

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #31: UNSUNG BIBLE HEROES: ENOCH

By John Temples

Hebrews 11 is a powerful and encouraging Bible chapter. That's the chapter that starts out, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is a chapter about faith.

But instead of a dry theological discourse about faith, Hebrews 11 is mostly a list of **people of faith**--heroic men and women of faith from the Old Testament. It is about their struggles and triumphs in their relationships with God. Part of the power of the Bible is that it is not merely a book of rules or abstract concepts; rather, it is a record of actual people trying to live for God. If I were you, I would pay close attention to anyone who made this list!

ENOCH was such a man. Hebrews 11:5 says, "By faith Enoch was taken away [or translated] 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."

Enoch is not a Bible figure we think about very often. He lived a very long time ago, before the Flood, some 4,300 years ago. There is not much said about him; just this reference and some brief verses in Genesis. He is also mentioned in Jude as being a prophet. Yet he stands as a powerful Biblical example of faith for us.

The writer of Hebrews tells us two things about Enoch: (1) He pleased God; and (2) he did not die, but was changed directly into a spirit being without dying (translated, KJV and ASV; taken away, NKJV). He experienced something that only one other Bible figure (Elijah) did. Because of his presence in Hebrews 11 as a paragon of faith, and because of the remarkable circumstances by which he left this world, we ought to look more closely into the life of Enoch.

Genesis 5 is an amazing Bible chapter. It gives the genealogy or line of descent from Adam to Noah, a period of over a thousand years. After each patriarch's name and age are given, the Bible says, "And he died." But there's a remarkable

exception: Enoch did not die, but God “took” him. Just as he did not LIVE like the rest, he did not DIE like the rest.

Here is the account found in 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.”

Actually, the writer of Hebrews clears up a mystery for us. The account in Genesis says only that he lived, and then “was not, for God took him.” The New Testament tells us HOW God took him--he was translated (“taken up or away”) and must have gone straight to Paradise.

But I call your attention to Genesis 5:22 and 24, which give us the reason for such special treatment: “Enoch walked with God.” There is one of the shortest sermons in the Bible! It would have been a tremendous epitaph for Enoch’s tombstone, but he didn’t have one!

What does it mean that Enoch “walked with God”? It does not mean he literally saw and communed with God, although man once had that privilege. Adam and Eve enjoyed God’s actual presence for a time. Genesis 3:8 tells us, “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” But then sin entered Eden, and Adam and Eve lost the privilege of direct fellowship with God. Sin separates us from God! It is not just naughtiness or a flaw of character; it is a soul destroyer and a homewrecker.

After sin came in, it was basically downhill from there. Adam and Eve had to leave the garden. They had children, but one of their sons killed his own brother. Men became more and more evil until, some 1,650 years after the Creation, God brought the Flood upon the earth to cleanse it. For a person to walk with God during that dark period is quite striking.

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “WALK WITH GOD”?

It means to have continual spiritual communion with God, to be always conscious of God’s presence in our lives, and to always strive to serve God to the best of our abilities. Matthew Henry said, “To walk with God is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under His eye. It is to live a life of communion with God both in ordinances and providences. It is to make God’s word our rule and His glory our constant care; to endeavor in everything to please God, and in nothing to offend Him. It is to comply with His will, to concur with His designs, and to be workers together with Him. It is to be followers of Him as dear children.”

The Bible often uses the term “walk” to mean the sum total of our life’s activities.

Not surprisingly, the New Testament is full of “walking” expressions:

- i) Walk in newness of life—Romans 6:4.
- ii) Walk by faith—2 Corinthians 5:7.
- iii) Walk in the Spirit—Galatians 5:16.
- iv) Walk worthy of your calling—Ephesians 4:1.
- v) Walk in love—Ephesians 5:2.
- vi) Walk in X—Colossians 2:6.
- vii) Walk in the light—1 John 1:7.
- viii) Walk in the truth—3 John 4.
- ix) All of these are “walking with God.”

WHAT IS THE FACT THAT ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD TELLING US?

First, that it is possible to walk with God even in a sinful world. The emphasis is this: **Enoch** walked with God. If it was possible for a man living before the Flood--in a world that was almost totally evil--with no written revelation--to walk with God, then it is possible for you and me to walk with God.

*Second, that Enoch **walked** with God.* He did not just visit God every now and then; his whole life was a walk with God. This was something Enoch did every day, consistently. His walk with God was something he did through thick and thin, in good times and bad. He lived 365 years, but old age did not keep him from

walking with God. He walked with God until the very day he was taken out of this world.

*Third, Enoch walked with **God**.* He could have walked with many others. He could have chosen many paths; he could have espoused many causes. But he walked “with God.” This was a conscious, deliberate choice on his part. In fact, the verb “walked” has the force of “chose, determined, purposed” (Adam Clarke). He took Joshua’s declaration to heart even before it was given: “Choose you this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

*Fourth, Enoch walked **with** God.* Meaning, he walked in step with, alongside, in agreement with, letting God set the pace. Amos 3:3 says, “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” Enoch did not walk BEHIND God, as many people do, following God only half-heartedly, being reluctant to give Him their all, and leaving off the parts of God’s commands they do not like or agree with. Enoch did not walk AHEAD of God, presuming on His goodness and going beyond what God’s law authorizes. Rather, he walked WITH God, on God’s terms.

Fifth, the fact that Enoch walked with God tells me that he did it willingly and joyfully. It does not say he was dragged along by God, or that walking with God was some kind of drudgery or punishment. Walking with God was Enoch’s business. It was his daily goal and purpose for living. Walking with God is not walking the plank! It should be willing, joyful, and voluntary.

Sixth, the expression “Enoch walked with God” means that God walked with Enoch. God allowed Enoch to walk with Him. In fact, it pleased God. Hebrews 11:5 says, “Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

God wants you and me to walk with Him, not just drop in on Him occasionally! He is not far from us. All we have to do is obey Him. We have Enoch for our example. Are you walking with God? --John Temples