Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:21-24; By Faith, Enoch I. The Commendation Proclaimed II. The Reward Given III. The Future Promised

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, can you avoid death? People have been thinking of ways to avoid death and escape the punishment of sin for many ages. Spanish explore de Leon searched for the fountain of youth in 1513 by exploring the New World. The first person to be cryogenically frozen was James Bedford in 1967. But are there actual means or a mechanism by which death can be avoided? Is there some fountain of youth by which your life can be extended? If you watch the ads on TV, you will find all sorts of serums and treatments that can reverse the signs of aging and reduce wrinkles. But these man-made sources cannot ultimately stop aging or postpone death forever. But there are two OT examples of men who did in fact escape death- men who avoided dying as all other men do. Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind- and in our text- we find that Enoch walked with God and was no more. But why was Enoch spared from death- and what are we to learn from his faith? Well, today we consider this theme: Those who believe in Jesus Christ are promises eternal life even as by faith, Enoch was spared from death.

**I. The Commendation Proclaimed**

In our first point, we consider the commendation that is given in our text. As v. 5 states, Enoch was commended as having pleased God. But how, exactly, did Enoch please God? Was it by some work or effort-something that he performed? Well- as v. 6 unfolds for us- without faith, it is impossible to please God. So what did Enoch do that pleased God? Well, Enoch had faith! By faith, Enoch avoided death. Enoch believed in the LORD and trusted in the appointed Messiah. Enoch believed the word of the LORD- and although he was the 7th generation after Adam- he knew and believed the truth! Our reading from Gen. 5 puts it this way- Enoch walked with God- or his life was pleasing to God. Enoch walked by faith and not by sight. Enoch believed what the LORD said- and did not live by what he saw with the eyes of the flesh. To walk with God is to have communion and fellowship with Him. So the commendation is clear- Enoch was a man of faith and this faith is praiseworthy! But Enoch was more than just a man of faith, he was also a prophet. Read with me Jude 1:14-15. Enoch was given a special revelation- Enoch was able to catch a glimpse of what would one day come. Enoch, who lived while Adam still lived, was blessed to see what would come. Enoch would overlap with Adam for about 300 years. So Enoch would be able to speak with Adam the man of God and learn about creation, the fall and the promised redemption. But although Enoch was so close to the beginning of world, he is given a glimpse of the end of the world! When Jesus Christ would return with his angels to judge the living and the dead. So Enoch was a unique man- a man blessed by God. He lived in a time of increasing hostility- which would soon bring the flood. He is set apart from his fathers and his sons. In reading Genesis 5- in this genealogy- there is a common refrain. Each man lived so many years, had these children, and then they died. But with Enoch we read that he walked with God. A specific commendation. But we also find something missing- and that is the record of his death! Every other man mentioned in Gen. 5 lives so many years- and then they died. Even mighty Methuselah lived 969 years- but he still died. But not Enoch- for Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him.

**II. The Reward Given**

So after this commendation- that Enoch was a man of faith who walked with God- after reading that God was pleased with him- we read of the reward that God gave to him. As Heb. 11:5 begins, by faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. So what was the reward given? Well, Enoch was walking with God and suddenly he was no more. He was not found- but rather he vanished. He was taken up to be with the LORD- being spared from death. Now we remember that death is consequence of man’s rebellion- the curse placed upon our sins. It is given that every man dies once, and after that face judgement as Heb. 9:27 puts it. But this did not happen with Enoch- Enoch did not die once and after that face judgment. Rather, God declared Enoch righteous and spared his child the sing of death! This is really abnormal- quite unique! To be spared from death is quite the gift! You see, death is an enemy- the last enemy as I Cor. 15 puts it. The process of aging and dying is hard- and often very painful. How many of us here do not have aches and pain- stiff joints and loss of strength. But not Enoch- he was spared. When Enoch was 365 years old, he was walking with God and then he was not found on the earth. The word given in our text is taken up- Enoch was translated- raptured- caught up to heaven. Enoch had a change of location- where at one moment he was on earth and the next he was with the Father in glory. What Enoch received would be a promise and foretaste of what all of God’s people would one day be given. But to be clear, our passage does not say that Enoch was given the full and complete blessings of a physical resurrection in the body. John 3:13 says that no one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. Although Enoch was spared from death, we also know that the resurrection and glorification of the body has not yet been secured. It seems clear that since Jesus is the first fruit of the final resurrection of the body, Enoch only enjoyed being spared from death without his body being fully resurrected and glorified. Enoch is still in the intermediate state if you will. And as Heb. 11:13 says- these all died in faith. So Enoch’s body is no longer living on earth- and he was spared from the painful process of dying as he was immediately brought up to heaven. So, his soul went to be with the God while his body simply was no longer on earth. All of the other earthly fathers in Genesis 5 would have left behind a body that would be buried- but not Enoch. All others would grow tired and their eyes would grow dim. But not Enoch. He simply was no more to be found on earth. The point our passage is making is clear- Enoch did not see death because God took him. As I said before, death is still an enemy- the last enemy. Although death has been defeated, it is still a present reminder of fallen state. Paul would say- to live is Christ and to die is gain! But most people- even Christians- do not like the idea of dying! I had a friend in Canada who told me that he wanted to die with his boots on- he did not want to waste way in an old age home. But it is not up to us- we do not get to choose when and how we die. Many Christians do not fear death, but they don’t look forward to dying. The process is scarry- dying can be painful- it is humbling to see the strength and vigor of life fade into shadow and weakness. How many strong men and women have become dependent on others as they approach the sunset years. But not Enoch- by faith he walked with God and was no more.

**III. The Future Promised**

But it is possible for us to enjoy the benefit that Enoch had? Going back to our introduction question, it is possible to avoid death? Can we have a reasonable expectation of avoiding the process of death? Well, that depends on two things. First of all, do you share in the faith of Enoch? If you do, as Enoch did, trust in the promised Savoir who has now come into the world, you do have a promise of everlasting life! Even as Jesus promised to Martha in John 11, whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live; and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die! So if you trust in Jesus Christ, your soul, like Enoch’s has already been ransomed! By faith, your soul will never die- having already been spiritually raised to everlasting life! So it is possible to avoid true and lasting death if you are joined to Christ by faith! Already now you live and will never die! But what about the body- is it possible for your body to avoid death? Well, let’s read from I Thes. 4:13-18. Did you note the process and timing here? Is it possible for a Christian to avoid dying in the flesh? Yes, but only if you are living a life of faith when Jesus returns on the last day! Interestingly in Jude 1:14 we found that Enoch as a prophet foretold of a day when Jesus would return to judge the living and dead. It is this end that Enoch’s translation into glory foretells! It will be this return that will ultimately bring an end to death! If you are still alive when Jesus comes back, you will not die but rather you will be changed. But note the timing- your change will only take place after those who have already died are first resurrected and changed! In this way- those who have already died in the LORD-those who have fallen asleep- which includes all the saints listed in Heb. 11- these will be the first to receive the full glory of the physical resurrection. Then and only then those who are still living will be caught up to meet the Lord- changed and glorified like those who have gone before! So either way, we will not miss out! And that is why the church prays- Come, Lord Jesus! We want- we desire and pray for Jesus to come back and make our faith sight! We desire to see the departed saints changed into His glorious image- for death to be defeated and cast out- and for us to dwell together with the Lord for all eternity! We remember that Enoch was a man of faith- he walked with God! He was commended by God as a saint- who trusted in the promises of God! His life now stands as a witness- testifying to this truth! The Lord will come with ten thousand of his holy ones to execute judgment on the earth- to convict the ungodly and to vindicate His people. May we be found standing in true faith on that day!

To conclude, the life of Enoch is a powerful witness to true faith and its reward. As the blood of Abel still speaks today- so also the life of Enoch proclaims that those united to Christ by faith will live forever! As our theme states; Jesus Christ promises eternal life to those who believe as Enoch did. These will be spared from death. Enoch walked with God- but he is not now walking on this earth for the LORD took Him. May the promise of eternal life and a future resurrection be our hope and joy! For whether we are alive or asleep in the body when Jesus returns- our souls will always be alive in and with Him! Our God proves His power over the grave as He spares his son from death. And remember- Enoch was spared from death but God’s own Son was not! Jesus died on the cross and rose on the third day to secure eternal life for our bodies and our souls! May we all trust in Him alone as we walk by faith!