

Genesis 5:21-24

A GOOD EXIT STRATEGY

Intro: As you know, we are in a presidential election year; and the accusations and attacks are flying fast and furious. (Ill. I hate election years!) One of the most common accusations I hear being thrown out against President Bush is that he took America and her soldiers into a war with Iraq and that he did so without a good exit strategy. In other words, he and his advisors made all the right plans about getting in and winning the war, but they made no plans as to how to get out of Iraq. Whether that is true or not, I do not know, but it does make sense to me that you need to know how to enter and win a war like that, and that you need to know how to get yourself out at the end of that war. I would think that you would devise a good exit strategy.

Well, I think I will leave the war and all of its problems and planning with the experts. But, I still think there is a need for us to discuss this matter of exit strategies. Now, I don't know if you have realized it or not, but this life you and I are living will not last forever! In fact, I can guarantee you that it will definitely end some day, **Heb. 9:27**. Since that is true, doesn't it stand to reason that everyone needs a good exit strategy? I mean, we all make our plans for living this life. We buy insurance, put money into retirement accounts and plan for this or that, but many folks never spend any time at all planning their exit from this world.

Here are a couple of examples. Henry Ward Beecher was one of the most prominent preachers in the 1800's. In his later years, he turned from the faith and embraced Darwinism, denied the deity of Jesus Christ and lived a less than glorious life. When he lay dying, his last words were, "**Here comes the mystery.**" That is not a good exit strategy! Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, her final were, "**All my kingdom for a moment of time!**" It doesn't sound like she had prepared a good exit strategy either!

Our text today tells us about a man who knew how to leave this world. Enoch had developed a great exit strategy. I want to look into what the bible says about this little known man, because there are a few elements of his life that can teach us how to have a good strategy for leaving this world. So, while the lord gives liberty today, I want to preach on this simple thought, **A Good Exit Strategy**. If you haven't taken the time to consider how you are going to leave this world, then there is a word for you here today. There are three kinds of plans you need to make so you can have a good exit strategy when it comes your time to leave this world.

I. V. 21-22 PLAN TO EXIT THIS WORLD SAVED

- A. The Bible tells us nothing about the early years of Enoch. All we know is that at the age of 65, Enoch became the father of a child which he named Methuselah. After that child was born, we are told that Enoch walked with God for the next 300 years of his life. What was it about the birth of this child that caused Enoch to come to faith in God?

It may have something to do with the name of the child. The name "**Methuselah**" means "**When he is gone, it will come.**" If you do the math, you will find that Methuselah died the very year the flood of **Genesis chapters 6-8** came. Apparently, Enoch was made to understand that the death of his son would signal the destruction of the world.

(III. Don't you imagine that every time that child developed the sniffles, old Enoch got nervous? But, God used the birth of that child to open the heart of Enoch and God used it to save that man's soul! It would appear that Enoch came to God under the threat of judgment!)

(III. This is a blessing when you stop to consider that Methuselah may have been a symbol of approaching judgment; but he was also a symbol of the longsuffering, love and grace of God. How? He lived longer than any other human in history, **Gen. 5:27!**)

- B. God uses many events in life to touch people's hearts to bring them to Jesus. Sometimes, people are touched when they think of Hell, **Psa. 9:17**. Others react when they think of the love of God manifested at Calvary, **Rom. 5:8; Rom. 2:5**. Others think of loved ones who have died and gone to heaven and are overcome with a desire to be with them, **John 14:1-3**. Still others feel guilty because of their sins and are drawn to Jesus, **John 16:7-11**. The means God uses to convict a person and draw them to Jesus does not matter. The fact that He draws them to Him is what is important, **John 6:44**. For Enoch, it was the birth of a son. For me, it was the thought of dying lost and of going to Hell. It may be different for you. The main thing is seeing your need of God and then coming to Him for salvation!
- C. Do you want a good exit strategy for leaving this world? If you do, be sure you leave it saved! You don't want to leave it any other way! Besides that, there is no better way to live in this world! There is nothing like being saved, here or there!
- D. So, how does a person get saved? It is a simple matter! All it requires is simple faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is coming to the place where you are willing to acknowledge yourself a sinner before the Lord, and where you are willing to receive Jesus into your heart and life as your personal Savior. Here is the Gospel in all its simplicity, **Rom. 10:9-10; Rom. 10:13; John 3:16; Acts 16:31; John 6:47**. Are you saved? Would you like to be? Friend, you will leave this world some day! Therefore, you need a good exit strategy! Be sure you leave this world saved.

II. v. 23-24 PLAN TO EXIT THIS WORLD SUDDENLY

- A. We are told that “***Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.***” It has been said that as Enoch walked with God one day the Lord simply said, “***Enoch, you are closer to my house than your house. Just come on and stay with me.***” We do not know all the details of his departure, but we do know that the writer of Hebrews tells us that Enoch was “***translated that he should not see death,***” Heb. 11:5. The word “***translated***” means “***to transfer.***” It carries the idea of “***being carried across.***” One minute Enoch was here and the next minute he was with the Lord. However it happened, it surely happened suddenly and without warning!

Of course, the writer of Hebrews also tells us that “***for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.***” Perhaps God called Enoch home because He wanted to be nearer to one who pleased him so well. Whatever the reason, Enoch left this world behind and cheated death in the process!

- B. Friends, you and I need to make our plans to exit this world suddenly as well. I guarantee you no matter how or when you leave here; it will catch you off guard. It will come suddenly, when you least expect it!

There are only two ways to leave this world. Saved people can leave it both of those ways; but a lost person can only leave it through one of those ways. What are those ways?

1. **The Rapture** – Only saved people can ever hope to leave the world via the Rapture. This event is called “***the blessed hope,***” Titus 2:13. Of course, I am referring to that time when Jesus will return in the clouds above this earth to carry His people away to heaven, 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-52. That’s how I hope to go! I want to be a “***was not***” like Enoch, how about you?

(III. The rapture will be an event that will be ***Sudden, Selective, Serious and Sad.***

- It will be ***Sudden*** because there will be no prior warning. Jesus will come and every saved individual will simply be gone!
- It will be ***Selective*** because Jesus is coming for His people and no one else!
- It will be ***Serious*** because it will mark the end of the church age and it will signal the beginning of the darkest hour known to mankind, the great tribulation. It will also determine where you will spend your eternity!

- It will be **Sad** because some will be taken and others will be left behind, III. **Luke 17:34-36**. (III. Marie Avery and her husband.) If it happened today, would you go or would you stay?
 - It pays to be ready if you expect to go to Heaven in the rapture!
2. **Death** – Both save people and lost people alike can and are leaving this world through the door way of death. Death is coming, **Job 30:23; Eccl. 8:8**. When death comes, it rarely gives advanced warning. Even when disease has made the end inevitable, the exact moment of one’s departure is always a mystery. Since death is coming, and since it is coming unannounced, it stands to reason that a person needs to be ready for that moment. You may not know when death will come for you, but you can know where you will go when it does! If you are saved by grace, then you have passed from death unto life, **John 5:24**, and will go to Heaven. If you have never been saved, then you are lost in your sins and you will go to Hell. If you are lost, you do not have to stay that way! If you will come to Jesus, He will place His life within you and He will prepare you for leaving this world, whether it be in the rapture or through what we call death, **John 11:25-26**.

III. V. 24 **PLAN TO EXIT THIS WORLD SERVING**

- A. We are told twice in these verses that “***Enoch walked with God.***” That is not Enoch’s testimony of his life; that is the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning Enoch’s life. God looked at Enoch’s life and saw a man whose life pleased the Lord, **Heb. 11:6**.
- B. The word “**walk**” is the biblical expression for “***fellowship and obedience that results in divine favor.***” It refers to a manner of life that results in a person living in nearness to the Lord. This is the kind of walk Enoch had with God. It is the kind of walk Amos refers to in **Amos 3:3**. It is a walk of dedication and devotion. It is a walk in which Enoch lives up to His name. The name Enoch means “***Dedicated.***”
- C. The Bible tells us two things about this man’s walk that need to be noted. The kind of walk that Enoch exhibited is the same kind of walk that needs to be seen in your life and mine.
1. **He Had A Visible Walk With God** – It would seem that Enoch lived a life that demonstrated the faith that was in his heart. He didn’t talk one way and live another, but he consistently, constantly and completely walked with God. He walked with God for 300 years! Think about that! Look at **chapter 5** and find anything that any of these other men did that was outstanding and remarkable. Enoch walked with God consistently for 300 years! That is quite an achievement!

That is the kind of walk we all need today! We should live a visible Christian live. We should just settle in and walk consistently with the Lord.

We should avoid that life that is hot and cold, in and out, up and down and we should just walk with the Lord in humility and obedience. That is the kind of life that pleases Him! Here is God's plan for your life: **1 Cor. 15:58; Micah 6:8; 1 John 2:6**. We are to show the world what we are by how we walk before them, **Matt. 5:16**.

2. **He Had A Vocal Walk With God – Jude 14-15** tells us that Enoch was a prophet. He was the world's first prophet and he preached to the people of his generation. He preached about the coming judgment and of the need for repentance. He was a hard preacher with a hard message. He was saved and he wanted others to know about this God he served. He also knew that judgment was coming and he wanted others to miss it.

As you and I pass through this world, we need to do so with the Gospel on our lips. Yes, we must live out the truth, but we must also be careful to tell others about Jesus Christ, His death and of what He can do in their lives if they will come to Him by faith. We are commanded to witness, **Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15**; we have been equipped to witness, **Acts 1:8**; therefore, let us get busy being a visible, vocal witness for the glory of the Lord! There is a dying world that needs to hear about a living Lord! Let's tell them while there is time.

Conc: Old Enoch had the right kind of exit strategy. He left this world saved. He left it suddenly and he left it serving the Lord. What a way to go!

Friend, how will you leave this world? If you had to leave today, would we be able to say at your funeral that you left this world saved? If death came suddenly, or if the Lord came again for His church, would you be ready? If you left out of here today, would it be said about you that you left this world still serving the Lord? You need a good exit strategy! Do you have one?

In the introduction, I quoted two people who died without a good exit strategy. Let me finish by quoting a couple of people who left here with a good exit strategy.

In 1931, the great inventor, Thomas Edison left this world. On Edison's last day, his wife leaned in close to him and asked, "Are you suffering?" "**No**", he replied, "***I am just waiting.***" Edison then turned and looked out his bedroom window and softly spoke his last words. He said, "***It is very beautiful over thee.***" Sounds to me like Thomas Edison had a good exit strategy.

In 1998, Karla Faye Tucker, who had been convicted of a particularly gruesome and terrible murder was executed. Ms. Tucker had received Jesus while in prison. Before she died she said, "***I am going to be face to face with Jesus now...I will see you all when you get there. I will wait for you.***" That is a far better way to leave this world.

Confederate General Stonewall Jackson said, "***Let us cross the river and rest under the shade of the trees.***" Now, that's the way to leave here!

Friend, if there are problems with your exit strategy today, please get that thing worked out right now. You do not know when you might be leaving here. It pays to be ready. Are you?