Research on: Translation of Enoch

Genesis 5:21-24

21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:

“*All the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years (Gen. 5: 23)*

Enoch was the great-grandfather of Noah. There is more about Enoch in the *Books of Enoch*. Though these books weren’t included in the Bible, the first *Book of Enoch* is quoted in the NT Book of Jude (1:14, 15).”

22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

“*Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Gen. 5:24)*

This is a close rendering of the Hebrew text. Enoch became the center of Jewish tradition as one who did not die, but was translated. See Heb. 11:5. Reflecting the figurative meaning of "walked" in Hebrew as referring to one's way of life, Moffatt's translation tells us that Enoch "lived close to God and then he disappeared, for God took him away;" while LXX expands on the idea in words cited by the author of Hebrews: "And Enoch was well-pleasing to God and was not found, because God translated him."

*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Heb. 11:5)*

Enoch’s lifespan of 365 years may seem long, but it is the shortest of these listed in the genealogy that fills that chapter. Enoch receives a singular commendation: He “walked with God.” Hebrews affirms that he was “translated”— *metatithemi* in Greek—a verb that also means “to transfer; to change;…to go or pass over.” He did “not see death.” It is interesting to notice that the writer of this epistle uses this very same Greek verb in the sense of "changed" (see Heb. 7:12), which suggests another possible translation for the present verse. (Cf. Thayer) The Greek word here rendered "translated" means literally "taken" or "taken up" in this context, so that the REB reads, "By faith Enoch was taken up to another life without passing through death; he was not to be found, because God had taken him, and it is the testimony of scripture that before he was taken he had pleased God." The familiar statement "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:24) was thus translated by the KJV translators on the basis of the Hebrew; but the LXX passage in Genesis used a word which means "pleased" and is repeated in Hebrews 11:5, indicating that the author was quoting from the Greek Version of the OT.

23 and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

“Enoch stands out in the genealogy of Genesis 5 as the only individual who “walked with God: and he was not”. The term translation – in Greek *metatithemi*, meaning transpose, change, or pass over – describes Enoch’s passing from earth without the death of his body.

Enoch and the prophet Elijah are the only two individuals in the Old Testament who did not experience physical death. To walk with God is described by one scholar as “to comply with his will, to concur with his designs and to workers together with him.” The author of Hebrews correlates Enoch’s faith and his favor with God: His faithful walking with God made him approved of God. Heb. 11:6 continues, “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” The Septuagint draws an even closer connection, translating “walked with God” as “was well-pleasing to God.” \_