

Enoch

Genesis 5:1-32, Ecclesiastes 3:11

Slide 1

Today we start a new series called “Extraordinary People of the Bible.”

These were ordinary people who God was willing to use in amazing and extraordinary ways simply because of their faith.

Our focus today is Enoch. We don’t know when he walked this earth, but it was probably somewhere between 4000 to 6000 B.C., during what’s known as the antediluvian period.

Do you know what that is? It’s the period before the flood. “*Ante*” means before and “*diluvian*” comes from the word “deluge” which means flood.

Enoch walked this earth in that period prior to the flood in which Noah was involved.

In fact, Enoch was such an extraordinary person, he’s not only in the Old Testament, he’s in the New Testament, too.

The first time we get a glimpse of him is in Genesis 5. Now I’m not going to read the entire chapter, but I want to highlight what it contains. The first two verses explain Who created mankind.

Genesis 5:1-2, *“This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created.”*

Then in the next thirty verses, you get a short genealogy from Adam to Noah.

What should catch your eye, when you read these verses, is that during this period people lived a very long time.

Adam lived a total of 930 years

Seth lived a total of 912 years

Enosh lived a total of 905 years

Kenan lived a total of 910 years

Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years

Jared lived a total of 962 years (the father of Enoch)

Methuselah lived a total of 969 years

Lamech lived a total of 777 years

The average age was about 907 years. How could they live that long? The reality is we don't know, they just did. Now, there are a lot of theories floating around on the internet.

One such theory is that shortly after the dawn of creation, after God created the heavens and the earth, the earth had a perfect environment in which to live.

Then, over time, the world slowly began to get polluted. Things like chemicals and pesticides in our fruits and vegetables. The ozone layer thinned causing climate change and dangerous sun rays to harm our DNA.

After time, our DNA became affected, and people's bodies became weaker, so disease and illness shortened our life span. That's one theory.

But if you want the rest of the story about what really happened, you just need to go to Genesis 6, verse 3b where God said, *"My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."*

So, why would God place a limit on our lifespan? Maybe He just got tired of the way man was behaving.

Maybe He got tired of the fact that man didn't appreciate the land or life, so He decided to limit his to 120 years and today we don't see many people living past that.

So, the pattern we see first in this passage is the pattern of longevity; people living a long age but there's another pattern.

It's the pattern of so and so became the father of so and so; he had other sons and daughters; altogether he lived so many years; and then he died. We see this here in Genesis 5.

Really, it's not much different than we see in a typical obituary today.

The sad thing is that even though people today may live long lives, some well past 100, they may only get a couple lines in an obituary.

If you look at an obituary section today, most people only get about two or three lines to sum up their whole life, and this is if their relatives want to spend their time and money to publish an obituary.

Some people get more coverage because they were a celebrity, a civic leader, or someone key to the community. I believe that's what we're seeing with Enoch.

Genesis 5:21-24, *"When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters."*

Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."

Enoch lowered the average age by dying at 365, yet he gets more coverage, compared to the rest.

But Enoch isn't an extraordinary person simply because of how long he lived or didn't live, he's considered extraordinary for two other things.

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Genesis 5:22b, *"Enoch walked faithfully with God."* This thought is emphasized again in verse 24, *"Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."*

Two things mentioned in these verses make him extraordinary. First, he *"walked faithfully with God"* and second, *"God took him away."* Why? Why would God just take him away?

To answer that, we need to examine verse 22, *"After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters."*

Scripture tells us that after Enoch fathered Methuselah at age 65, he walked with God.

We don't know what happened prior to 65, but what we do know is when Methuselah shows up, Enoch's priorities changed.

Maybe he began to think more about God. We don't know why his priorities changed; we can only speculate. All we know is that at some point he decided he wanted to walk with God.

After walking in the world for the first 65 years, he decided it was time to change; a time to increase his relationship with God.

We know that this idea of walking with God is a significant point in this passage because it's repeated two times.

It says in verse 21, "*Enoch walked faithfully with God*" and then two verses later it repeats word for word, "*Enoch walked faithfully with God.*"

Anytime, you read the Bible and there's a repetition of a phrase, you need to pay close attention because it's important.

Here, the writer's making the point that Enoch, at one time, wasn't walking with God, then he was walking with God.

Now, what comes to your mind when it says, "*walked faithfully with?*"

What I see is someone who's literally walking side by side with somebody even though I know he's talking in a figurative sense.

John 1:18 says, "*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God,*" so it is unlikely that he walked along side any physical body.

But Enoch had such a good relationship with God, it was as if he actually walked with Him. He actually communed with God.

He developed an ongoing relationship just like we would if we walked through life with another person.

As we walked and talked, we'd get to know that person in a deeper way. We'd get to know about all his traits, likes and dislikes, etc.

We'd get to know the characteristics of that person and begin to feel his constant presence.

I think that's what happened with Enoch. He walked and talked with God for 300 years, actually feeling God's presence.

A monk named Brother Lawrence, who lived in the 17th century, wrote a little 100-page book called *The Practice of the Presence of God* that speaks about learning to walk with God.

His goal was to live a life continually in God's presence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the book, he said that we've made the idea of walking in God's presence too difficult.

He basically said that we make it too tough because of the many methodologies we develop trying to figure out how to get closer to God.

In his book, he said that getting closer to God is accomplished by just practicing the love of God in everything we do. In other words, just walk around loving God.

Everything Brother Lawrence did from the moment he got up until he went to bed was to constantly seek to do everything for the love of God.

He said, *"My whole day; my whole life is nothing but an attempt to live in the practice and presence of God simply by going around and doing everything for the love of God."*

That's a picture of what I believe Enoch accomplished, but the advantage that Enoch had over Brother Lawrence is that Enoch had 300 years to figure out what it meant to walk with God.

Given that, you may think, *“What could they have conversed about for those 300 years.”*

I imagine that it was anything and everything. 300 years may seem long to us, but I believe that it barely scratched the surface.

During that time, I suspect Enoch wanted to know the character of God.

He wanted to know His traits like His love, His holiness, His kindness. He wanted to know how He’s all-powerful, all-knowing; that He had existed eternally.

He wanted to know what went on during the seven days of creation. What was God going to do with the problem of sin? Just asking question after question.

So, after 300 years, as Enoch got to know God, eventually what resulted was a deeper love of God.

The study of God isn’t just a head thing; it’s a heart thing. To study God is to develop an intimacy that ultimately results in the worship of God. That’s what I believe went on with Enoch.

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Not only that, but because he developed this love of God, the natural outcome was a deeper faith in Him.

What if somebody asks you about your faith? Would you say, *“Well I go to church, give my offerings, and serve when asked. That’s my faith.”*

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith: *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*

In this verse, faith is defined but it's still a difficult word to get our mind around because it basically says we're to be sure and certain of what we don't see.

Yet, if we read between the lines, we see that it has real significance.

The idea of being sure and certain for which we hope is the idea of bringing into substance something that's invisible. That's the direct result of faith.

As we exercise faith in the unseen realities, it's as if those realities take substance. Then we become sure and certain, and those realities begin to grow inside of us; becoming substance within us.

The writer of Hebrews goes on to say that's why the people, who lived before the flood, were commended. They were commended for having this particular faith.

They were commended for it so much so that Enoch ended up in Hebrew 11's Great Hall of Faith.

Hebrews 11:5, *"By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: 'He could not be found, because God had taken him away.' For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God."*

And it's here where we get a little more clarity regarding Enoch's departure. You could read Genesis and say, *"Well, he was taken by God,"* but we use that terminology all the time.

When someone dies, we say they were taken by God, but Enoch didn't experience death. Not only didn't he experience death, but he was also commended as one who pleased God.

We go through life trying to please all sorts of people like teachers, employers, spouses, and children. Some of us go through life trying to please people that aren't even alive anymore.

What we find is that some people are just impossible to please. The good news here is it's possible to please God and Enoch was commended for doing this.

He was able to please God in a very corrupt and unstable environment that was full of violence, bitterness, hate, and sin. The world was out of control.

Genesis 6:5, *"The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time."*

This was the environment in which Enoch walked. Not only did he walk in it, he lived in it, yet he was still able to please God. The reason he was able to do that goes back to this idea of faith.

Hebrews 11:6 tell us: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

We just talked about how faith is some sort of invisible reality and that, by exercising our faith, we give substance to it in our lives. We learn that, without faith, it's impossible to please God.

Basically, the writer's saying that faith is the prerequisite to be able to please God, but he also gives us a clue of what that requires.

At a minimum, it requires that anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Think about God's existence. We believe in the existence of God, but we also know there are people in the world that don't believe in His existence. Those people are called atheists.

Atheists don't believe in God so it means, by this passage, they are not able to please God.

This makes perfect sense because it begs the question, *"Why would they even want to please God if they don't believe in him?"*

But the issue is there're Christians out there who're basically practicing atheists.

They come to church on Sunday. They drive around town listening to Christian music. They watch different pastors on TV.

They even read the Bible but the rest of the day they basically act as if God doesn't exist.

He doesn't enter into their life. He has no effect on their family. He has no effect on their finances. He has no effect on their behavior.

For all purposes, the atheist and the Christian, who's acting as if God doesn't exist, are pretty much one in the same.

Therefore, it's impossible to please God unless you have faith that He exists, and you make Him a part of your life.

Then, having accomplished this, you must believe He rewards those who earnestly seek him.

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This idea of rewarding is a little difficult to unpack, since we think of God's reward as Him giving us something based on something we did, sort of like a merit badge.

We think that if we pray the right prayer or say the right things, God's going to bestow on us all sorts of blessings or material things we want. That's not what's being said.

Enoch lived at a time when material things probably weren't that big of a deal. Also, he wanted to experience more of God's reality.

What I think happened was, as Enoch walked with God, as he began to please God, he began to see more of God. In other words, God revealed more of Himself to him.

Enoch began to experience a greater presence of God because he earnestly sought Him. He didn't give up; he was on the constant lookout for God.

Trying to get to know Him better. Going after God with a hunger and a thirst to get to know Him in any way he could. That's basically a picture of Enoch.

What makes it extraordinary is the fact that Enoch lived before the time of any of the writings of the Old and New Testament. He didn't have the Ten Commandments. He didn't have any of the Jewish Law.

So, how did he know what to do? How did he know how to approach God? I believe it boils down to the fact that God placed something in his heart.

God placed some knowledge in his heart; something that's available to every human being that has ever walked this earth.

God placed the idea that He exists in every person's heart. There's a passage that speaks of this in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

I like this passage because it answers the question, when people ask, *"How can God condemn somebody if they don't know about Him? If they live out in the middle of the jungle or whatever and they never heard about God."*

God placed the knowledge of Himself in the DNA of every individual who has ever lived. I believe people are born, not only with original sin, but with the knowledge of God.

It may be small, but there's enough knowledge to know that this life is not all there is; there has to be something else, something better.

Every human being has the desire to live past this life and into eternity. It doesn't matter if you're an atheist or not. Nobody will admit that they'd like this present life to be the end.

God has placed eternity in our heart. This means that God has initiated Himself in us, regardless if we believe or not.

Every person that has walked this earth, whether they heard of Jesus or not, has an intimate knowledge of God. God placed that DNA in Enoch.

The difference between Enoch and anybody else who gets that seed placed into them is that Enoch chose to act on it.

Everybody has knowledge, but many just don't act on it. They just let it sit there.

Enoch took that first step to walk with God. At first, it was just a clunky step. He probably didn't even think about or know what he was doing. He probably didn't even know how to talk with God.

Probably, as he began to walk down a road and talk with God, people thought he was nuts. He knew that God was out there. He believed it so he kept seeking Him in whatever way he could.

Over time, what happened was he became closer to God. He began to feel God's presence.

He began to hear God speak to him through all sorts of means. He began to feel the presence of God in amazing ways. He did this for 300 years.

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Going back to Hebrews 11:5, "*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death.*"

This was an extraordinary event. There are only two people in the whole Bible that didn't experience death. The first one was Enoch and the other...? Elijah.

If there's any fear we have or any concern we have in the back of our minds, it's possibly the thought of death. We don't know how or when it's going to happen.

It could be a car or a plane crash. It could just be that our heart stops. It could be long and painful, or it could be quick.

We don't know what our death experience is going to be. Elijah's event is described in 2 Kings.

2 Kings 2:11, *"As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind."*

This is a phenomenal picture of chariots of fire coming down, swooping him up, and taking him away. The difference between Elijah and Enoch is at least with Elijah we have more information.

We can envision the chariot coming down. We even sing songs about it, but Enoch was just there and then he was gone. We have no idea what happened. We can only speculate.

Going back to the idea that Enoch walked with God, I imagine an ongoing, unbroken relationship as a friend to a friend, or a husband to wife. He was always at His side.

As they were walking, Enoch listening intently as God spoke to him, Enoch decided he really wanted to please Him.

As he pleased God, he got to know Him better and as he got to know Him better, God began to reward him and give him more information.

As he traveled along, the presence of God became overwhelming.

So much so that I believe at some point, at the ripe old age of 365, God said, *"You might as well be in heaven. You're just about home anyway."*

So, he made this seamless transition from one realm to the other and all Enoch probably thought was *“something’s different about the environment”* but one thing he knew for sure was that he was now fully in the presence of God.

That’s my theory. I think God just said, *“Why are you wasting your time on earth? You’re already experiencing my presence, so why don’t you just go and experience it to its fullest?”*

Enoch was an extraordinary person anyway we look at it, but what lessons we can learn?

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Conclusion

First, God desires to walk with us. He desires to walk with every person in this room.

God loves walking with His children. Just as we like walking with our children, God’s ready and willing to walk and talk with us 24/7, if we’d let Him.

Enoch was a person who had no qualms about walking with God. Brother Lawrence didn’t care what people thought. He’d lay flat on a road in front of people in worship of God.

That’s the kind of Christians we need in the world. Those are the people who’re going to transform this world.

As we walk with God, God begins to reward us. Not with more stuff, but with a deeper revelation of Him so we can begin to have clarity in all aspects of our life.

We begin to see how He's working. We begin to understand Him. We begin to experience Him in a deeper way. We begin to walk in a fullness of His presence.

But if we don't have faith, then we might as well forget it because it's impossible to please God without it and God wants to find pleasure in us.

Second, we must believe that God exists and live a life as though He does. When we do that, God will reveal more of Himself, a clearer presence.

The only requirement is to say, *"I'm going to take that step. I have no idea where I'm going but I'm just going to take that first step. I'm going to keep walking and I'm not going to look back no matter what happens."*

When we do that, not only will we have the rewards that come from it, not only will we enjoy the fact that God takes pleasure in us, but we're going to have a different sort of death experience.

We may not experience a departure as Enoch did, but I suspect that if we live our life bent on pleasing God, living in His presence; when we get to our deathbed, close our eyes, and take that last breath, the next time we open them we'll be in God's presence.

That's what I am hoping for, and we'll get that if we're walking in the full presence of God.

Remember what Paul said in Acts 17:27, *"God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us."*