and thought that they knew better than God! Eventually God’s judgment fell upon them to their everlasting woe.

Such people are damaging to the Christian company and possibly the Christian testimony. They are spots at the “love feast”. The “love feast” was intended to be a happy and profitable time of fellowship probably culminating in the “remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His death” This word “spots” is interesting as it has the meaning of a hidden rock or reef in the sea. These people were not necessarily obvious as to the damage they were doing but the potential for making people shipwreck as to their faith was a very real danger.

They are selfish, “they feed themselves without fear”. By implication these people took an important place in the Christian company but in reality were not pastors or shepherds of God’s flock; they were feeding themselves. “Without fear” would imply that God was not in their reckoning. Peter, in 1 Peter 5, clearly warns that the people of God are God’s heritage and, as such, pastors have great responsibilities.

They bring no benefit to the Christian fellowship. The second part of verse 12 brings out the stark fact that spiritually they were dead. There was no water, no stability, no fruit and no foundation. What disaster for God’s people to have leaders of this character in the fellowship. Let us not deceive ourselves today. What was true in Peter’s day is probably doubly so today!

Enoch’s prophecy clearly shows from verse 13 that these unbelievers were heading for eternal judgment. Wandering stars, they have no fixed settled course in life for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. They are eternally lost because of the course of action they have set for their lives. They are like the fool, who was building bigger barns for his wealth and retirement and who died without God before he could enjoy his worldly riches, see Luke 12.

In verse 14 Enoch turns to a more positive aspect of his prophecy: “the promise of the Lord’s coming”. Let us notice, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of His saints. This is a time of judgment and believers are involved and, at some point, we will judge angels, see 1 Corinthians 6.

The purpose of the coming of the Lord is to judge the ungodly. The people of the world divide themselves into ethnic groups, not just nations. What conflicts have occurred in many countries over the past decades! It is the same with religious groups, similar conflicts. This is not to mention power and political struggles, which have resulted in conflict and wars. God sees two classes of people, the godly who know Christ as their Saviour and the ungodly who do not. When we look at verses 15 and 16, there is the implied declaration that the ungodly are rotten through and through. As Romans 3:10 states, “There is none righteous”.

Conclusion

Enoch faced massive problems in his day. All around there was an ungodly attitude. Jude records Enoch’s prophecy in his letter to Christians because they were facing the same kind of difficulty. Today, Jude’s letter and Enoch’s prophecy are just as relevant and, as Christians, you and I face the same situations. Let us be honest and say the world is no better now than it was then and quite possibly even worse!

How am I to respond? Be like Enoch who focused on the living God and made it his purpose in life to walk with God. Not some days, when we feel like it, but every moment of every day. This is the twenty first century challenge. What kind of Christian am I?

While considering this radio talk the text on a calendar was as follows:

*Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. Genesis 5:24.
He had this testimony, that he pleased God. Hebrews 11:5.*

*How many souls were succoured on his journey,
Helped by his words, or prayers, we do not know,
Still, this we read, words of excelling grandeur,
“He walked with God”, while yet he walked below.*

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