

"By faith..."

3. Enoch (Heb. 11:5)

Geoff Cave

ENOCH WAS a contemporary of Adam for about 300 years, and yet he found it necessary to make the prophecy recorded by Jude: "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" (vv. 14,15). This is an indication of how quickly apostasy developed before the Flood.

Enoch, son of Jared, was in the line of those who called upon the name of the Lord; it is likely that the situation described in Genesis 6 was well developed, as the sons of God were marrying the daughters of men. Therefore the godlessness was not just amongst the children of Cain, but also, as it were, within the ecclesia. The words of Enoch were directed as a warning, not only against the godless descendents of Cain, but also against those who called upon the name of the Lord.

Enoch was a man of great courage. Speaking forth the words of truth resulted in his life being in danger. Hebrews 11:5 records: "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". The Greek word for "translated" is *metatithēmi*. In Acts 7:16 this word is used when Stephen speaks of the body of Jacob being "carried over" from Egypt to the land of promise. Jacob was moved or "translated" from one place to another, and it would appear that the same happened to Enoch.

Hebrews 11:5 states he "was not found", which suggests that some were looking for him, presumably to kill him because he had condemned them and their actions. The words of truth are often unacceptable to the thinking of the flesh, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither

indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7,8).

Enoch is not alone in this respect; he is in concert with men like Jeremiah, Daniel, Stephen, Paul, Barnabas and, most notably, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of Peter and John, they were all faced with this dilemma: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19). Peter's later statement, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (5:29), is the answer of faith which has resulted in many losing their lives.

In these days of every man doing and saying "that which is right in his own eyes", it is unlikely, in most countries, that we shall die for speaking the words of truth. We may be shunned or looked on as odd by those who do not understand the ways of God, but Enoch also warned those who called on the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26). Today this is the household of faith, where the teaching of Scripture should always be accepted in preference to ideas of human origin.

Those who call on the name of the Lord, however, can also include Christendom at large: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Mt. 7:22). It is here where we may be tested in the future in the same way as Enoch. History shows that when the Roman Catholic Church becomes powerful it persecutes those who speak forth the truth of Scripture. Is our faith strong enough to withstand such a test? Will we be like Enoch and receive the testimony that we please God? Or shall we join the harlot/beast system of the man of sin, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8)? The faith of believers is always tested, both individually and collectively. Those who have an unshakeable faith will survive. Such faith comes by reading and absorbing the Word of life.