

The Third One Hundred Years of His-Story: The Church Begins Formal Worship

“And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26).

Having overcome the devastating blow of Abel’s death and Cain’s proud rebellion against God, Adam and Eve’s hope in the promised Savior was renewed with the birth of Seth. After Seth, the dreadful picture of Satan’s hatred for the covenant of God faded somewhat as Cain moved away with his family, and God blessed the home of Adam and “he begat sons and daughters” (5:4). With the birth of more children, Adam began to see the great variety of characteristics and traits that God had created within him combine with those of his wife to form unique and special children. He began to see the beauty of the church as a body of believers, each one unique and suited for his or her particular place. With sorrow, he also saw the corruption of his nature come out in the nature of his children. Even so he found encouragement in the promise of God and was strengthened by the power of grace to press on and instruct his children in all the knowledge God had revealed to him, but especially that covenant promise of a Seed who would crush the head of the serpent. With wonder, he looked to the God to whom he had been shamefully unfaithful and began to see the depth of the riches of his love and mercy.

Now, as the third century of history unfolded, Adam’s children began to marry and establish homes of their own. In due time Seth married (likely a sister), and received a son from God. Adam experienced the joy of being a grandfather, and rejoiced to hold a grandson—Enos—in his arms. Adam had many grandchildren within the sphere of the covenant, but this one was ordained by God to be the next link to the promised Savior.

By now there were multiple families in the church, with separate distinct households where children were being instructed in the gospel. It was no longer practical for Adam to gather his household around the table for meals and tell the stories of God’s work and promise of salvation. Now his sons would take on the responsibility to reveal the wonderful works of God to their children, but they did not isolate themselves in this glorious work. Just as God rested on the seventh day of the week, so Adam around the time of the birth of his grandson Enos, called the covenant families together for a day of worship to “call upon the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26). To mark this wonderful development in church life, God tied this activity of

worship to the name of Enos. “And he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.”

The church was growing, but so was that group which, being deceived by Satan, found their salvation in the power and wisdom of man. Cain had also brought forth a grandson to Adam and named him Enoch. We read in Genesis 4:17, “And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.” So while the covenant family of Adam was developing the concept of a church, the reprobate seed of the serpent were quickly harnessing the powers of man-in-cooperation to build a city. The two groups were already quite different even in their ways of living. All the energy and resources that Adam used to fight sin and provide instruction for his family, Cain and his children directed to the enjoyment of this life and personal glory. Do you think Adam was proud of his other grandchild, Enoch, after whom a city had been named?

In many ways, the church began to take on a life and form very similar to the church life that we experience. Some members were strong in their faith and others were weak. Each had unique gifts and characteristics. Parents rejoiced to hear the confession of faith from their growing children, and also shared the sorrow of watching a son or daughter forsake the faith, leave the church, and join the citizens of Enoch. Exactly how far away Enoch’s city was, we do not know. Cain had moved far enough away to a land that had a distinguishing name, the land of Nod, to the East of Eden. God tells us that he “went out from the presence of the Lord,” which indicates that he was removed from the sphere of God’s covenant people. Communication was certainly likely, as it was only a matter of time before the two groups expanded into each other and intermingled. At this time, it would appear as though the church was relatively free of persecution. It was not for another 300 years until another Enoch with his pointed preaching of God’s judgment upon the wicked, that Satan pushed the tactic of persecution upon the church.

For a time, then, it would appear as though God blesses his church with peace. Church life develops. Families grow. Children are instructed. A world of life develops in and around the great city of Enoch as well. Families grow. Children are instructed, but not in history or the promise of God. Talents, beauty, power, pleasure, and technology crowd the curriculum. With glee Satan urges man on, running away with the prize he imagines he has taken from God. All the wonders and powers of creation, Satan will harness for himself. The church has been left miles behind.

During the next hundred years, we will take a look at the creation itself. We will do some exploring in “the world that then was,” a world “standing out of the water and in the water” (2 Peter 3:5, 6). It was a world that was “good,” a world that shouted forth the handiwork of God. We live on the rubble of that world, waiting to be melted down

with a “fervent heat.” Even through the rubble, the handiwork of God shines through, but it pales in comparison to the world that then was, and the new heavens and earth to be.