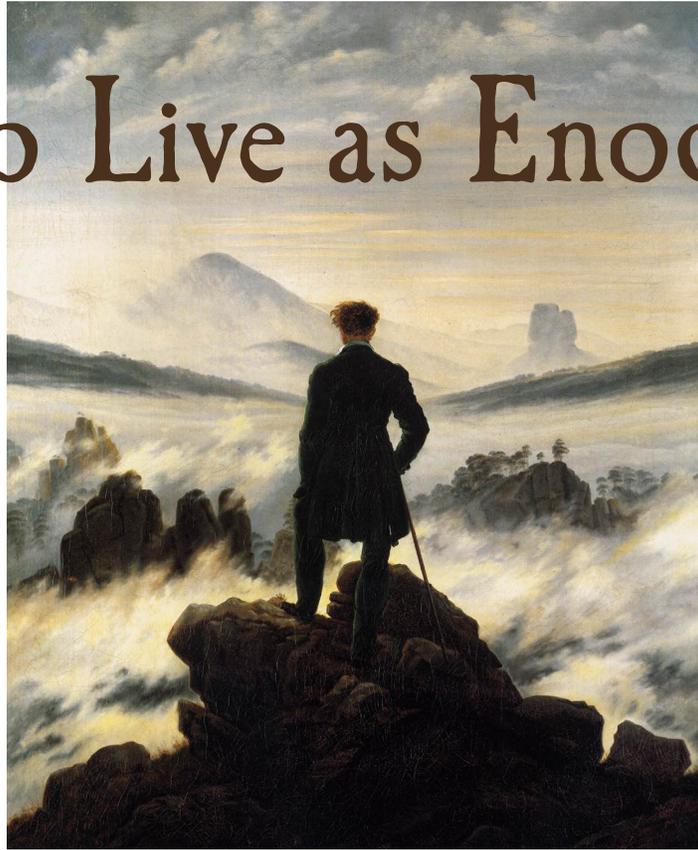


To Live as Enoch



GOD'S WORD includes a number of passages common mortals prefer to skim over, rather than digest every word. Vast, featureless plateaus found in 1 Chronicles make for profitable reading when slumber is elusive and sheep are not available for counting. Perhaps one reason new Christians are steered to the gospel of John for a starting point is that it is missing the monotonous genealogies of Matthew's and Luke's accounts.

Chapter Five of Genesis is for some another yawner, tracing the descendant line of Adam through Noah and his three sons for thirty-two verses. Nestled within that leaden, repetitive record, however, are four brief verses of pure gold.

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Genesis 5:21-24

The Christian's spiritual forefather, Enoch, was the very first to pass into the presence of God without first being returned to the dust from whence he came. "He was not" means that Enoch did not suffer death like his predecessors—as the chronicler of Genesis makes clear with his device of repetition—but instead was the first to experience what every Christian still living will experience at the Lord's return.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The difference between Enoch and the rest of the men listed in Genesis 5 is found in four simple yet profound words stated twice: "Enoch walked with God." Everyone else mentioned, from Adam to Noah (in Genesis 9:29), had a different end, numbingly recited: "...and he died."

The study of great individuals in God's word is a worthwhile endeavor, for their lives teach character, righteousness, and faith. While not one of these individuals led an untarnished life, they all, in varying degrees, had one thing in common: faith in God. Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, Elijah (who, like Enoch, was "translated" to heaven without experiencing physical death), Samuel, David—all "walked with God" in obedience, by faith.

Therein is true *life*.

A life without faith in God's Son is not really a life at all, but a long, delusional slog toward an ultimate death that consists of eternal suffering. No hope, no light, no real joy. A life *with* faith in God's Son is indeed assured of a better future, an eternal life with Christ in glory.

But there is still something even better: a life, here on earth, walking with God. The common denominator, the minimum requirement for such a life, is certainly faith. But that is just the starting point. When we "walk" with someone (scene: two amiable fellows meandering down a country lane as they converse with each other) we do more than just hear their words. In that steady proximity we can study the expression on their face as they speak, we can observe how they dressed for the occasion, we can smell on their breath what they ate at their last meal, and we can witness for ourselves their reaction to what *we* have to say and do.

It is impossible, from this sub-heaven murk, to duplicate that experience with Almighty God, for He is spirit and we are now spirit-kind, so our relationship for the moment is spiritual. The fleshly intimacies of human companionship must be translated into something higher—yet, more meaningful and eternal.

A true walk with God means a life in which faith—or, to be precise, simple belief—has blossomed into obedience, adoration, communion, companionship, dialogue, dependency, knowledge, and a familiarity with what He has said in His word.

Therein is *true* life.

