

The Two Who Walked with God

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Genesis 5:24—"Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him."

Genesis 6:9—"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation and Noah walked with God and he died."

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews has been called the Westminster Abbey of the Old Testament. Among the many memorials found there to heroic faith and saintly sacrifice, two bear nearly the same inscription: "Enoch walked with God, and he was not." "Noah walked with God, and he died."

These words are used of no other persons in the Bible. Abraham received the command "walk before me" for he was the friend of God. Moses was the man of God. Elijah—the prophet of God, a mountain of a man with the heart of a whirlwind. Gideon was the warrior of God. Ezekiel was the "Son of Man" in the Old Testament. Daniel is called "greatly beloved."

But only Enoch and Noah have this testimony that they walked with God in an age when everyone else walked away from HIM. Our age too surely needs men who walk with God, while they preach personal and social righteousness: Prophets of the realities of the world to come in an age of secularism. Men who can stand unmoved in a crisis and whose faith can survive a catastrophe. Such were Enoch and Noah.

Above all these mark the origin of the line of the Prophets. Adam and Abraham were only patriarchs but Enoch and Noah were Prophets. The first earliest names in the great and long apostolic succession. Both were pioneer preachers. Both were bold preachers. Both were lonely preachers. In fact their messages were so universal that after thirty centuries they are recalled and recorded by Peter and Jude in the New Testament. Their preaching is up-to-date. Our world is turning its back on God and needs men who will make His presence a reality. Enoch prophesied and then men began to call upon the name of the Lord. Christ said that the last days would be like those of Noah. Present day society is facing a catastrophe more terrible than

that which overwhelmed the ante-diluvian world, if we may believe the pessimistic seers of the downfall of western civilization.

Jesus Christ points out the need for an ante-diluvian ministry! Even Bernard Shaw calls us back to Methuselah. Yes, the world needs preachers of righteousness who will call men to repentance. It was a great message that fell from the lips of these men, ordained to preach before the flood. But their character was greater than their message, for it is the man behind the message that counts. Some of the saints mount up with wings as eagles—others run and are not weary like Elijah. But of these two we have this climax recorded, that they walked and did not faint.

There are several Hebrew words that are translated walk in the Old Testament. This word is peculiar, it signifies to walk to and fro, to walk habitually, to walk daily and hourly with God. It denotes the most intimate intercourse with God. A permanent realization of the presence of God, a dependence on Him, and a following of His guidance. Like the Psalm, "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

There are three thoughts that grip our attention as we meditate on these patriarchal preachers of righteousness, these pilgrims to the City of God. Although they lived so long ago, their footprints (like those of ante-deluvian monsters in rock) are permanently imbedded in the pages of Holy Writ. We ask three questions: (1) What did their walk and message have in common? (2) How did it differ? (3) What did they find at the end of the road?

Both are historic characters, not myths, for both are referred to as such in the New Testament repeatedly. The name Noah was often on the lips of Jesus.

I. ENOCH AND NOAH HAD MUCH IN COMMON

Both were the leaders of a new dispensation. Both were preachers of faith and righteousness in an age of doubt and wickedness. The record is very brief, but the words used are very significant, and both brief records find their interpretation in the New Testament.

On each character as he appears on the stage of history the curtain rises and falls three times.

(a) We first see Enoch as an ordinary man, engrossed in family cares and secular pursuits: "Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah." Then there comes a great change.

(b) The curtain rises and we read: "And Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah three hundred years and begat sons and daughters." Up till then he had merely lived. Now he walks with God. Why? He goes through the old duties and carries the old responsibilities but there is a new light in his eye and on his path. A new vocation, a new companionship. One far older than the ages of Methuselah. "Lord thou hast been our dwelling place." He had a deathless companion, and so was not afraid of death! Yet Enoch must have been a lonely man—in his generation.

(c) Yesterday he walked alone, today he walks with God. Then the curtain falls to rise again. We stand in a vast cemetery. Adam, Abel, Cain and his Seth, Enos, Methuselah—they are all there but NOT Enoch. There is no grave for him. Enoch is immortal. God took him. He was Translated!

In the same way there are three great stages in the life of Noah. First he stands a solitary man lifting a protest against the sins of a wicked world. "All the imaginations of the thoughts of man's heart were only evil every day"—what a powerful description of Noah's daily environment. Who can picture the men of the ante-deluvian world!! The cup of a world's violence and iniquity overflowing!

(b) Then we see him building the ark and surviving the flood of waters, and the waves of terror that rolled over his soul. He went through that great catastrophe!! (Like the last world war—only far more destructive and it left deeper scars!) "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts." "All Thy waves and Thy Billows passed over me."—He too is lifted above the world—almost translated like Enoch.

(c) But when the curtain rises the third time he stands alone in a new world keeping vigil over the new dispensation for he stands not alone but with God; under a rainbow, waiting: next to him a smoking altar! What a pulpit!

(2) Again, both were preachers and prophets of God. The echo of their message still is heard!

Enoch was the seventh from Adam. Jewish tradition and the Epistle of Jude credit him with a special revelation called the Book of Enoch, two versions of such a book have come down to us—Pseudo—

1. The Book of Enoch (Ethiopic version) written in first or second century B. C., ascribed to Enoch. Often quoted by New

Testament writers was lost, then discovered in Abyssinia by Bruce in 1773, translated in 1821. Derived from Hebrew or Aramaic original. Deals with apocalysse and Messianic Prophecy judgment.

2. Book of Secrets of Enoch (Slavnic Enoch) was lost for 1200 years. Discovered in Russia (a 16th century manuscript) by Sokolof in 1886. Probably dates from first century A. D. Deals with millenium, Messianic Kingdom and Paradise.

He prophesied saying: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought and all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Four times the dreadful word ungodly echoes like the trump of doom from the lips of this godly man and prophet in Jude's epistle.

As regards Noah, says Peter, "he too was a preacher of righteousness when God brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly." Men were pushing God aside. Noah held Him fast. An unsuccessful preacher? How does God measure success?

The two patriarchs lived four centuries apart, but both walked in the same path . . . the narrow way of life.

(a) By faith. They saw the invisible. Hebrews 11:1-2. Saw the promises from afar. Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims. (Hebrews 11:13-16)

(b) With faithfulness—Uncontaminated—undismayed, they preached righteousness.

(c) In perseverance. Enoch "three hundred years.

They walked and did not faint. Step by step—up the steep to the city of God. It is unwise to say, as some do, that the Patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament had no idea of immortality. The argument from silence is not convincing, e. g. neither the cat nor the date-fruit are mentioned in the whole Old Testament. Were they unknown?

The old Puritan divines with deeper insight, say: Abel confessed another life after his death, for his blood cried out and is heard; Cain acknowledged another life before death, for he was afraid to die, and his soul foreboded that something more awaited him than this world's unhappiness; Enoch confesses another life without death, for out of this world's misery, and without the pain of dying, he goes straight to everlasting life."

II. THEIR WALK DIFFERED BECAUSE THEIR LIVES DIFFERED

For there are diversities of gifts in the Old Testament but the same spirit, diversities of administration, but the same Lord. Their lives are a great contrast. Enoch means the devoted one. Noah the rest-giver.

(a) The former lived in a quiet, commonplace age, History runs its even course—Humanity increases, life expands—civilization grows more complex but there is no catastrophe only the daily round and common task.

(b) The latter appears at a crisis. The cup of human iniquity is full. He lives through the forty days and forty nights of the Divine Judgment.

We need to study the whole record carefully and abide with Noah in the Ark to appreciate what he suffered although he was saved. "No man suffered so much in the flood as Noah, says George Matheson. He saw the disappearance of an entire world! It drowned all his friends but seven, all his contemporaries. It quenched his fame as a representative man. The flood has infected his memory with the mist of its own antiquity. The more universal we make the deluge, the more local we make Noah; the more do we isolate him from the common experience of mankind." To be an only survivor is always a great tragedy, of the Titanic or a great battle.

Noah is a type of many who followed after him. He was saved; but in the new world and the new life, his old sin found him out.

Noah planted a vineyard and became drunk. The flood did not drown the Devil Alcohol.

For Enoch the pathway was smooth. For Noah it was rough all the way. Enoch walked through the sunshine, Noah through the storm. Enoch walked carefully, Noah stumbled. The pages of Enoch's diary are without incident or tragedy or tears, Noah's life is all drama, all tragedy, all catastrophe. Enoch is only celebrated in the brief record of the Jewish people in three verses.

Noah's faith and stature are so colossal that the flood story is known from Mexico to China, from Babylon to the South Sea Islands. This is most remarkable. A universal reputation!

Most of all do the two life stories differ in their last chapters. The one is an idyll of peace and quiet, the other a family tragedy of unrest and terrible temptations! Noah was drunk and Noah was naked . . . "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" "Cursed be

Canaan a servant of servants shall he be." There the curtain falls. On the right side the altar and the rainbow, on the left side the vineyard and the curse. "And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years; and he died." Yet all his life, nine hundred and fifty years, he tried to walk with God." "Now unto Him that was able to keep Noah from stumbling at the end and to present him before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy" . . . we leave Noah. Because we know that Christ was with him in the ark and with him at the end. "Heir of the righteousness by faith."

III. WHAT WAS THE END OF THE ROAD FOR THESE TWO PILGRIMS OF THE NIGHT AND DID THEY MEET AT LAST?

Both of them might have used the beautiful words that Bunyan puts in the mouth of Mr. Feeblemind in his immortal allegory: I love to repeat them.

"I am a man of no strength at all of body, nor yet of mind; but would if I could, though I can but crawl, spend my life in the pilgrim's way. I am escaped with my life for which I thank my King. . . . Other brunts I also look for, but this I have resolved on, to wit, to run when I can, to go when I can not run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I thank Him that loved me, I am fixed. My way is before me, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am, as you see, but of a feeble mind."

And so they all passed over; Valiant-for-the-Truth, Christian and Christiana and her children and Feeble-mind, Greatheart and Despondency, Enoch and Noah, and all the trumpets sounded for them on the other side. For there is no difference—all have sinned and come short of the glory here—all who believe and walk with God pass into the glory over there. Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him." "Noah walked with God and he died." Will it be so for you and for me? Are you walking away from God? To Him? With Him?

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, He will not desert . . ."

"They shall walk with me in white for they are worthy:" "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no

wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall first rise; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore "comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:14-18).

Enoch walked with God . . .; Noah walked with God . . .;
Do you?

A M E N

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