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Enoch - An illustration of the importance of watching for the return of Christ as an incentive to holiness.

The most remarkable thing recorded in the Bible about Enoch, a man of the seventh generation from Adam and whose life span would have been overlapped by that of Adam by some 308 years, according to calculations based upon figures given in Genesis 5, was his avoidance of death. Genesis 5:24 says, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." This truth is further stated in Hebrews 11:5. "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."

That makes him, along with Elijah the prophet, unique amongst humanity.

But there are two other facts about Enoch which are especially worth noting. He walked with God and he had the coming again of Christ ever before him.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him," Genesis 5:24.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, 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," Jude 1:14-15.

There is a very important link to be observed here - holiness and a looking for the return of Christ. I have no doubt that Enoch's clear view of the return of Christ was a factor in his walking with God.

John the Apostle links these two great truths together in his first epistle. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And **every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure,**" 1 John 3:1-3.

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and **not be ashamed before him at his coming,**" 1 John 2:28.

The hope of the return of Christ engenders holiness of walk and practice. A forgetting of this glorious event leads to carelessness and sin.

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matthew 24:48-51.

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," Matthew 25:5.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Peter 3:3-4.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according



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to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," 2 Peter 3:9-14.

I am sure that there would be few to contradict me when I say that the doctrine of the return of Christ and the things associated with that wonderful event, is a very much neglected subject in the pulpits of Bible Christianity today.

There are those who seek to excuse this by saying that 'Eschatology' is a difficult subject with so many conflicting views of it. May the same not be said about the divinity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the atoning work of Christ on the cross, justification etc., etc? Yet who is it, who would claim to be a preacher of righteousness, and would seek to excuse the neglect of any of these doctrines in his pulpit ministry by saying that they are difficult to grasp and there are many views held about them.

I think that, in Bible-believing circles, a minister who indulged in such excuse-making would find himself being investigated for heresy!!

Why then is such an empty, worthless, senseless excuse sufficient reason for all too many fundamentalist preachers rarely touching upon the subject of Christ's return?

Furthermore, given the associating of this doctrine and the holiness of life that Enoch displayed, can we be surprised that this day of neglecting eschatological subjects in the pulpits is also a day of worldliness, prayerlessness and carnality in the pew?

The rediscovery of the truth of God regarding the return of Christ is as essential for the recovery and reform of the Church of Christ in these last days, as was the rediscovery of the doctrine of justification for the reform of the people of God in the days of Luther, Knox and Calvin.

I believe that Matthew 25:5-7 clearly indicates that we are to expect an "awakening" before the return of the Saviour. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."

There is a need for God's servants to take up the cry "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," in order to awaken the slumbering church. That requires the man of God to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Timothy 2:15.

There is a need to consider seriously how the Bible emphasises this glorious topic by devoting so much space to it.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, **which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,**" Acts 3:19-21.

This subject has occupied the people of God since the dawn of time, as Jude's reference to the preaching of Enoch clearly shows. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," Jude 1:14.

That being so, ought it not to occupy us today at least to the same degree?

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," James 5:8.

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