

The Man Who Went Home for Christmas

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One of the most pleasant memories is that of going home for Christmas. Remember when you went home where your parents lived or your grandparents? All the family were gathered together for the Christmas celebration and the festive occasion. Aunts and uncles were there by the bunch; cousins were there by the droves. On Christmas morning you all got up and gathered around the tree and opened your presents. In the early afternoon you sat down to a long table, groaning with the bounty that a gracious Providence had provided. After dinner you no longer sought the companionship of others, but you retired to some dark corner, out of ear-shot of your talkative aunt, and there you took a nap.

Today that is all a memory, a haunting memory. It can never be repeated in this life. Those dear ones have gone on through the doorway of death. Many of them today are in the presence of the Lord waiting for you. Perhaps there the family circle will be renewed, and if it is, Christ will be present and you will be celebrating – not His coming down here to earth to a stable, but you're going up there to heaven to be with Him.

A great English preacher many years ago was having services in Canada. Late one afternoon he was standing on the deck of a ship on the St. Lawrence River. As the sun went down, he turned to his wife and said, "I'm homesick." Thinking that he meant England (I'm told that if you're born in England you'll always be homesick for that place), she said to him, "We'll be home now in a few weeks. We'll be back in England." Then he said, "I'm not homesick for England, I'm homesick for heaven." And that night he slipped away in his sleep. He went home.

However, he went home through the doorway of death. The Bible gives an account of one who went home without dying.

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. (Genesis 5:21-24)

The fifth chapter of Genesis, from which this passage is taken, is one of the most disappointing, discouraging, doleful, dark and dull chapters of the Bible. However it opens on a bright and high note:

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. (vv. 1, 2)

What a glorious beginning! But something happened. A great catastrophe took place, which is recorded back in the third chapter of Genesis. Adam, through doubt that led to disobedience, plunged his entire progeny into sin so that from that moment on, all mankind has a fallen nature. We read that Adam lived 130 years and begat a son in his own likeness – and that likeness is a fallen likeness. Adam is no longer a son of God, alienated now from God, he is a man that ran from God. God had to come and get him; God had to clothe him in order that he might stand in His presence. From that moment on, such is the story of the human family

This is clearly evident today, for in this day in which you and I are living we are seeing the rise of what is known as the "new morality." It is actually an old morality, as old as the Garden of Eden. It is a doubting of God, a rejection of all revelation and an attempt to get rid of

all Bible ethics. Man, they are saying, is now out on his own, doing something that is entirely different. They call this the “new” morality, although it is as old as the human family. Only this morning a letter came to me with the question, “I have been hearing the expression ‘freethinker.’ What is a freethinker?” Well, it goes back to the beginning of this country when a group of people said they no longer were controlled by revelation, no longer governed by the Word of God, but that they did their own thinking. They were agnostics and atheists. There is still a lot of “free thinking” and now it is called a new morality.

Also there was an outburst of the so-called theologians, or theological professors who espoused what is known as “the God is dead movement.” This is not new either. Mr. Julian Huxley wrote a book many years ago entitled *Religion Without Revelation* in which he declares that God has nothing more to do. This is a quotation from his book:

Operationally God is beginning to resemble not a ruler, but the last fading smile of a cosmic Cheshire cat.

Also we are seeing the rise of lawlessness. And the free speech movement is, of course, the *filthy* speech movement. Man will be able to say what he wants to say.

All of this is evidence that the Word of God is accurate when it says that when man fell it was total depravity and, as the thin veneer of culture is disappearing, man’s depraved nature is coming out again. Ten years ago I made the statement that the mob would take the streets in the United States, and blood would run in the streets. Now, honestly, I did not think I would live to see it, but I have. And, frankly, we haven’t seen anything yet. There is a bit of a storm blowing through the world, and this storm is the result of what Adam did in the Garden of Eden. His offspring in this world today has a fallen nature, and this offspring is in rebellion against God. Such is the picture of the human family.

The very final evidence of this is, “in Adam all die.” Follow the record of Adam and his sons:

***And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died....
And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.... And all
the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.*** (Genesis 5:5, 8, 11)

This is the story of man – “and he died.” It is like a walk through the cemetery. Frankly, friend, God is not dead, but man is! He is not dead to the world, he is not dead to himself, he is not dead to sin, but he is dead to God. This is the picture of man; “and he died” is his story. This chapter gives the lie to the lie of Satan (and he was a liar from the beginning) when he said to Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” Not die? Men have been dying ever since that day.

There is one shaft of light in this morbid mausoleum

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (v. 24)

Here is a man who did not die. The question arises, “Well, what in the world happened to Enoch?” We are told that he was not; for God took him. What does that mean? The writer to the Hebrews tells us,

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.... (Hebrews 11:5)

That word “translate” is *metatithemi*. *Tithemi* means “to place” and *meta* means “over” – it means “to place over.” And it actually means to place over death – he went over death, not through it. Dr. B. H. Carroll, who was one of the greatest theologians of the Southern Baptist Church, has said it better than anyone else:

God translated him. This is an old Latin word, an irregular verb, and simply means carried over or carried across. God carried him across. Across what? Across death. Death is the river that divides the world from the world to come, and here was a man that never did go through that river at all. When he got there, God carried him across. God transferred him, translated him, God picked him up, carried him over and put him on the other shore. And walking along here in time, and communing with God by faith, in an instant he was communing with God by sight in another world. Faith, oh, precious faith; faith had turned to sight and hope had turned to fruition in a single moment. The life of faith was thus crowned by entrance into the life of perfect fellowship above. “They shall walk with me in white” (Revelation 3:3, 4).

What a wonderful explanation that is! Enoch is one of two men who did not die; Elijah is the other one.

God has put down in the Genesis record certain great principles. Someone has said that all truth is germinal in Genesis. It is the seed plot of the Bible, and what you have is the bud opening up into the flower, as further explanation is given. Actually the Book of Genesis contains just about every great truth in the Word of God. In Enoch’s experience is something quite wonderful for us. He is a representative of another group of people that is not to die. It is a body of folk who believe in Jesus Christ and trust Him as their Savior. Whether or not they are living today, I do not know. But one of these days, we are told, the Lord will take out of this world His own. He will take believers who have gone to their graves for the past 1900 years (this is the larger company), and also there will be a living group, alive at that moment, who will not go through the river of death. They will go over the river of death just as Enoch did. Listen to the Word of God in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [that is, we shall not all die], ***but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we*** [those who are alive at that time] ***shall be changed*** [just as Enoch was].

Further light is given in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are 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 rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is the great New Testament truth that we call “the Rapture of the Church.” To me it is no longer academic. It has become in the past few months a very precious truth to me personally. It would be a wonderful thing to pass over death as Enoch did. I sure would like for Him to come.

I want you to notice something else. Enoch was taken out of the world *before* the judgment of the flood. You can be sure of one thing, when God puts down a pattern, He always trims along that line, He never departs from it. My friend, true believers will be taken out of the world *before* the judgment of the Great Tribulation Period.

All of this is spectacular. It is sensational. Listen to me carefully now, because what I am going to say may sound strange: There is another facet of truth, which is not spectacular, but it is more important for us in this hour than the Rapture! You ask, “What could it be?” Enoch *walked with God!*

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years....
(Genesis 5:22)

He walked with God *after* he begat Methuselah. And we read that Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begat Methuselah, and after that he walked with God. I do not know what the first sixty-five years of his life was. I assume that he was like the rest of the crowd – this was a very careless period, moving now into the orbit of the days of Noah. But when that little boy, Methuselah, was born, Enoch’s walk was changed. That baby turned him to God. My friend, sometimes God puts a baby in a family just for that purpose. And if a baby will not bring you to God, nothing else will.

I had a friend in Nashville, for whom I conducted the funeral of his little boy. We had worked together in a bank before I was saved. I knew his life and he knew mine. I had gone to talk with him, and he had brushed me off saying, “That may be good for you, but it is not for me.” Then his little boy died. He asked me, “Why would God take my little boy?” I said, “You know, sometimes God puts a little one in a home, then takes it to try to draw the parents to God.” And I added, “If this won’t do it, nothing else will. I think God has exhausted His ammunition when He gives you a child and then has to take it to try to wake you up.” God does this sometimes – it is an extreme measure, but that little one that comes into your home should bring you to God.

Enoch looked down in the little crib. There was Methuselah. And he said, “I have to bring up that little fellow right. My life is not what it should be. I know that I am in a line of men who have known God. And I am going to worship God also.” And so from that moment on, the record says, he walked with God. Only of two men in the Bible is it said that they walked with God. The other one is Noah (Genesis 6:9). I assume there are others in the Scriptures of whom this might have been said, but only of Noah and Enoch did God say that they walked with Him.

What is involved in this phrase “walking with God?” What is the reference? What are the implications? What does it actually mean to walk with God? This is important, and the answer is fourfold.

First of all, walking with God implies *agreement*. There must be agreement with God. Amos, in his prophecy (Amos 3:3), asks a question that is an axiom of Scripture, an axiom like any in geometry: “Can two walk together except they be agreed ?” Can they? They cannot. They have to walk in harmony; they have to walk in agreement.

Now Enoch lived in a day of hostility to God, a day that was hastening to the flood, a day in which men were in rebellion against God. Such is the picture of that day. It is a picture of our day, and it is a picture of the human family. David speaks of it in Psalm 14:2, 3:

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

God said that – I didn't say it – and God means every word of it. There is not a man on top side of this earth who in his natural condition is seeking God. He is running from Him! Paul confirms this in Romans 3:11:

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

This is the Word of God—take it or leave it. This condition is the sad fruit of sin. Enoch lived in a day when men were in rebellion against God, and yet this man was walking in agreement with God.

Don't get the notion that God had changed His mind and decided, "Well, it looks pretty bad down there, no one wants to walk with Me. I think I'll go down and walk with Enoch and agree with him." You can be sure of one thing – God had not changed, but Enoch had. God had not changed from the days of Abel. You remember that Abel had brought a little lamb to the altar, thus recognizing two things: his condition as a sinner and the holy character of God which made necessary a penalty and a payment for sin. Abel had brought a lamb; he had offered that little lamb by *faith*. That is the way that Enoch came – by faith Enoch walked with God. That walk originated, had its beginning, at an altar where he agreed with God that he was a sinner, and a blood sacrifice was needed. Christ Jesus came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. God will not begin with any man at any other place than at the cross of Christ. God said to His own nation when it was far from Him, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD" (Isaiah 2:5). God is not going to walk with you in sin. He will not walk with you unless you begin where He begins. There must be newness of life. Enoch had to come to that place that speaks of the Lord Jesus who later said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). There must be agreement, first of all, if you walk with God.

Nourishment

The word "walk" in the Hebrew is an interesting word. One of the facets of meaning is to walk up and down. In fact, when it is brought over to the New Testament it is *peripateo*; peripatetic is the English form. It comes from Aristotle's school of philosophy which was known as the peripatetic school, not because of his peculiar teaching, but because of the way in which he taught. Aristotle is said to have walked up and down while teaching, thus his school got the name of Peripatetic. Walking with God means to walk up and down, and actually it means to live with God.

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. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
(Hebrews 11:5, 6)

We are told that this man walked with God by faith. And faith, we are also told, comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Enoch walked by faith and he walked by the Word of God. That altar at which he confessed his sin was his entrance into life. From that moment he walked with God. He is walking now in the light of the Word of God. This truth is put to believers like this – it is put very plainly:

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:6, 7)

In other words, when you walk in the light of the Word of God, you see yourself as you really are. Then you find that the blood of Christ will cleanse you so that you can continue to walk with Him. The light is the Word of God:

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.
(Psalm 119:130)

There is a movement today that strives to be spiritual and superior without regard to the Word of God. I met with them one time and the leader said something like this, “We want to meet together here in fellowship, we will not read the Bible, we just want to meet about the person of Christ and think about Him. What is wrong with that? Here we have met, all from different groups, and we have our peculiar viewpoints, we do not want to have divisions, so let’s put the Book aside, and we will just meet about the person of Christ.” It sounds so plausible, my friend; but how do you meet about the person of Christ without His Word? The Lord Jesus said in His day,

Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.
(Mark 7:9)

And a very fine British writer has said recently,

Division and disunity among Christians is not the ultimate sin, rather the ultimate sin is the obscuring of God’s truth by the accumulation of manmade tradition and its distortion by human opinion.

He is correct. It is not the Word of God that causes the trouble, it is the human element, which is always there when humans meet together. How can you meet about His person and not meet about His Word? “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me...” (John 5:24). “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). It is impossible to walk with God apart from His Word.

It reminds me of a little game we played some years ago. After we had lost our first child, a family in the neighborhood was deserted by the father, leaving three of the most precious children I have ever seen. We took one of them, the middle child, about three or four years old. One night after I had built a fire in the fireplace and was sitting there with the little one, the front door came open for no reason at all. I could see that she was frightened a little, so in order not to frighten her more, I got up, went to the door, and said, "Oh, it's you, Mr. Fu-Fu. Come right on in." She sat up bug-eyed as she looked around. I had him sit down and I talked with him. Then Mr. Fu-Fu said he had to go. He left and I closed the door. Do you know what she did the next night? She said to me, "Mr. Fu-Fu is at the door!" She was ready to play it, and she and I played it to the hilt. I went to the door, opened it and said, "Come in, Mr. Fu-Fu. He came in and sat down and *she* talked to him. It was a good game. We played it as long as we had that little girl. But, my friend, Mr. Fu-Fu never existed.

There are many Christians who are playing Mr. Fu-Fu with Jesus. He is not a reality to them. God was a *reality* to Enoch. He pondered the Word of God, he listened to what God had to say – and it meant something to him. He had fellowship with the living and true God. He was His companion, he lived with God, and it brought joy and peace to him. David also experienced this:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me... (Psalm 23:4)

Is He with you? Enoch knew God personally. There was a growth in grace.

In John's Gospel, chapter eleven, Mary and Martha illustrate this. Both of them knew Jesus in a way, yet Martha did not actually know Him – did not know who He was. The record tells us that the brother of these two women became seriously ill and Jesus was notified of it. He delayed coming to them until after the brother was dead.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (John 11:20, 21)

This is not a rebuke, but sorrow for her brother, and the emphasis is upon him, not upon the Lord.

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. (v. 22)

Hadn't she found out yet that He *is* God? No, she had not. But Mary had. Mary sat in the house and waited until she was called for, then she went out to Jesus. Our translation gives the impression that she said the same thing Martha had said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But it is more than that, it is rather, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, hadst not died my brother." Her emphasis is different. The inference is, "Lord, with you present, nothing could have happened." The emphasis is upon Him. She knew Him as the Lord; Martha did not know. The reason they had to go through this experience was so that Martha might learn also. Mary had been sitting at Jesus' feet. She knew Him. Do you *know* Jesus today? "Oh," you say, "I trust Him as my Savior." I am convinced that you can do that and still not know Him. Do

you know what fellowship is? Do you know what it is to sit at His feet and be taught by Him? Do you know what it is to have a devotion and a love for Him? Is He real to you, or are you playing Mr. Fu-Fu? In the next few months, and certainly in the next few years, your faith will be tested, I guarantee you that. Right now there are frightening movements appearing that will be faith-shattering if Jesus Christ is not real to you.

Development

What does it mean to walk with God? It means development. This word walk has another meaning. It means not only to walk up and down, but it means to go on, to proceed forward, it means steady progress. Again the best I can do is quote from a very quaint commentator of the past, a Scotsman:

Enoch did not take a turn or two with God and then leave His company, but he walked with God for hundreds of years. What a splendid walk, a walk of three hundred years! It was not a run, it was not a leap, a spurt, but a steady walk, walking with God.

That is what is meant. The writer to the Hebrews says, “He that cometh to God must believe that he is [that He is real], and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Another translation brings out, I think, that which the writer has in mind. “That he ever rewards them that are *seeking him*.” That means a constant attitude, a passion for God. Are you seeking Him? Moses said, “Show me thy glory” (see Exodus 33:18). Do you want to see His glory? Philip said, “Show us the Father, and it will satisfy us” (see John 14:8). Do you really want to see Him? You won’t unless you have a passion to want to see Him. That is what Paul meant when he wrote, for instance, to the Galatians,

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit [by means of the Spirit], ***and ye shall not fulfil the lust*** [desire] ***of the flesh***. (Galatians 5:16)

He will not let that thought go, but adds in verse twenty-five, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Also these verses to the Ephesians are very practical:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. (Ephesians 4:1)

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. (Ephesians 4:17)

You cannot walk in sin if you are to walk with Him. You have to make up your mind with whom you want to walk. You are not to grieve the Spirit if you are to walk with Him. And today, if you are a child of God, you are living with either a grieved or ungrieved Spirit.

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Ephesians 5:2)

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. (Ephesians 5:8)

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.
(Ephesians 5:18)

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to walk with God, walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. And to walk with Him means development, it means you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him. And there will come a day in your experience when you will not need arguments to prove to you that the Bible is true, you will *know* it is true. I get rather impatient with some of the saints, who have been saints for twenty-five years, and still say, “Oh, do you hear what Mr. So-and-so says? Is the Bible true?” My friend, didn’t you settle that years ago? You can be sure of one thing: Mr. So-and-so or Dr. So-and-so has not found out anything new. The disturbance is up here in your mind because you have not been walking with God.

There are a lot of folk who let a little rain keep them away from church. Many have legitimate reasons, but to others Christ is not real. My friend, if there was a football game in which your Alma Mater was playing, you would be there. Wouldn’t you? Rain or shine, because football is real to you. I have sat in the rain many a time watching a football game. And I have hunted in the rain, because I love to hunt. I have played golf in the rain because I’m a nut. And, my friend, do you think I am going to let a little rain keep me from worshipping my Savior? I will, if He is not real to me. And so will you.

Testament

To walk with God means agreement, it means nourishment, it means development, and it also means testament.

Paul said to the Corinthians:

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3)

Enoch was a witness, he was a testament, he was a Bible for the unbelieving world of that day, he was a testimony.

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 [he had a testimony], that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him... (Hebrews 11:5, 6)

There is one of the strangest texts in the Scriptures concerning this man Enoch, and it is the only other reference to him in the Bible. It was written to warn of apostates in the last day – in our day:

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. (Jude 14, 15)

Martin Luther said that this Scripture reveals that Enoch was an aggressive testimony to his generation. He bore a witness to the fact that there was coming a judgment and he did not mind speaking out concerning it. Now don't misunderstand me. Enoch may not have given out tracts (that has its place), or sung in the choir (though that is important), or have preached from the pulpit (important as that is); he did not go as a missionary, and that is important. His testimony was that he *pleased* God. He pleased God because he walked by faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). He was known as a man of faith in his day. Enoch was a testament, a Bible to his generation.

How are you known? Where you work, where you live, are you known as a man of faith? Do you believe God, and live as though you do?

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years...and he was not; for God took him. (Genesis 5:22, 24)

...Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

There is a familiar story of the little girl who went to Sunday School and when she came home, her mamma asked, "What did you study about?"

She answered, "About a man named Enoch."

"Well, what about him?"

She replied, "We learned that Enoch walked with God. Every day God would come by his house and say to Enoch, 'Let's take a walk.' Enoch would say, 'All right,' because he liked to walk with God. So every day they took a walk. It got so that Enoch would wait at the gate for God to come, and then they would take a walk together. One day they walked a long, long way. Finally Enoch said, 'It's late, I must get back home.' God said, 'Enoch, you are nearer my home than you are your home. Come on home with me.'"

That's the story. I don't know how to tell it any better than that. Enoch went home for Christmas.