

Understanding Holiness

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[0:00] Before I preach this morning, I'd like to say thank you to all of you on behalf of Dole and myself for the hospitality we've enjoyed. I don't know whether in America you have one star, two star, three star hotels, do you? Four star? Five star? How high does it go?

Yeah, well in Q8 it goes up to seven, but we won't go into that. We've had six star hotel accommodation while we've been here, it's been wonderful. Thank you very much to a certain family.

And thank you very much to the other friends who've had us into their family life for a short period, so we've been able to have some fellowship together. And we've had a really good rest and the weather's been wonderful. I've been looking at the internet virtually every day we've been away. We've had rain. And here we haven't. I wonder what my neighbours will say when we get back. Most of all we've enjoyed the fellowship in the church here. And now we come to God's Word. So please come to the book of Genesis. Some of you were convinced I was going to speak on the Acts of the Apostles again, but today, Genesis chapter 5. The first book in God's book, Genesis, chapter 5.

[1:24] It's important that we read the whole chapter. This is the written account of Adam's line.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them.

And when they were created, he called them man. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image, and he named him Seth.

After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years. And then, he died.

When Seth had lived 90 years, he became the father of Enosh. And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters.

[2:38] Altogether, Seth lived 912 years. And then, he died. When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Enosh.

And after he became the father of Enosh. And after he became the father of Enosh, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years.

And then, he died. And then, he died. When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years. And then, he died. When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared.

And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years.

[3:56] And then, he died. And then, he died. When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch.

And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived 962 years.

And then, he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

And after he lived together, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God. Then, he was no more. Because God took him away. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech.

[5:15] And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years.

And then, he died. When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah, which sounds like the Hebrew word for comfort.

And said, He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed. After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years. And then, he died. After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Up to that point is the word of God. I am going to preach to you from verses 18 to 24. And it's always difficult to know how to start a sermon.

[6:35] So, today I'm going to start in Chicago. In 1871, what happened? It was.

It was the great fire of Chicago. And living nearby and preaching the gospel for the last 11 years was Dwight L. Moody. But the fire of Chicago shocked him.

Hundreds of men and women went to bed normally and woke up in heaven or in hell. From that moment onwards, there was a new seriousness about his preaching.

And a new quality about his life. And a new prayer which he prayed every day. Lord, he prayed every day. Make me as holy as it's possible for a saved sinner on earth to be.

How holy can a saved sinner on earth be? You'll find the answer in our passage Genesis 5, 18 to 24.

[7:53] Here we have Enoch. And we're going to do it quite simply this morning. We're going to ask five questions which you don't have to answer. I'm going to answer them. And then we'll understand a little bit more about holiness and what it is.

And how it comes about. And how I can have it. And you can have it. Because whatever else God wants for his people, he wants every man and woman and boy and girl who belongs to him to be a holy person.

But how holy can a saved sinner on earth be? First of all, who was he? Who was Enoch? Well, there are four Enochs in Genesis. If you look at chapter 4, verse 17, you'll see there's an Enoch there.

Cain lay with his wife and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Well, I've directed you to the verse. Now quickly forget it. Because I'm not talking about that Enoch.

If you were reading Hebrew, there's another one in chapter 25, who's the grandson of Abraham through Midian. And if you were reading Hebrew, there's another one in chapter 46, who's the son of Reuben.

[9:01] But you don't read Hebrew probably, so you can forget that as well. We're talking about the son of Jared, who was Enoch the seventh from Adam.

That's what he's called in the New Testament. What does it mean? Seventh from Adam. Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, I'm sure you've never called your son the next one, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch. That's who we're talking about. He has the distinction, ladies and gentlemen, of being the very first preacher on the planet. I love theological students and I love catching them out.

I have a number of trick questions which I put to them in seminary. But one question I like to ask every class is, who was the first preacher on our planet? Sometimes they say God.

Well, okay. But besides that, who was the first preacher on our planet? And the clever ones say Noah. But they were wrong. The first preacher on our planet was Enoch.

[10:15] But we don't know that till we get almost to the end of the Bible, when it's revealed for us in the book of Jude. Enoch. Enoch is like a light in a dark sky.

In chapter 3, the sky goes very dark. Adam and Eve, our first parents, walk out on God. In chapter 4, the light is still out.

Cain, son of Adam and Eve, kills his brother, Abel. So the relationship this way has been broken and now the relationship this way is completely in pieces.

That's chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 6, we have one of the, probably the saddest verse in the Bible. Probably the most horrifying verse in the Bible.

In chapter 6, it's in verse 5. The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become. And that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

[11:27] I don't think there's a sadder verse than that. And then, of course, we get the terrible sin, which leads to the worldwide flood and the near destruction of the human race.

That's chapters 3 and 4. That's chapters 6, 7 and 8. But here we have chapter 5. And in chapter 5, we have Enoch.

And in this dark, dark sky, where there's not a single moon or star to see, there is, yes, just one, just one light shining in a dark world.

That's why I want to talk to you about him this morning. Who was he? Now we know. Number 2, second question. What did he do?

What did he do? Well, you'll find the answer in chapter 5, verse 22. And you noticed it as I read. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

[12 : 41] Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God. There's a famous book written by one of your countrymen, which tries to tell you how to be more effective in your life.

In the book, the author takes you to a funeral service. You're all sitting in church and the casket is at the front. And you're invited to come up to the front and see who's in the casket.

And it's you. It's you. Then the author says, now people are going to come to the front and give eulogies.

They're going to speak about the person in the casket. What would you like them to say about you? Come on now.

What would you like people to say about you? Come to chapter 4, verse 20.

[13 : 53] Ada gave birth to Jabal. Jabal. He was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.

So at his funeral, they stand up and say, Ah, Jabal. He was the very first Bedouin. The very first person to be a nomad. The very first person to live in a tent.

The very first person to keep cattle. That's what they would have said about him. Chapter 4, verse 21. His brother's name was Jubal. Not Bugle.

Jubal. He was the father of all who played the harp and flute. At his funeral, they would have said, Ah, Jubal. He was the very first musician.

The very, very first person to play a musical instrument. That's the distinction he had. That's what they would have said about him. Verse 22. Zillah also had a son, Tubal Cain.

[14 : 54] Tube. Think of Tube. Who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. What would they have said at his funeral? He was a metal worker. He's the first person to make wrenches and tools.

Enoch didn't have a funeral. But what would they have said about him? What does the Bible say about him? Enoch walked with God.

But actually, it's not what Moses wrote. Moses wrote Genesis, as you know. Moses wrote, Enoch walked with the God.

Now Moses, why did you write that? Why didn't you just say, Enoch walked with God, like it says in English? When you wrote in Hebrew, Moses, why did you say, Enoch walked with the God?

Well, the answer is obvious, isn't it? Some people worship the sun. But the sun's not God. Some people at that time worshiped the moon.

[16 : 07] We can still go and visit their ziggurats to this day. But the moon is not God. Some people worship the stars. Some people worship idols made out of wood or stone or metal.

But Enoch walked with the only God there is. There is only one. And Enoch walked with him. He walked with God.

Now later in this book, God will speak to Abraham. I am the Lord Almighty, he will say to him. Walk before me and be blameless.

Walk in front of me. Later on, we shall come to the book of Deuteronomy, which Moses also wrote. And God will say to Israel, you shall walk after the Lord your God.

And fear his name and keep his commandments and obey his voice. Before, after. Enoch walked with.

[17 : 19] Now the country where I was born was a country where men don't walk with their wives. What do you think about this ladies?

You engaged ladies. The wife walks five paces behind the husband, slightly to the right.

You fancy that? We had to do that in our wedding actually because they put extra chairs down the middle and we didn't have room to walk side by side.

But we have not been doing it since. Why in our culture do men and women walk side by side?

Hold hands. Why do they do that? Why do they do that? That's companionship. That's intimacy. That's closeness. That's acceptance. Isn't it?

[18:17] And that's what Enoch was enjoying. He was enjoying intimacy with God. Closeness. Communion. A friendship deeper than friendship.

That's what he did. That's what he did. Well, my Hebrew is getting rusty. But I know that Hebrew is not like English. In English we say, he walked. Past tense. He is walking.

Present tense. He will walk. Future tense. In Hebrew you can't do that. There's no past. There's no present. There's no future. Present tense. He will walk. Future tense. In Hebrew you can't do that. There's no past. There's no present. There's no future. Odd language, isn't it? Good job we don't talk it. In Hebrew you have intensities of verbs.

Some doing verbs, verbs, are finished and some are not finished. But some of the verbs are intense and some are not intense. And I'll explain what I mean.

[19:16] Your little daughter is learning the piano. Well, I'll have to think of a name that you don't have. Zara, how about that?

Go and practice on the piano. Over to the piano she goes and Donk, donk, donk, donk, donk. Until you can hardly wait for the practice to finish. Now there's a Hebrew way of saying that. Now let's change the story. Zara, go and, and before you can finish it, she's run to the piano and she's playing away.

And it's beautiful. Moonlight sonata, rhapsodies, everything you can think of. Off it goes. Twenty minutes later, she's still carried away. She's almost levitating. Forty minutes.

And there's a Hebrew way of saying that. It's called the Hithpael. When Moses says, Enoch walked with God, he uses the Hithpael.

[20:20] Which means he loved every moment of it. His heart was in it. He enjoyed it. It was his life. It was his passion. It was his interest. It was his all.

That's what he did. When I was a boy, I was a curious boy. In other words, I had a sense of curiosity.

I'm sure I was a curious boy in the other sense. And as I cycled to school, which was three miles, I went past this stone column, which looked like a big needle.

And I wondered what it was. But I actually cycled past it for years before I went to look. And it was in the middle of a circle.

The traffic goes all the way around. So you can see why I didn't actually get off my bike and go into the middle. It hadn't always been in a circle, but it was now. So I went across the traffic, crossed some grass, and came to this column.

[21:29] This is what it said. Matthew Henry. Heard of him? Minister of the Word of God.

Erected with thanks to God by public subscription. Have you heard of Matthew Henry? He wrote the greatest Bible commentary ever written, still in print, and the modern English version recently come out.

It's circled the globe. It's gone into dozens of languages. It is the best Bible commentary probably ever written by one person. But the time came for him to die.

And in those days in England, although he was a Welshman, they recorded people's dying words and wrote them down.

A life spent in communion with God is the pleasantest life in the world.

[22:34] Enoch knew that. A life spent in communion with God is the pleasantest life in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, you were made for God. You can never, ever, ever fail to be hungry, unfulfilled, empty, unless you know the Lord.

And even then you'll be unsatisfied until you become intimate with God. Until you know Him, and know Him, and know Him more, and follow on to know Him.

Because walking implies progress. That's who He was. That's what He did. Here's our next question.

Where did He do it? Let's go to the book of Jude. You don't have to go there. You can listen.

[23:43] But if you know where it is, it's the last book but one in the Bible. It's a tiny little book. It's only one chapter. And it has an extract from, guess what? a sermon preached by Enoch.

This sermon extract contains one word which comes four times. And I'm not talking about the word and. See if you can spot it as I read it.

Jude, it's only one chapter, verse 14. The apostle here is talking about evil, false teachers who slide their way into churches.

Verse 14. 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.

And you noticed the word, didn't you? He walked with God surrounded by ungodly people. Godly people. Now I once had a dog.

[25:11] It was an ungodly dog. It really was. It would get up in the morning and I would feed it some milk and some biscuits and it never once paused in prayer.

And then it would go through all the day accepting all the good things which I gave it eat its evening meal and before it went to bed round and round and round I never know why round and round and round and then lie down and not a word of prayer came from its lips all day.

Never read the scriptures and unlike Spurgeon's dog it never went to church. It's ungodly. It's ungodly. Why? Because God isn't in its thoughts.

Sin is bad. And sin is far worse than any of us think. Think the worst thought about sin and you've not yet thought bad enough.

And the worst sin of all is to live in God's world with God's life given to you and to neglect him entirely so that in the words of scripture he is not in all your thoughts.

[26:29] He is not in all of them. All of them. And Enoch walked with God in a world of people like that. I meet Christians who think oh if only every day were Sunday well it will be we'll be in heaven one day.

But we have to walk with God in an ungodly world and it can be done. We have off the coast of Wales lots of little islands.

On most of these little islands there are dozens of them you will find a chapel or a shrine or a lonely house because through the years men and sometimes women have got away from everybody else because they thought they could walk with God better that way.

But like Luther they discovered that even when they got away their sinful heart was still with them and evil thoughts still came to them. We have to walk with God in an ungodly world.

But did you notice verse 22 After he became the father of Methuselah Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters he already had Methuselah the Hebrew in verse 22 for sons is plural which means in Hebrew the daughters is plural which means three or more so he had at least seven children he had a wife and seven children or more and he walked with God somebody says it was so easy to walk with the Lord when I was single but now I'm married and now I've got children how can I walk with God this one's in diapers this one keeps pulling the plug out of the computer this one keeps opening the cupboards this one fiddles with the microwave I don't know what to say about him this one's always in late it goes on and on this one's about to go to school this one's at school this one's leaving school this one's got a job this one wish he had a job how can I walk with God like in all this and Enoch did 300 in a world where Adam was still alive [29:04] Adam was 622 years old when Enoch was born they were on the earth for 308 years Adam died 57 years before Enoch left the world Enoch walked with God certainly from the age of 65 think about this for 243 years Adam saw Enoch do outside the Garden of Eden what he had not managed to do in the Garden of Eden what do you think that did to Adam's conscience?

that's where you walked with God that's where you walked with God we know what he did and we know where he did it next question number 4 why did he do it?

why did he do it? well the answer is in that extract in Jude Jude remember is the last book and it says in verse 14 Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men this is what Enoch now preached 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 Enoch was a prophet like all the Old Testament prophets he could see the coming Christ he could see his life he could see his sufferings he could see his resurrection and he could see the glory that would follow with particular clarity

Enoch could see that after the cross and the resurrection and the glory would come the last day and on the last day the suffering resurrected Christ would judge everyone every act every word and here he was in this world where nobody thought about that but he did but he did and if you really

take on board what scripture says about judgment you cannot be the same as other people sometimes people come to me I'm a failure in my Christian life if I could just have some explosion inside me which would make me different how happy I would be I want to be holy but I don't manage it but if I could just have some new experience of God I'm sure everything would be right well I'm not denying that people can have new experiences of God but your real need is not a new experience of God your real need is a new thought life if you want me to put it in theological language your real need your real need is not pneumatology it's eschatology how about that for a sentence in other words is not a new explosion of the spirit inside you your real need is to think about the future and remember that every word and every deed and every lack of word and every lack of deed and everything about us that we do because we do it because we are who we are we will answer to Jesus Christ and with that thought we cannot be the same as other people

[33:44] Spurgeon was a holy man people commented on the fact that he constantly thought about living this in the light of what he called the final blaze of glory in your continent the log college have you heard of that where young men trained for the ministry most of whom had short lives and short lives did they have such passion in the cause of Christ and why were their lives so markedly different even from the lives of other Christians and the answer is they could not forget the last that's why we need the Sabbath day to stop and reflect and that's why we need time out everyday to stop and reflect it's the thought life which makes men and women so final question who was he?

what did he do? where did he do it? why did he do it? number five where did it lead him? where did it lead him?

it led him to a short life how old was his father Jared when he died? 962 years how old was his son Methuselah when he died?

969 years it's a record how old was Enoch when he left the world? he was old 365 it's like someone coming to the end of their life when they're about 35 years old it led him to a short life that's important God doesn't measure you that's in his secret things how long you'll live how long you'll live God weighs you it's the sort of Christian you are how much you weigh he has shown you a man and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly and to love mercy it's not long life that counts you should be grateful you should be grateful if you've had it it's a holy life that counts have you heard of Robert Murray Mishane?

we've all heard of him those of us who've read a little bit but how old was he when he died? so why do we remember him? because of the purity and holiness of his life even more than his preaching who were the people who touched you when you were a young Christian?

[37:03] who influenced you in a way that you can't forget? it was the people who had a certain quality about their lives not those who've lived the longest since is it?

so eight times in this chapter we read but of him we read Enoch walked with God then he was no more because God took him away or we read in Hebrews now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see by faith Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death he could not be found because God had taken him away for before he was taken he was commended as one who pleased God now let's go back to the Hebrew language there are different words for take away so you drive in your car Woody's stores leave the car in the parking lot go inside and when you come out your car is missing so you immediately ring the police and say my car, my car, my car that's one word for taken away but that's not what

Moses writes when he says Enoch was taken away that's changed the story you go down in your car to Woody's stores and when you come out the car which you drove down in is not there and you just call your friend or your husband and go home happily what's happened now?

well you see the car and it was somebody else's and the arrangement was that they would come to Woody's parking lot and take what belonged to them and you would go home under your own steam as we say in English they took what belonged to them that's the word Moses uses God because Enoch trusted in the coming Christ for his salvation trusted in his resurrection for his justification trusted in his glorification for his place in heaven and trusted in the righteousness for his final acquittal knowing that he himself was safe in Christ and the Lord took away what was his children listen to sermons very well they do in this church this is what a six year old girl wrote at the end of a sermon on Enoch

God and Enoch were great friends God often came to visit Enoch and then they prayed together don't know about that bit but my friend what about a little walk and Enoch said alright Lord I'm

coming see you again he said to his wife and children and closed the door so Enoch walked with God they saw the flowers they saw the she goats with their little ones until all of a sudden Enoch was alarmed and said my Lord we've walked too far there's your house how will I ever find my way back but the Lord said isn't that so?

[40 : 54] so why not now? and Enoch was no more for God took him let us pray oh Father we love the record of every holy life we thank you that there is was one life lived here on earth which had no sin of any sort and he the Lord Jesus Christ in all points like we are yet without sin we thank you that we thank you that Jesus was holy and harmless and undefiled and completely separated from sinners but he himself bore our sins in his own body and has risen again to be our living saviour we thank you that Enoch saw him trusted in him and lived to please him that sinner had an intimacy with you which we all long for and we pray oh Lord that as we go into this coming week with all its pressures and voices and noises and influences our thoughts may be of Christ and of that glorious day when we shall see him as he is we thank you that your word says everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure may that be our experience we pray for Jesus sake