

The Tenth Century of His-Story: Enoch Is Translated to Glory

The first millennium of history was marked by an amazing event which created an uneasy stir in the otherwise pleasure-wild city of Enoch, but a thrilling revelation of hope for the church. Everyone watched the antithetical and climactic clash between the wicked citizens of Enoch (the city), and Enoch (the man who walked with God, and was not, for God took him). Just when the “ungodly men” with their “ungodly deeds,” “walking after their own lusts,” speaking “great swelling words,” and “having men's persons in admiration because of advantage” (Jude 16) were ready to silence the disrupter of their fun, God made them fall back with one stroke of his power. Their fun now would be overshadowed by the mysterious translation of Enoch to the throne of victory. The words of Enoch, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,” was seared into their conscience, and would torment them every day, and especially 600 years later while Noah built the ark and preached the same thing. This momentous event sent a chill through the camp of the wicked, but a thrill to the heart of the church.

We noted last month that Adam had died. As with every death, those left behind feel lonely and afraid. They cling to the godly inheritance, and are forced to look forward. Expelled from Paradise, they increasingly felt too that the beautiful earth—now cursed—was not really their home. Those hopeful words of the gospel preached by the only man who had personally walked with God in perfect fellowship in the cool of the evening were now only a memory.

But, now look at this man Enoch! What do they say of him? “That son of Jared who walks with such peace and joy through this sin-cursed world. How does he do it?” Here we see a particularly beautiful display of that “walking with God;” not now in the cool of the evening, but in the very heat of a raging battle! Here was a walk with God raised to new heights, and this merely a picture of the covenant life prepared by God through the work of his only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Enoch displayed the power of God's grace at work in the regenerated heart of a child of God. Like Christ he walked on the raging waters of the sea: the tumultuous unrest of the wicked. Fear had been banished from his heart. He loved God, and his chief desire was to please God. He preached with unbelievable boldness in the face of and against the wicked.

God reveals to us in the book of Hebrews that Enoch's walk was a walk of faith. A walk by sight would bring terror to the child of God, even as Peter was filled with terror when he saw the violence of the waves. The church faced the violence and

murderous hatred of the ungodly who were rapidly growing in might and glory. By faith, Enoch was united to Christ who “arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). God had given Enoch faith (Eph. 2:8), a most blessed gift for his children living in this world. Our reformed fathers have defined faith as “not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel, in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits” (HC A21). Enoch believed what God had promised through the preaching of Adam. Enoch also received revelation from God and preached the crushing of Satan's head, the bruising of the church's heel, and the ultimate victory for God and his people.

Had it not been for Enoch, the ungodly may have contented themselves with the smothering of the church by its rapid growth and absorption of the dwindling church into its life. But Enoch and his preaching proved to be a grievous thorn, and warranted a bounty for his life. Perhaps he had slipped from their clutches from time to time, but when their rage reached a murderous bloodthirsty pitch, a search party was quickly organized to bring a sure and swift end to Enoch. Nothing would stop them, and they would not stop hunting until his dead body was paraded before the eyes of every man, woman and child then living; a sure testimony that man, not God would prevail.

What a terrifying and humiliating failure they faced when on the day appointed, an eerie silence pervaded the pulpit from which Enoch had always boldly preached. Did he hear of their plot? Was he scared and hiding? No, that would be most uncharacteristic of Enoch. Like so many saints after him, he would have rejoiced to sing from the flames had they caught and burnt him at the stake. The failure of a most thorough search to find one trace of him amazed everyone. His footsteps simply stopped. “He was not found.” He was no more! Science had no answers. Only the living God who “spake, and it was done” (Psalm 33:9) could so remove his servant, and in doing so, rebuke the wicked, and comfort his people. Adam had died, but not he. “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” (Hebrews 11:5). What a marvelous testimony to the church of God's faithfulness! God will preserve his church. He will display his power and glory in the way of the wonder, the impossible in man's eyes. And in this way, the way of the cross, the church would come to know the depth of God's love.

May we also live in this hope as the world continues to revel in pleasure, seeking to drown out the witness of God, which no effort on their part can silence. May we by faith walk boldly the antithetical life of God's people in the midst of this world. May

we by faith see with the apostles the empty tomb, and know that the second Adam, our Lord and head is in glory, sitting at the right hand of God.