

Beacons of the Bible

Enoch Unheeded

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"Enoch walked with God." Genesis 5:22

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men--"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 1:14-15

While Lamech sinned foully in the house of Cain, Enoch shone brightly in the family of Seth. In the worst times some godliness will raise its head. A star often glitters in the darkest night. In a waste wilderness some solitary flowers bloom. A green spot sparkles amid expanse of sands. When sin rushes in like a flood, a barrier from the Spirit meets it. When the Lord's cause lies very low, some saint confesses God--some faithful hand points up to heaven--some noble champion draws the sword of truth--some preacher of righteousness uplifts the Gospel-banner. While the Head breathes, the members do not wholly die. Satan never reigns undisputedly. There was an Enoch in the midnight of the old world.

His miniature is exceedingly lovely. It shows much beauty in a little space. One touch displays the man--"he walked with God." But in that simple phrase we read the pure consistency of his happy life. His career was the brightness of a tropic climate--the clear blue of a summer sky--the tranquil flow of an unruffled stream.

Blessed man! he took no step, but leaning on his God--he did no deed, but as in God's sight--he spoke no word, but as to God's listening ear. God was his light within--his life without--the polar star of all his being. He knew no deviating path--no double motive--no divided heart. His way was narrow, but it led straightforward. He saw his guide, and followed fully.

Thus he lived a type of what the Spirit can effect. What man, through heavenly grace, has been; man, through like grace, may still become. The height attained before the flood, is not too high for other days. Away then with the thought, that evenness of godly walk is too sublime for present earth! It is indeed a fearful truth, that the wells of birth-corruption are most deep--that evil cleaves as the very skin--that Satan ever tempts--that the world spreads most fascinating

snare--that man unaided surely sinks. But the Spirit lives, and loves, and is omnipotent. He can subdue iniquities, and blunt temptation's shafts, and win the heart to Christ, and fill it with all the fullness of God. Thus the saint, linked to sinful flesh, can still walk closely with his God. Enochs may still bless the earth.

Child of God, do you lament your distance from this state? Be humbled, for you are not what you might be. Investigate the cause. Too often prayer is lifeless--infrequent--vague--pointless--the eye of faith is slumbering, or not intent on Christ--the heart ceases to watch--the shield is dropped--the sword is sheathed--the Spirit is grieved--the Word is not the constant food--ordinances are negligently used--the wings of wandering thoughts are not clipped; indolence puts out the fire of zeal. The walk with God is far from self--from sin--from worldly cares--from formal worship, and from frivolity's enfeebling whirl. It seeks heaven with heavenward face, besieging it with unremitting cries. It works for God--faithful to His truth--strong in His strength--rejoicing in His presence--valiant for His glory. "Enoch walked with God."

It may be said, that he was thus a magnet to attract, and not a Beacon to deter. His life, indeed, allured to holy paths. The halo around him was the winning beauty of devotedness. But while he meekly lived, he boldly preached. His steps were gentle, but his words were the thunder's roar. Among the sinners of the old world his voice was trumpet-clearness. The Spirit records his key-note. He spoke of the Judgment-seat. He raised on high the great White Throne. He warned of tremendous reckoning. He told of the world ended, and of the endlessness beyond. His spirit bounded to time's final goal. He seems not to have dwelt on Jesus in humiliation, bearing our sins, and making full atonement. He strode over the *first* advent--the glorious ascension to God's right hand--the session on the mediatorial throne--and all the wonders of Christ's wondrous reign.

He pictured the awe of the *concluding* scene. His Beacon was the coming Judge. Thus he proclaimed, "Behold! the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

We hence learn, that the old world rushed not unwarned to ruin. God left them not without clear notice. They were told of the sure end. They knew how terrible were the wages of iniquity. The upraised arm was shown. The crushing blow was fore-announced. They heard that clouds were gathering, and that shelter should be sought. The cry went forth, Behold the Judge stands before the door.

So it has always been. In every case, God will be justified, when he speaks, and clear, when he judges. Men press to hell, surmounting many barriers. They will not turn even for the prize of heaven. Too late, one agonized confession will ring sadly in each lost cell. "My anguish is *my* merited desert. Many a sign-post told, that my path was towards this misery. I knew of righteous judgment. This end

was blazoned on many a warning scroll. The blame is mine, even as is the suffering. I stopped my ears. I steeled my heart. I trampled on restraints. Therefore I am here. Justice is just, and I am righteously undone."

Reader! these thoughts lead directly to Enoch's Beacon. Mark it, and you shall escape this doom. "Holy Spirit! come and give realizing views. All must be darkness, without Your rays. All must be light, if You give Your presence. All will be hardness, except You melt. The rock will soften, if You will mercifully touch."

A prelude sounds, "Behold!" Let every slumberer awake. You listless, listen. Let every eye turn here-ward; for soon each eye must meet the sight. A revelation dawns, dimming all that earth ever saw. Let then all minds now contemplate.

Look onward--realize--"behold." What is the spectacle! Whom do you see! "The Lord comes." The God-man is revealed. Jesus appears unclouded--manifest--in open glory. He, who took flesh, as Bethlehem's babe--He, who grew up at Nazareth--He, who walked a lowly man beside the sea of Galilee--He, who bedewed the garden with His blood of agony--He, who bore the scourge--the buffetings--the mockery--the crown of thorns--He, who died accursed on the accursed tree, and suffered all the penal anguish of our sins--He comes to close the scene of earth, and wrap up the worn-out scroll. "Behold, He comes."

Child of God, "Behold." Gaze steadily. It is your own Jesus. "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as you have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. Recognize your kinsman--your elder brother--your unfailing friend. It is He, who loved you with an everlasting love--who loved you more than His own life--who espoused you to Himself, in righteousness and truth, forever--who welcomed death, that you might live--who thinks His heavens incomplete without you. By faith you often realize His smile--and see your name upon His heart--and hear the whispers of his love--and lean upon His arm--and joy in His fellowship. Now see Him at hand--in very person--in glorious nearness. Behold, the Judge is your own Jesus!

You Christless ones. "Behold." He, whom you scorned--reviled--rejected--He whose blood you counted as a worthless thing--He, whom you crucified afresh--whose love you ridiculed--whose wrath you braved--whose cause you strove to counteract--whose kingdom you have trampled down--whose scepter you defied--whose humble followers you derided--maligned--oppressed--whose warnings you rejected--whose truth was your jest--whose ministers you shunned--whose word you hated--whose promises and threats you sneered at--"Behold," this Jesus comes!

But who can describe the actual spectacle! Faith, with her eagle eye intently fixed on heaven, strives to conceive what soon will shine forth in reality. But weak is the effort. No painter's skill can represent the blazing flame--the sun in mid-day splendor--the glow of life in human countenance--the expression of the sparkling

eye. Paul's eloquence could not relate the words of Paradise--they were unspeakable. No angel's tongue can open out the riches of Christ--they are unsearchable. So this sight exceeds all skill of utterance. We only know, that "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." Matt. 25:31. "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father." Matt. 16:27.

But here description must be silent. Let the sun intensify its rays into one focus, and magnify ten thousand times its present luster--that brightness would be but an expiring torch--a dying spark--compared to Jesus thus appearing. His human form--for human it will ever be--will be as dazzling as Deity can render it; and every eye shall see it.

The encircling retinue, also, will be worthy of the king of kings, and worthy of the purpose of His advent. "All the holy angels" spread their wings around. Heaven sends forth its total armies. The whole company of the angelic host encircle their descending Lord. They attend in all their glittering multitudes. Thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand swell the train. Think of the beauty of one seraph's form--think of the concentrated beauty of the collected throng--think of the God-man Jesus superlatively shining above all. And still thought touches not the grand reality.

But the glory of this retinue is more glorious yet. Every angel shall be present--so, also, every saint. All who are Christ's, from righteous Abel to the last-born child of faith, shall add their numbers to the swell of triumph. They shall be very many. Jude depicts their hosts as myriads. At present they may appear a little drop in the vast sea of the ungodly, but when thus gathered into one mass, they will be more than numbers can express.

Believer, mourn not, that now you often seem to stand alone. Truly you are united to a band more than the stars in multitude--more than the sands which gird all oceans.

They shall be very bright. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. The corruptible shall have put on incorruption. The mortal shall be robed in immortality. The natural body shall be changed into the lightness, purity, and power of spirit. We now bear the image of the earthly--and it is base, and low, and liable to pains and sad defilements. We shall then bear the image of the heavenly--and it shall be lovely and perfect, as the righteousness of God.

But why are the saints thus gloriously assembled? It is their office now to sit as high assessors in the Judgment. "Do you not know, that the saints shall judge the world?" 1 Cor. 6:2. Again, "Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the Saints of the most High--and the time came, that the Saints possessed the kingdom." Dan. 7:22.

Beloved, your earthly lot may be neglect--contempt--reproach, and poverty. You may drink the bitter cup of scorn. It was so with your heavenly Lord. Shall the poor servant covet greater favor? But the end is near. The scene shall change. Jesus shall re-appear. Then you shall have "beauty for ashes." Then you shall be arrayed in glory by His side. Your place shall be upon His very throne. They, who crushed you, shall see, and tremble, and bewail.

The ensuing scene is vivified by terms familiar to the courts of men. Well-known images thus awfully throw light upon the sequel. It is written "The Judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened." Dan. 7:10. Again, "We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ." Rom. 14:10. Again, "We must all appear," or be made apparent--conspicuous--manifest, "before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. Once more, "And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done." Rev. 20:11-12. Thus graphically is the consummation pictured.

We are thus led in lively thought to intermingle in transactions, which must be. The Spirit takes us by the very hand, and brings us to the dread tribunal. He guides us now to take our station, where we so soon must stand. He almost constrains us to make the future present. Who now can say, that coming judgment is an obscure hint! It is revealed in clearest light. It is proclaimed in strongest terms. It is displayed in gigantic magnitude. Oh! that the world would learn, that it is sure--near--inevitable; that it will be universal; that it will be final. Each child of man must act his part. All, who are Christ's, shall then receive their crowns. All, who are not found in Him, must meet their condemnation.

But Enoch's teaching omits the full acquittal of the just. Each had indeed his countless and most frightful sins. Each in nature, and by act, had merited the depths of hell. But long ago each had endured his fullest punishment, when the redeeming God-man died. Each too had put on by faith the glories of His glorious righteousness. Each had exhibited by holy walk his vital union with the Lord of life. Each displays full evidence. Each holds the title--deeds to pardon--life--glory. Each has in his heart the fitness for this home. God is faithful. Therefore they are welcomed on the strong ground of right. Jesus purchased heaven, and purchased them, and made them fit. They hear, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. They ascend to thrones of light. Glory--glory to the God of grace! Glory--glory to the work of Christ!

But Enoch, dealing with sinners, sings not this song of triumph, he shows not the chariots which bear the saints aloft. That he might check and scare from sin's

destructive paths, he opens the dreadful side. He drags the ungodly forward. They must confront the great White Throne. The Judge appears "to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

To Convict. Conscience is now terribly awake. It may have slept amid the warnings and exhortations of time-state. It may have stifled all inward tremors under the Gospel-note. But now it is all life. Its eyes are widely open to the iniquity of lost days--the flimsiness of vain excuse--the positive reality of contracted guilt--the worthlessness of now vanished hopes--the justice of the now-arrived condemnation--the truthfulness of all God's word--the inevitable issue of unpardoned sin.

Earth is now fled away. The guilty have then no terrestrial refuge. Heaven is for the righteous. They have no righteousness. Hell is for the ungodly. They are ungodly. They see it now. They own it. And they must endure. They are convinced, that their whole life was spent in toiling hard to earn the wages of the devil. The time for payment is arrived. His reckoning place is hell. The light of the White Throne makes all things clear. Willful ignorance and self-deception are no longer blind. Memory is awake in agonized review. It sees in one expanding glance the history of all past days. Each action is apparent in true form. Each word again sounds loudly. Each rapid thought swells to the frightful magnitude of overt acts. But each act--each word--each thought is only sin. Denial--extenuation--palliation--have vanished--or, if they show themselves, they aggravate and mock. Truth now reigns. Confession speaks. Such were our lives. These are our sins. This is our fault. This is our righteous doom. This is our merited misery. The Judge of all the earth does right.

The mandate lingers no more. "Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness--there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 22:13. They "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1:9. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. 25:46.

You sons of men, who are not safe in Christ--who have not found the shelter of His saving wings--who have not fled for refuge to His Cross--who are not hid in the clefts of His wounded side--who are not washed in the laver of His blood--who are not covered beneath His sin-concealing righteousness, listen to Enoch's faithful word. You--your works--your speeches--your thoughts are all ungodly. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:18. These lives of yours will all rise up again in the Judgment-day, and prove your guilt, and call aloud for wrath.

But the final Trumpet sounds not yet. The Throne is not erected yet. The Judge stands indeed before the door, but still His entrance tarries. Judgment is ready,

but not yet quite come. The angels spread their wings, but they fly not. You have yet opportunity. Delay affords you space. Oh! then, by all the terrors of that dreadful day--by all the certainties of the foretold assize--by the sure unfolding of all your most secreted deeds--by the exposure of all that you have done and been--by the inevitable sentence--by the outbreking wrath--by the down-hurling into hell--by the ever-gnawing chains--by the unquenchable fire--by the everlasting worm--by the eternity of torment, you are now implored to pause--to think--to turn--to weep--to be repentant--to seek mercy--to flee to Christ--to hasten to His Cross--to clasp His arms of love--to take Him as your only hope--to cling to Him as your only refuge--to embrace Him as your full salvation. Make Jesus now your friend. He comes to be your Judge.

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