

The Seventh from Adam

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There is nothing superfluous or redundant about the inspired Scriptures. Every sentence, every clause, indeed, every word that is there has its own purpose and reason. We often clog our remarks with meaningless, or at least unnecessary, verbiage, but never so the Word of God.

A striking example of this occurs in Jude 14, where we read, "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these . . ." That Enoch was number seven in the line of descent through Seth is a fact easily ascertainable from Genesis 5, but one may be tempted to wonder why Jude should expend even four words in calling our attention to that fact. Is there any point in it?

There evidently is. Seven is in Scripture the number of perfection and completeness, usually as regards that which is good, though sometimes in regard to what is evil. It was fitting, therefore, that of all the ten antediluvian patriarchs number seven should have been the one in whom faith and the life of faith came out in its completeness.

But there is more than this. If we refer to Genesis 4, and count the antediluvian patriarchs mentioned in that chapter, we shall discover the illuminating fact that number seven in the line of descent through Cain is Lamech. In Genesis 5 the list through Seth is given to us, without comment other than their ages, until we reach Enoch, when the Spirit of God pauses to record certain details as to him. In chapter 4 the same thing takes place.

After Cain, merely names are given until the seventh, Lamech, is reached, when the Spirit of God turns aside to give us details as to him.

The line of Cain was composed of men in whom the flesh and the principles of the world found expression, whereas in the line of Seth God preserved a godly seed in men of faith. In both lines the man of outstanding character and power, the man in whom the respective tendencies found their complete expression, was number seven. In Lamech (Gen. 4: 19-24) we have set forth the world in its main features: in Enoch (Gen. 5: 21-24) the believer's pathway through the world. The order in which the two are presented by the Spirit of God is worthy of note, for it is the order consistently observed all through Scripture and explicitly stated in 1 Corinthians 15: 46: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. "First, that which is merely of man, and fails; second, that which is wholly of God, and abides. Hence that other word: "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10: 9).

The antediluvian age was pre-eminently an age of lawlessness. Death reigned "from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5: 14), for sin abounded, yet there was no transgression, since there was no law to transgress. But not only this, there was also no divinely constituted authority in the earth. No one was as yet empowered to wield the sword of justice against his fellows as representing God. This was introduced when post-diluvian conditions were established (see Gen. 9: 1-6). Under these earlier conditions every man was apparently a law unto himself, and this tendency reached a climax in Lamech.

In connection with this man of great originality and forceful personality three things are recorded.

1. He broke through the marriage ordinance as ordained by God at the beginning, when one man and one woman were united. Apparently Lamech was the first to set aside this and take a plurality of

wives. What God had arranged was nothing to him! True, he only took *two*. From that to the state of things we find with a Solomon or an Ahasuerus may seem a great descent, but it was Lamech who opened the flood-gates! What led him to pioneer the entrance of this great evil into the earth? *The lust of the flesh*.

2. By the two wives he had a remarkable family. The second characteristic came out in his children, and the lust of the flesh eventuated in *the lust of the eyes*. One son became a pioneer in trade and commerce, for those who dwelt in tents and had cattle were the nomadic folk who did not settle down as tillers of the soil, but wandered with their beasts and became a people of trade and of transport.

Another son became the great pioneer in the arts and sciences. He was "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," thus cultivating the intellectual and aesthetic side of life. The third was a pioneer in craftsmanship. In his family, artificers in brass and iron were found.

A sister's name is even recorded. The meaning of Naamah appears to be "pleasure." She, evidently, true to her name, set forth the pleasant side of worldly life, and became a leader in worldly pleasure.

The "lust of the eyes" we must remember is an expression embracing not only the "lust of seeing" with the eyes of the *head* but with the eyes of the *mind*. It covers all that insatiable and restless spirit of inquiry which marks man away from his true source of knowledge — GOD. Today men are more feverishly than ever pushing their investigations and bringing fresh worlds of discovery and thought within their field of vision, yet always is it a case of "ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth." In Lamech and his family we see emerging from the earth as a trickling stream what is now a torrential river.

3. But not only was Lamech a pioneer in *corruption* as the first polygamist, but he was also a leader in *violence*. He was a tremendous egotist, and there comes plainly into view *the pride of life*. Verses 23 and 24 may not seem very clear to the ordinary reader of the Authorized Version; other translations, however, render it "I have slain a man 'for my wound,' and a young man 'for my bruise.'" From this it would appear that some hapless young man inflicted some bodily injury upon Lamech, who thereupon revenged himself upon him by slaying him.

Generations before there had been Cain's wicked outburst, and this brought him so manifestly under the condemnation of men and the judgment of God that for some centuries apparently men were awed into respect for human life. Again it was Lamech who broke through the restriction. And not only did he slay the young man, but after the deed was done he returned to his wives in a spirit of exultation and boasting. He gloried in the deed, and to give his wives an idea of his importance he made irreverent allusion to the divine protection thrown over Cain, by which Men were not allowed to touch him — as stated in verse 15 of the chapter. He affirmed that if vengeance for Cain should be sevenfold, for him it should be seventy and sevenfold; thus ranking himself as eleven times more important than Cain! — truly the *pride of life*!

What is all this but just the elements of the world?" For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2: 16). Upon these three things is the whole of the world system based. In our day we see them to well-nigh their utmost ramification, but in Lamech's day they were quite distinctly revealed.

Now, while Lamech was thus disporting himself in the earth about a thousand years before the flood, and breaking down the barriers which let loose the torrent of human corruption and violence, so

that ultimately it came to pass that "the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6: 11), another man began quietly to pursue his earthly career. Enoch began to live, and after the birth of his son Methuselah, for 300 years he walked with God.

Of this remarkable man two things are recorded in Genesis and two in the New Testament — four in all. Let us note them, for we shall thereby be learning the true character of the pathway of the saints through the world as set forth in this "seventh from Adam."

1. "*And Enoch walked with God.*" What a world of meaning is compressed into these few words! "Walking" signifies not rest but activity, whether of mind or of body. Enoch's activities of mind — in the way of intercourse and communion — his activities of service also were "with God." When Adam was in an unfallen condition the Lord God had walked with him in the garden, as Genesis 3: 8 implies. Enoch, however, was in the midst of a scene of increasing corruption and violence; no longer was it possible for God to walk with him as once He did in an unfallen creation, so Enoch walked with God. God Himself he knew: in God's things he lived and moved and had his being. In body he trod the earth that was no longer a place fit for the walking of the Lord God in the cool of the day: in spirit he moved with God in His own place, and amongst His own things.

He was, however, no recluse or dreamy mystic, for the record is that "Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." He entered into ordinary human life and knew all the usual trials and vexations as well as the joys of bringing up a family, and families in those days of vigorous longevity were usually *large*. In spite of that he walked with God, not by fits and starts, but with steady persistency *for three centuries!* A wonderful walk, the longest walk on record was that! Moreover, while walking with God in spirit, he walked amongst men in bodily presence and well knew their ways and their sins, and bore trenchant witness to God and against them. But this brings us to the second feature that marked him.

2. *He witnessed for God.* This we are informed by Jude, who has put on record for us the subject of his testimony: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints..." Even at that early stage in the world's history a clear ringing witness was given to God's intervention in glory, an intervention which would bring conviction to the ungodly. Enoch did not spare his hearers. Ungodly they were both in deeds and words. The threefold use of the word *ungodly* in Jude 15 is very striking. We do not read that Enoch had any converts, but his witness was evidently marked by the utmost faithfulness and power.

3. *He was "translated" to God.* The terse record of Genesis is that at the end of the 300 years "he was not; for God took him." This is amplified in the New Testament, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him" (Heb. 11: 5). Here we learn that faith was the energy in which Enoch walked with God, and in which finally, he was transported into God's presence. After three centuries of walking with God it must have seemed a simple and natural thing when one day "God took him," and Enoch exchanged his earthly dwelling for the very abode of God Himself.

Every word here is worthy of note. He was translated "that he should not see death." Was he then threatened by death? In the ordinary way it would hardly seem so, since his father lived 962 years and his son 969, and the average life of the nine antediluvian patriarchs excepting himself was well over 900 years. Again, it says, "he was not found," which infers that he was *sought*.

The language, however, is explicit. His translation took place "that he should not see death," which can hardly be the statement of the obvious truism that had it not been he would ultimately have died. No, it carries with it the glorious moral import that the power of God through faith could lift a

man clean out of the domain of death. It could sustain him in spiritual life whilst walking through the sphere of death's operations, and ultimately forbid the touch of its blighting hand, and land his feet in the presence of God for ever beyond its power. It carries also, we judge, the inference that but for translation his death was imminent, that in fact he was translated just as the blow was impending. In other words, that Enoch was left by God in his path of faithful witness until the last possible moment, and then just as the lawless antediluvians, angered by his plain and fearless words, were about to silence the witness, and sought him in order to slay him, "he was not found, for God had translated him."

If we are right in so reading these words, Enoch's translation must have been a presage of judgment for the world, but also a public witness to the fact that God was on his side. This brings us to the fourth feature.

4. "*He pleased God*" — a thing which is impossible apart from faith. The world saw evidence of this in the fact of his translation. He had the testimony of it "before his translation" (Heb. 11: 5). Verse 4 tells us that *before* Abel was slain he had the testimony *that he was righteous*. Verse 5 that Enoch *before* he was translated had the testimony *that he pleased God*. One was *right* with God and he knew it. The other was *agreeable* to God and he knew it. Both knew on Divine testimony.

"He pleased God." After all, what more could be said than that? The life that can be summed up in those three words is the life worth living, even though, as in Enoch's case, it is a life that mightily displeases the world.

Here, then, sketched in the early dawn of the world's history, is a very complete picture of the world on the one side, and on the other, of the believer's pathway through the world to glory. Some fifty centuries have passed and the world has immensely developed. The young sapling of Enoch's day has become a gigantic tree. Its three main shoots as revealed in Lamech — "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," have become three main trunks, each bearing branches and twigs innumerable. The great tree now shows signs of weakness. Shall we let you into the secret? The interior is a mass of decay and rotteness. The imposing tree is doomed. Upon it this sentence is written: "The world passeth away and the lust thereof" (1 John 2: 17).

Shall we lament it? No, indeed. Being what it is, the passing away of the world-system is a subject for rejoicing, and the above quoted verse does not close without adding, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." It is men of the Enoch stamp that will abide.

Enoch is peculiarly an instructive type for us. Just as Noah sets forth a godly remnant of Israel carried safely through the flood of judgment to the renewed earth beyond, so Enoch sets forth the Church's path of obedience and witness, with translation at the end before the judgment comes. Shall not we, who live in the light of a far more wonderful revelation than ever Enoch knew, be imitators of his faith?

Depend upon it, our great business is to WALK WITH GOD, not to run before Him, nor to lag behind Him, but to keep pace with Him, rejoicing in Him as He has revealed Himself in Christ, and responding to all He has revealed, in the power of the Spirit who has been given to us. It is all a matter of individual exercise and faith.

As we walk with God so shall we witness for God, and please God. The end, thank God, is sure. We shall go to be with God, translated into His very presence.