



A Tale of Two Cities...

It's hard to believe that another year has flown by. One can certainly feel perplexed when considering how many major things have occurred – with such rapid succession – in the past 12 months. When a year draws to a close, I always try to take additional time before the Lord to allow Him to speak to me about my walk with Him. As the holiday of Chanuka also falls around this time, it is a good backdrop for my considerations.

In Genesis 5: 18-24, we find the birth of Enoch recorded and read that 'he walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.'

In turning to Hebrews 11: 5, we see that Enoch also had a testimony: 'that he pleased God.'

Looking at the context of this verse, we also read that others obtained a good witness, by faith, and that Abraham 'looked for a city which hath foundations, *whose builder and maker is God*' (v.10). Verse 16 goes on to say, of these heroes of faith, that God is not ashamed to be called their God, for *HE hath prepared for them a city!*

Jude 14 and 15 tells us that Enoch, 'the seventh from Adam', prophesied regarding God's coming judgement. In this same letter, Jude refers to '*the way of Cain*'. Why does Jude mention Cain and then go on to mention Enoch, with the distinction – 'seventh from Adam'?

What has all of this to do with Chanuka, anyway? Well, Enoch's name is 'Chanoch' (חֲנוֹךְ) in Hebrew, which is where we get the word Chanuka – חֲנוּכָה – Dedication. While there is not much written about him, I believe that Enoch has much to teach us today.

First of all, the phrase 'walked with God' tells us a lot. The word 'walked' is a reflexive form of the verb which, in Hebrew, has three 'aspects'. They are:

1. Action performed on oneself,
2. Performed habitually and,
3. Performed mutually (with someone else).

Consider, for a moment, how each of these levels manifested in Enoch's life: His walk was the exercise of his will (performed on

himself), it was habitual (continual, and not sporadic) and mutual (he walked *with God*; **in relationship with Him**, not in isolation or as a robot).

Now, let's go back and read an earlier Biblical passage about Cain because, as I've already mentioned, Jude refers to '*the way of Cain*'.

In examining the passage (Gen 4:1-23) that describes Cain's offering, we see that he neither denied the existence of God nor refused to worship Him. In fact, he may have been seen to be a 'good, religious man', but he presumed to approach God - being yet in his sins - without the shedding of the blood of an innocent substitute. Therefore in effect, he refused to confess that he was a sinner in need of such and, instead, offered the fruit of the ground, which had been cursed as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:17-19). All produce would come forth only for sorrow and represent human efforts (the sweat of one's face).

God's rejection of Cain's offering did not produce true repentance in Cain's heart. Rather, Cain's response was to slay his brother Abel, whose animal sacrifice *had* been accepted. Because of this murder, God pronounced that the ground wouldn't yield its strength and that Cain would be a *fugitive* and a *vagabond* in the earth (Gen. 4:12). But when Cain produced his first son, he called him ENOCH! Not only that, but he built a **city** and called it 'Enoch', after his son!

So, instead of becoming a drifter, Cain built himself a city! Here, the verb, 'built', is a LONG TENSE, CONTINUOUS form – HE WAS

EVER-BUILDING it. This indicates COMMENCEMENT AND PROGRESS, BUT NOT TERMINATION OR CULMINATION! Because he was ever building it, he had to be *dedicated* to its ongoing construction. This is often what happens when it comes to covering one's sin. Instead of accepting truth and forgiveness from God: one erects an edifice (or a religion, a programme or a project) which one, then, has to continually maintain, lest it crumble, reveal the truth and expose a sinful foundation.

Effectively, Adam and Eve were bereaved of both their sons in one day. Then, in Genesis 4: 25, Eve conceived SETH (NOAH came from the line of SETH.).



Notice that the line of Seth is *separate* from that of Cain. This seems to show, from the beginning, the separation of the 'Church / Ecclesia' from the world.

In looking briefly at the names of Cain's descendants, we get the idea that the

people were trying to ease the ache and sorrow that comes from being separated from God, as well as being exiled from the Garden. We have names like Zillah (shade), Adah (ornament), Juval (harp & organ), Naamah (pleasant) and Lamech (power).

These names seem to indicate a desire to palliate the pain of banishment from God and Eden and the desire to create a point of unity for Cain's family, to compensate for the loss of the union with God and the estrangement from one another that sin produces, as well as establish the inclination for that which was earthly - the development of a worldly mind and use of

industry, pleasure and beauty. This, I believe, is the *way of Cain*, mentioned in Jude, whereas, Seth's descendants have names like Enosh (frail, mortal), Mehaleel (Praise of God), Jared (Descent, as in humbling oneself) and finally, ENOCH (Dedicated). Seth's line abstained from fleshly lusts, built no cities, invented no arts and devised no amusements. Their names epitomised humility and frailty and, most importantly, dependence upon God.

I believe that, as in the times of the Maccabees, we are seeing the rise of wickedness in the world, as well as compromise, unrighteousness, worldliness and disarray in the Body of Messiah / the Church. Like Abel, many of the Maccabees paid for their uncompromising stand with their lives.

But the final dedication – that of the Temple – was the result of lives that were already 'laid down' before the Lord. The testimony of Enoch's life (the seventh from Adam) was that he *walked with God*. The end result was that *'he was not, for God took him'*. Oh, to have a testimony like Paul when he said, 'I am crucified with [Messiah]: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but [Messiah] liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' (Gal 2:20) This was not a one-off occurrence! It was an ongoing life of daily yielding and dependence on the Lord.

Chanukah is a good time to get before the Lord, to consider the present state of ourselves, our activities, our ministries; to ask the Lord to search us and shine His Light into our lives and hearts and *re-dedicate* ourselves to Him.



Maccabean Revolt at Modi'in

There are only two ways; two 'Enochs':

One is a worldly way, using worldly methods and seeking worldly answers and comforts – building our own 'city' on top of personal motives, ingenuity, pain or sin.

The other has its origin in God and is habitually and mutually worked out with God, on the basis of His atonement and by the power of the Cross.

When it comes to building, Psalm 127:1 reads, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' In the first verses of this psalm, the word 'vain' is used three times (שוא). It's the Hebrew word that we get 'Shoah' from (meaningless, void!). As

a preacher once said, if something is done in vain, then it's a lie. Sadly, I believe we can see that there is much 'empire-building', activity and busyness in the Kingdom of God. But while such efforts seem to promise something lively, they cannot impart the Lord's life, if they are not

birthed by Him and done in continuing relationship with Him. The letters on the four dreidels (above) stand for: 'A Great Sign Happened There'.

Enoch – 7th from Adam – was a prophet (Jude 14, 15). May we be yielded to the Lord enough to be prophetic for *these* days. Like those of faith, may we cultivate a 'walk' like Enoch, look for that city, whose builder and maker is God and, by His grace, *be* a 'sign' and a light to the Jewish People in our generation.

May you know a blessed, holy and true Chanuka this year!

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