

Number 43 (8 - 2)

Copy of the "GRACE JOURNAL"

"Preaching grace in the Dispensation of grace"

A Bible Study

Richard Jordan, Editor, President of Grace School of the Bible

888-535-2300 Gracelmpact.org

Walking With God

BY RICHARD JORDAN

Enoch is one of the most remarkable characters in the Bible. He lived in a notoriously wicked period of history, one that in many ways parallels our own "evil age". The fact that he "*walked with God*" makes his life and career of special interest to every sincere student of the Word of God.

A WALK OF FAITH

The whole of Genesis 5 is a reproof of the restless ambitions of fallen man as it attaches to even these centuries-long lives the fact, "*and he died*". The only exception to be found, amazingly enough, comes in the account of the *shortest* life in the chapter, for Enoch is the only break in the funeral train recorded here. The basic facts are these:

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:

"And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

"And all the days Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him". (Gne.5:21-24)

Everyone knows that "*Enoch walked with God*" but many seem to overlook the fact that this began "*after* he begat Methuselah." While the birth of a child is a sobering event for any parent, Methuselah's birth was certainly a watershed experience in Enoch's life. It was by faith that Enoch gave his son his name, the significance of which is no doubt embodied in that name's meaning: "*When he is dead it shall be*

sent." That the "it" is a reference to the coming judgment of the flood seems apparent and that this knowledge was given to Enoch as a *special revelation* for his day is equally certain.

Enoch was divinely instructed; he *heard* God, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom.10:17); and Enoch clearly *believed* God, for it was "by faithhe had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb.11:5). His was a *walk of faith*-a life in which the Word of God was a real power.

Amos 3:3 asks the question, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" and the prophet goes on to say:

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophet". (Amos 3:7)

To Enoch God revealed the solemn fact with the death Methuselah His judgement would be poured out and thus it was as prophet that Enoch name his son.

It is a simply matter to note that the deluge *did* indeed come at the death of Methuselah: Methuselah was 187 years old at the birth of Lamech. (Gen.5:25); Lamech was 182 years old of when Noah was born (5:28); and the flood came when Noah was 600 years old (7:11). Adding up these figures we get exactly 969 years -- the age of Methuselah at this death (5:27).

Thus we learn *why* Methuselah lived so long. Rather than immediately pouring out His judgment on an ungodly world, "*the longsuffering of God waited*"(I Pet. 3:20). Thus as Methuselah's life was drawn out to become the oldest man of all time, it was a demonstration of God's longsuffering.

Not only did Enoch *name* his son by faith, but his daily life was a *walk* of faith:

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5).

We should not overlook the fact that it was "*by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.*" God had also revealed to him that he would not personally endure the coming judgment and thus he lived daily with that "blessed hope" before

him. It was this *walk* of faith that led to the *witness* of faith held forth by Enoch. Thus "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" as he proclaimed His Word to his generation.

A WITNESS FOR GOD

The Word of God was a real power working in Enoch's life and it produced a vigorous witness for the truth committed to his trust. Jude 14, 15 tells us of his ministry and message as God's spokesman:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints,

"To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

By faith Enoch was a witness of God, living a life well pleasing to him as the Word of God worked effectually in his heart and life.

THE LESSON FOR US

There is much in Enoch's walk with God to instruct us today for we too have been given a *special revelation* from God--one that focuses on the delay of His judgment on ungodly men and that assures our translation prior to its ultimate pouring out. (A revelation, of course, found in God's *written Word*).

At Pentecost the stage was set for the day of God's wrath to begin. The prophets of the Old Testament had long and clearly predicted that God would judge the world for its rejection of his Christ. Peter recognized this as, quoting Psa. 110: 1, he warned his hearers:

"For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND,

"UNTIL I MAKE THY FOES THY FOOTSTOOL.

"THEREFORE LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL KNOW ASSUREDLY, THAT GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:34-36).

The rejected Christ had ascended to the Father's right hand and the next scheduled event on God's program was for Him to make Christ's enemies His footstool. Yet the predicted and expected wrath did not come. Something amazing took place which the prophets had never uttered nor even known. God interjected into the prophetic scheme a *whole new dispensation*, a whole new order of things, a new divine administration!

Delaying the judgments He had predicted, God ushered in a period of *grace*, based solely on the merits of His crucified, risen Son. And just as surely as "the dispensation of the grace of God" was hidden from the prophets, so surely was it first revealed to and through the Apostle Paul:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

"If ye have heard of THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME to you-ward:

"HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY..." (Eph.3:1-3).

"Whereof I am made a minister, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL [i.e., complete] THE WORD OF GOD;

"EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS" (Col.1:25, 26).

It is an astonishing fact that "this present *evil* world" is also an age of *grace*-a fact that emphasizes the true character of grace. It is also a testimony to the infinite mercy and longsuffering of God that this age of grace has lasted longer than any other. This "*longsuffering*" is by no means slackness on God's part. It is the very opposite, for God is containing and restraining His wrath and pouring out His grace instead. Peter, speaking of the delay in Christ's return to judge and reign, says:

"The Lord is NOT slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness: but is *LONGSUFFERING* to us-ward, NOT WLLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE.

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is *SALVATION*; EVEN AS OUR BELOVED BROTHER PAUL ALSO ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN UNTO HIM HATH WRITTEN UNTO YOU" (II Pet.3:9, 15).

Today, the *longsuffering* of our Lord spells one wonderful word--*SALVATION*! Just as the longsuffering of God waiting in the days of Noah was symbolized by Methuselah, Paul tells us:

"Howbeit FOR THIS CAUSE I obtained mercy, that IN ME FIRST Jesus Christ might shew forth ALL LONGSUFFERING, FOR A PATTERN to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (I Tim.1:16).

Like Enoch, we have a special revelation of the longsuffering of God committed to our trust-and we have the promise of deliverance from "the wrath to come" as we wait for the day when He will take us to be with Him.

How long this longsuffering will last no one can tell, for there are no signs to mark the time of its termination--except, of course, the removal of the Body of Christ. Thus our opportunity to "*hold forth the Word of life*" becomes our urgent responsibility. We must be "*redeeming the time, because the days are evil*" (Eph. 5: 16). May we, like Enoch, *walk with God*--following the path of faith, intelligently understanding just where we stand in God's program and witnessing faithfully for Him until He comes for us.

THE SINS THAT ARE PAST

"Whom [i.e., Christ] God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of SINS THAT ARE PAST, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25).

Many believers have stumbled over the phrase, "*sins that are past*," in this verse. They conclude from Paul's words that Christ's righteousness only avails for the sins

of their past life, before conversion, and that their security thereafter must depend upon their own conduct.

But this is not what is meant by "*sins that are past.*" Heb. 9: 15 sheds clear light on the passage:

"And for this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of THE TRANSGRESSIONS THAT WERE UNDER THE FIRST TESTAMENT, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Though the Israelites were required to bring blood sacrifices to God under the "first testament" (the Law), we know that "*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats' should take away sins*" ([Heb.10:4).

It was really *Christ's* blood, which was only later to be shed for the remission of their sins, that saved them. Old Testament believers were not saved by the blood of the old covenant but by the blood of the new covenant--not by the blood of bulls and goats but by the blood of Christ. Only this was not as yet made manifest.

Notice Paul's words in I Tim. 2:5-7:

"Forthere is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

"Who gave Himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not ;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

Notice: "*One mediator-a ransom for all-to be testified in due time-whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle.*" That the "*due time*" for this to be testified arrived with the ministry of Paul is further demonstrated by Rom. 3:21-26:

"BUT NOW the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. . .

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of SINS THAT ARE PAST, through the forbearance of God;

"TO DECLARE, I SAY, AT THIS TIME His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Paul is the "due time" testifier of all that Christ accomplished at Calvary and when Paul declared Christ's righteousness "for the remission of sins that are past" he meant simply that though it could not be declared "*at that time*," it was really Christ's righteousness that availed to take away the sins of past generations and that believers of the past were saved, not by their own righteousness but by His.
