

BIBLE CHARACTERS

by

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CHAPTER 8

ENOCH

The last prophet of the Jewish dispensation, and almost the last prophet that the world ever had - though CHRIST, of course, came after him - was John the Baptist. But I now want to call attention to the first prophet who is mentioned in Scripture. You will find an account of him in the fifth of Genesis; And Jared lived a hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch; and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died. 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 of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years. And Enoch walked with GOD: and he was not; for GOD took him.

We find it stated in the book of Jude that Enoch prophesied of the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints; so that we know he was a prophet of the Lord. We find also, in Genesis, another man bearing this name. He was a descendant of Cain, one who built a city, and was, no doubt, very popular and highly thought of by men; whereas, the Enoch we refer to was very unpopular. He who built a city and was so famous, has gone with the city which he built, no one knows where; but the influence of this man, who was gifted with the spirit of prophecy, and who walked with GOD, is still fresh upon the world.

Enoch lived in a world moulded and fashioned by the sons of Cain. They were the men of light and leading - the men of culture and progress. Jabal took the lead in agriculture; Tubal-Cain was the manufacturer; and Jubal provided the music and amusement. No doubt they thought Enoch an odd man, not valuing the improvements they were making in the sin-blighted earth. They doubtless hated him, because they saw that he despised the paint and varnish with which they were hiding the rottenness of a world dead to GOD. But they could afford to treat with contempt a minority of one; for they did not perceive the invisible GOD with whom Enoch walked. But GOD regarded him; and that satisfied Enoch's soul. He was the one man upon the earth who was well-pleasing in His sight.

Enoch's name - dedicated, disciplined, well-regulated - was significant of his character. He was a dedicated man, whose life was disciplined and his habits regulated by the guiding hand of GOD. He saw the promises afar off, and was persuaded of them, and embraced them; and by faith lived

as one alive from the dead, yielding his members as instruments of righteousness unto GOD. He strove not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers; he shunned and purged himself from profane and vain babblings; he was a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared for every good work. Enoch was one of the small number of men against whom nothing is recorded in the Bible. It has been truly said that people think Enoch had not half the trials, half the difficulties, that saints of GOD have in these days. But that is a very superficial view. Enoch was surrounded by, and going through the midst of, a system of things that Satan has improved upon at the present moment. He lived in the midst of the world as Cain and his descendants had made it. No one supposes that the ordered system of things round about us is the production of GOD's hand. Satan is the God and prince and head of that... There was a religion and a city. Those were the two great constituent parts of that system of things in which Enoch lived.

Cain was the founder of a religion that disowned the claims of GOD in righteousness, seeing that man had fallen from GOD. Cain toiled on the earth, and, though cursed, it yielded its fruit to him; and he brought the fruit of the earth that was cursed, as if there had been no curse at all, and offered it to GOD. That which characterized and marked the religion of which Cain was the inventor and founder, was bringing to GOD an offering in such a way as to deny the great principle, that without shedding of blood there is no remission. Then the city is exactly what we have all round us now. There was manufacture; there was the art of man cultivated to its greatest possible extent; ingenuity taxed beyond all conception - to produce something which would make the world, out of which GOD had been rejected, bearable to man. This was Cain's world. Herein lay its religious, political, and moral aspects.

In the midst of such a state of things, Enoch walked with GOD; and in the very same world we are also called to walk with GOD. The record of his life is that he had this testimony, that he pleased GOD. Notice that this man, the brightest star of all that period of history before the flood, a period which lasted rather more than fifteen hundred years, accomplished nothing that men would call great. He was neither a warrior, a statesman, nor a scientist; nor did he, so far as we know, accomplish anything remarkable, like Daniel, or Joseph, or any of the other mighty men of Israel: but what made him great was that he walked with GOD. That, in all ages, is what has made men really great. He found the way of holiness in that dark and evil day; and he will be in the front rank of those who shall walk with the Lord, the Lamb, in white, for they are worthy.

The faith of Enoch drew GOD down from Heaven to walk with him. He maintained unbroken fellowship with GOD. A man in communion with GOD is one of Heavens greatest warriors. He can battle with and overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. In this way Enoch was a mighty conqueror. It was not that Enoch was anything; but his GOD made him great.

Abraham is called the father of all them that believe. Enoch may be called the father of all those who in all generations have walked with GOD. What made Abraham great? We do not read of any famous speeches that he made, nor that he was a very learned man in the wisdom of the world; but he had faith in Enoch's GOD, and GOD walked with him. All down the ages Abraham has been known as the friend of GOD. Eastern travelers to this day are reminded by the Mohammedans, when approaching Abrahams grave, that he was the friend of GOD. What made Abraham so great and mighty was that he subdued kingdoms and overcame the world by faith. He was a man of like passions with ourselves; but faith in GOD made him great.

Joseph was another of those great men who walked in fellowship with GOD. His brethren tried to get rid of him; Satan attempted to put him down; but they could not although he lay so long in the Egyptian prison. The skeptical and unbelieving of that day might have said, Look at that man; he serves the GOD of his fathers, the GOD of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; he will not turn aside a hairs-breadth from the worship of the unknown GOD: yet see how his GOD serves him! He is in prison! But wait GOD's time. It is better to be in prison with GOD than in a palace without Him. It is said that he was in prison; but - and I like that expression - GOD was with him. If a man is in communion with GOD, He will not leave him. GOD never deserts His children in their hour of need; and, in due time, Joseph came off victorious; exchanged the prison for a throne; and was made ruler over all Egypt. What a power he was in Egypt when GOD had taken him from prison and put him in his proper place!

Look at Moses. He, too, was in communion with GOD. When Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh, the stubborn king did not see the third Person who was with them. If he had, he might have acted altogether differently. The idea of those two unarmed men going before the mighty monarch of Egypt, and demanding, without trembling for their lives, that he should give three millions of slaves their liberty! The idea of these two men, without position or influence at Court, making such an extraordinary demand as that! But they were in communion with the GOD of Heaven, and such men always succeed. You must let Israel go, said Moses. Pharaoh mocked. You say your GOD! What do I care for your GOD! Who is He that I should obey Him? The king found out who He was. Moses was the mightiest man who lived in his day. Why? Because GOD walked with him, and he was in communion with GOD; he was linked to the GOD of Heaven. Moses alone was nothing. He was a man like you and me; but he was the meekest of men, and the meek shall inherit the earth. He was famous because he walked with his GOD.

When Elijah stood on Mount Carmel, Ahab did not see who was with him. Little did he know the prophets GOD; little did he think that, when Elijah walked up Mount Carmel, GOD walked with him. Talk of an Alexander making the world tremble at the tread of his armies! - of the marches and victories of a Caesar, or a Napoleon! the man who is walking with GOD is greater than all the Caesars, and Napoleons, and Alexanders, who ever lived. Little did Ahab and the false prophets of Baal know that Elijah was walking with the same GOD with whom Enoch walked before the Flood. Elijah was nothing when out of communion with GOD; but when walking in the power of GOD, he stood on Mount Carmel like a king.

The sword of Gideon was nothing; but away went the Midianites when the Lord linked His power with that of Gideon. When GOD unites His power with the weakness of His children, they become mighty. It was so when Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass. We want that same power. Who can stand before a man that, like Enoch, is in communion with GOD? No one on earth. He is a mighty giant. Strong in the strength which GOD supplies, he is more than conqueror.

Daniel and his friends had the same GOD to walk with them in Babylon. The Chaldeans were a mighty people; the king and his warriors had great strength, and had conquered many nations, but Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, and Darius, and Cyrus, had not the power of Daniel. Why? Because Daniel walked with the GOD who made Heaven and earth. He was in communion with Him. And when his friends were cast into the fiery furnace, they had nothing to fear. Do you think that GOD would desert them in that trying hour? I can imagine Shadrach saying to his two

companions Be of good cheer. They were probably well acquainted with this prophecy of Isaiah: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Man is immortal till his work is done. These men had not done their work yet; and the fire could not scorch a hair of their heads, or do them any hurt. The three Hebrew youths were cast into the fire; but the form of a Fourth was with them: GOD walked with them. Satan had incited the king to make the furnace seven times hotter than usual; but, to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, it was like walking in green pastures, and beside still waters. No hurt can come to those who are walking with GOD.

Look how it was with Joshua. GOD told him that no man should be able to stand before him all the days of his life. When the news came to him that a confederacy had been formed against him by five kings, who were bringing against him regiments of giants, and among them the sons of Anak, Joshua was walking with the GOD of Enoch; he had the same GOD, and therefore had nothing to fear. When he was told of the danger of encountering them, he was not alarmed; and trusting in the arm of the Lord, he routed all the hosts which were brought against him.

Mark the contrast when there is no communion. Israel rejected GOD a few hundred years after. They, like other nations, wanted a king who could be seen, and who would go with them to war - instead of the Theocracy with which they were growing discontented. They wanted to walk by sight, not by faith; and when Samuel grieved and wept over them, and remonstrated with them, they said, We will have a king. GOD directed Samuel to tell them of the consequences, and that they would regret their choice. They had a king who was a head and shoulders above any other man; and they raised the cry, GOD save the king! When the day of trial came, and when all the armed hosts of Israel were in battle array, out came one solitary giant; and when he shook his finger at them, they all trembled from head to foot. There was not a man in all the army who dare go out and meet him. One giant frightened the whole army. But one at last comes forth who is armed and equipped - for GOD is with him, which is best of all; and he takes a few small stones and a sling, and goes forth to meet this giant. Was not GOD with David when he picked up the stones? - when he placed one in the sling, and when he took such a sure aim at the giant of Gath? Yes, he walked with GOD. We are strong when the Lord is on our side, but weak when we are out of communion.

A great deal is being said about Holiness. Every true child of GOD desires to be holy, as His Father in Heaven is holy. And holiness is walking with GOD. Enoch had only one object. How simple life becomes when we have only one object to seek, one purpose to fulfill - to walk with GOD - to please GOD! It has been said that the utmost many Christians get to is that they are pardoned criminals. How short they fall of the joy and blessedness of walking with GOD!

I will venture to say that Enoch, in his day, was considered a most singular and visionary man - an eccentric man - the most peculiar man who lived in that day. He was a man out of fashion - out of the fashion of this world, which passeth away. He was one of those who set their affections on things above. He lived days of Heaven upon earth; for the essence of Heaven is to walk with GOD. He did not go with the current and the crowd. If the question of drink had been raised, he would have been a teetotaler. He would not have gone with the multitude to do evil. He would have taken that ground, though the whole world were against him. And what we want is the moral courage to be against the whole world when we are in the right. Enoch dared to do right. He took his position, and dared to stand against an ungodly generation. There he stood;

and he was not ashamed to stand alone. He testified against the sins of a generation which was filling the earth with violence, and crying out for the judgment of GOD upon it. While his fellow-men were hurrying toward death and judgment, he calmly walked with GOD. He took upon him the yoke of the meek and lowly One, and found rest unto his soul.

Enoch was translated fifty-seven years after the death of Adam. He might have been often found in Adams tent; and the young prophet may have talked with him of the second Adam, who would not fall, but would overcome the tempter, and would come with myriads of His holy ones. Perhaps he stood with the ancients round the grave of the father of our race. What a scene must that burial have been! Enoch may have seen the first man who died a natural death, though not the first corpse, nor the first grave, for Abel had been murdered centuries before.

But suddenly those antediluvians were startled by a wonderful event. Enoch was translated, that he should not see death. Moses, the great earthly chronicler, tells us nothing of the manner of his translation, beyond this - he was not, for GOD took him. If the recording angel had been entering it in the chronicles of the Heavenly Kingdom, he would have written that He was, for GOD brought him up hither. Those simple, yet mysterious words, he was not, for GOD took him, seem written in anticipation of that coming mystery, when the world shall wonder because from the bed, or the mill, or the open field, one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

We read that while Elijah still went on, and talked with Elisha, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven. GOD sent His carriage and pair for the prophet of Mount Carmel, who had done such mighty deeds; but Enoch, of whom nothing is recorded but that he walked with GOD, was honored on that heavenly journey with the company of GOD Himself. They were companions here on earth, and they went up together to the world of light and rest; and they walk together forevermore. Oh, dear friends, though we may be children of GOD, how much we shall lose if we sacrifice, for any earthly thing, that close intimacy with GOD in this world and through the ages of eternity!

Elijah thought that he was the only faithful man left in Israel; yet there was a whole school of the sons of the prophets who spent three days in seeking the body of their lost leader. And we may well suppose there were loving friends who sought for Enoch; but he was not found, for GOD had translated him. No man can suddenly disappear without being missed by someone. Let us so live that when we are removed from earth, we may be missed by many to whom in life we have been a blessing.

The brief record of Enoch's life presents him to us as a foreshadow of the Son of GOD on earth - alone, yet not alone, for the Father was with him. Enoch was alone, yet not alone, for he walked with GOD. And when he was translated, he changed his place, but not his company.

Enoch belonged to a long-lived family. Jared, Enoch's father, was the oldest man but one, being nine hundred and sixty-two years old at his death; and Methuselah, Enoch's son, lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years of age; but Enoch was taken away, or translated, in the very prime of life. We have this testimony concerning him in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 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.

Now there is one thing we can settle in our minds distinctly: if he pleased GOD, he did not please men. It is impossible to do the two things. This world is at war with GOD; it has been for six thousand years, and will be as long as man is on the earth. We cannot please GOD and man. That which is highly esteemed by men is an abomination to GOD; and that which GOD esteems, men cast out as vile. Look at GOD's estimate of His Son; and of the Atonement that has been made. Man tramples it under his feet as if it were not worth having! Man rejects GOD's offer of mercy! There are men all around us who see no beauty in CHRIST; to whom He is as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness. He is the richest jewel that Heaven ever had, and dearer to GOD than anything in Heaven or earth. When men are well pleased with and accept His Son, then it is that men and GOD agree.

What a testimony was that to Enoch! - he pleased GOD. Though men rejected his testimony, and did not like him because he went against the current of that day, it was everything to Enoch to know that he pleased GOD. I have heard some boys say, when they have been taunted by others, I don't care, I am pleasing my father; he is quite satisfied. If we can please GOD - that ought to be our aim in life. If we are living as we should be, we can please Him; and, if not, we certainly cannot please Him. Every one of us may follow Enoch. It is GOD's good pleasure that we should walk with Him, and have this testimony - that we are pleasing GOD.

Enoch was the first who was translated into the Kingdom of GOD without death. Each dispensation - the Patriarchal, the Legal, and the Gospel - had its representative in this respect in Enoch, Elijah, and Emmanuel. With regard to Enoch, we are simply told that he was not; at what time of the day or night we know not; for GOD took him. Elisha saw the chariot which conveyed Elijah to glory. And the little band of disciples who accompanied Him to Bethany were the spectators of CHRIST's ascension into Heaven, as your Representative and mine. He raised His wounded hands, and in the act of blessing He ascended. His voice grew fainter and fainter as He rose higher and higher, till a cloud received Him out of their sight. Who could we have to represent us to better advantage, in the Court of Heaven, than the Son with whom the Father is well pleased? If you have an advocate to attend to your case, you want him in the Court, do you not? That is the place for him. When CHRIST was here He was our Prophet; now He is our Priest; and when He comes again He will appear as our King. Enoch and Elijah are representing their dispensations; and we have this consolation, that we have our Representative.

How the thought that Enoch was thus the representative of that earliest dispensation ought to have brought the antediluvians into the dust before GOD! I believe, if they had taken Enoch's translation as a warning, and had turned from their sins to GOD, the Flood would never have destroyed the old world. I believe that we have not the faintest conception of the sin and iniquity which abounded in the days of Noah. Men had time to mature in every conceivable sin. Their guilt was so great that the Flood came and swept them all away. But Noah had no opportunity of seeing the wicked inhabitants swept from the face of the earth, as the window was so constructed that it looked towards the heavens. No one can imagine the blackness and wickedness of that day, the corruption and violence of the world, out of which Enoch was caught up.

What a translation it must have been! I think I see him going from mountain peak to mountain peak, rising higher and higher in his experience of GOD, until he became so heavenly-minded that GOD took him into His own presence. Away in the morning of history he found the highway of holiness, and walked in it. And if Enoch, in that dim light, in the early ages of the world, could walk with GOD, and have fellowship and communion with Him, how much more

can we, who are living under the full blaze of Calvary, under the very shadow of the Cross of JESUS CHRIST!

Now, it is very evident that he lived for something outside of himself and outside of this world. He must have had a more powerful telescope than any now in use, notwithstanding the extraordinary improvements recently made in that instrument, for he could see into the very heavens; and he had his eye fixed upon the City which hath the foundations, whose Builder and Maker is GOD. By faith he could see, in that world of light, Him who is invisible. He was dead to the world. He had the world under his feet. He could see that everything was trifling here, and would soon pass away; - that even the earth itself would pass away, but that GOD's Kingdom was an everlasting Kingdom, and that He would reign forever; and he walked with GOD.

One day the cord that bound him to earth and time snapped asunder. GOD said unto him, Come up hither, and up he went to walk with Him in glory. GOD liked his company so well that He called His servant home. Dr. Andrew Bonar has said that Enoch took a long walk one day, and has not got back yet. With one bound he leaped the river of death, and walked the crystal pavement of Heaven - in the wilderness yesterday, in the promised land today.

Think of the society he was with on earth in the morning, and of that which he enjoyed in the evening! Think of what he was translated out of, and of what he entered into! Think of his being taken up out of this evil world, full of sin and iniquity, into the presence of the pure and holy GOD! Abel and Adam were there before him; and JESUS had not yet left the throne to come into the world and die, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to GOD. He saw CHRIST. Think of the ages He had been there, and the greatness of the reward Enoch had after walking with GOD only three hundred and sixty-five years! It was not long, after all, that he had to bear the scorn of men, compared with what he has enjoyed since. Think, too, of the reward that is set before us in yonder world if we are only true and faithful, and walk with GOD whilst we are on earth! Let us put the question to ourselves: Are we walking with GOD, like Enoch, or contrary to GOD? Every man was walking, in his day, towards the grave; but Enoch was entirely different. He had his heart and affections in another sphere. He was dead to the world. What charm had society for him? How many people now-a-days want a place in society - want to hold high positions even at the sacrifice of principle! They turn aside from the GOD of the Bible, and when they have attained to the goal of their ambition, that is the last we hear of them. But Enoch walked with GOD. When men get outside of themselves, their lives have an influence over other lives, and they live forever!

They walk with GOD whom none can shame
From trusting in His holy name:
Who looking for a glorious morn
Shrink not before the tip of scorn.

They walk in light, in safety, peace,
Awaiting patiently release;
Turn from the world and take the cross,
Even though it be of life the loss.

Thus Noah walked - an ark prepared
Thus moved by fear, salvation shared:

What, then, to him mans scoff and jeer?
GOD, the Almighty, was his fear.

So Abram walked when called to go
Forth to a land he did not know;
A stranger and a pilgrim here
Looked for a city to appear.

So Moses walked serene, endured
Affliction, and heavens rest secured:
And now the wealth of all the earth,
Compared with his, is little worth.

And thus GOD's heroes of all time,
So walk with Him in faith sublime;
The world is but a passage way
Through which they reach the realms of day.

E. C. Pearson.

~ end of chapter 8 ~
