

## Two Different Fates – Methuselah and Enoch

### **Introduction**

Genesis chapter 5 contains information about the early *patriarchs* – that is, the first 10 generations of men after Adam. Two of the most famous of those patriarchs are Methuselah and Enoch.

Both Methuselah and Enoch had very interesting events happen to them, at the very *end* of their lives. In other words, both of those patriarchs had interesting “fates”. Let’s see what Scripture has to say about the fates of those men.

### **Background on Methuselah**

The patriarch Methuselah has the distinction of being the longest-lived person recorded in Scripture - he lived to the ripe old age of **969**.

Recently, I discovered a relatively interesting fact about Methuselah. Here are some of the items that are listed about Methuselah and his descendants:

Genesis 5:25 (ESV):

<sup>25</sup>When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech.

So, Lamech was born 187 years after Methuselah was born.

Genesis 5:28-29a (ESV):

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son <sup>29</sup>and called his name Noah

Lamech was 182 when he became the father of Noah.  $182 + 187 = 369$ . Therefore, Noah was born 369 years after Methuselah was born.

Genesis 7:11-12 (ESV):

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. <sup>12</sup>And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Noah was 600 when the flood began.  $600 + 369 = 969$ . So, the flood began 969 years after Methuselah was born.

As mentioned above, Methuselah died 969 years after he was born. In other words, Methuselah died in the **exact same year** that the flood began.

As a result, it is *possible* that Methuselah - Noah’s grandfather - **was killed by the flood!**

Of course, it not *guaranteed* that Methuselah was killed by the flood; because he may have died earlier in that same year.

However, if Methuselah *did* die in the flood, then that may be one reason why *God* closed the door of the ark (rather than Noah closing it) - because if Noah had to close the door, then he would have had to condemn his own grandfather to drown in the flood.

There are two *other* items that arise, from this initial information about Methuselah.

### **Noah's other relatives**

First, it seems strange to me that *only* Noah - and his immediate family - were saved from the flood. One might expect that at least *one* other member of Noah's family - brothers and sisters, cousins, nephews and nieces, etc - would have been influenced by Noah's good behavior; and would therefore warrant being spared.

Of course, Scripture tells us that the time right before the flood was *extraordinarily* filled with wickedness:

Genesis 6:5-7 (ESV):

<sup>5</sup> The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. <sup>7</sup> So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Note verse 5: "**every** intention ... was **only** evil **continually**." If that statement is *literally* true, then the wickedness of that time period must have been *unimaginable* to us.

Even if that statement is not literally true, Scripture certainly seems to be emphasizing the point that wickedness and sin were rampant during that period, to an amazing extent. Of course, all of us are influenced by the people around us - so if everyone (or even most people) around us are constantly practicing sin, then that will have an extremely corrupting influence on us.

So, the extreme wickedness of that time period *may* explain why none of Noah's *other* relatives - other than his immediate family - were saved from the flood. In other words, all of his other relatives - including Methuselah - may have been "corrupted" by the sinfulness of that period.

### **What about Enoch?**

The second item regards another one of Noah's relatives: his *great*-grandfather, Enoch. Almost all of the patriarchs listed in Genesis 5 lived until they were over 900 years old. Enoch is the big *exception* in that group. Here is what Genesis 5 says about Enoch:

Genesis 5:21-24 (ESV):

<sup>21</sup>When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. <sup>22</sup>Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup>Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. <sup>24</sup>Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

So, Scripture tells us that "all the days of Enoch were 365 years" - far *lower* than the normal 900+ years of the rest of the patriarchs in Genesis 5.

Hebrews chapter 11 - the famous “heroes of the faith” chapter - has this to say about Enoch:

Hebrews 11:5 (ESV):

<sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

That verse states that “Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death”. That **seems** to indicate that Enoch ascended into *heaven* - so that he did *not* die *at all*. However, that understanding is contradicted by other Scripture.

First, Jesus explicitly told us that **no one** has ascended into heaven, *except* Jesus himself:

John 3:13 (ESV):

<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

The only person who has ascended into heaven is Jesus - **not** Enoch! So, Enoch *cannot* be in heaven now.

Also, Hebrews chapter 11 goes on to say that *all* of the heroes who are listed there - *including* Enoch - actually **died**:

Hebrews 11:13 (ESV):

<sup>13</sup>These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Some people may claim that the above verse only applies to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph – because those are the people who are mentioned *immediately* above that verse; and because the verse states that “they did not receive the things promised”. In other words, some people claim that that verse is only speaking about Abraham dying, without inheriting the promised land. However, take a look at what is stated in verses 39 to 40:

Hebrews 11:39-40 (ESV):

<sup>39</sup>**And all these**, though commended through their faith, **did not receive what was promised**,  
<sup>40</sup>since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

The individuals who are mentioned *immediately* prior to that passage are: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. Did *those* individuals inherit the promised land? In other words, did *they* live in the promised land, *after* it had been conquered by the Israelites? Yes! So, it certainly appears that Hebrews 11:39-40 – as well as Hebrews 11:13 – do not only apply to Abraham; instead, those verses apply to **all** of the heroes listed in that chapter – including Enoch!

As a result, it appears that Enoch actually *died* - just like all of the other heroes mentioned in that chapter (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.)

## Conclusion

So, what can we make of Hebrews 11:5, when it states “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death”?

Well, here are some facts about this overall subject:

1. Scripture tells us that Enoch “walked with God”, and “was commended as having pleased God”. As a result, I would expect that Enoch would live a very **long** life - that is, **longer** than his contemporaries lived.
2. All of the patriarchs listed in Genesis 5 lived for at least 777 years - *except* Enoch. Enoch had a much **shorter** life than all of the other patriarchs - which is exactly the **opposite** of what I would expect!
3. Apparently, **everyone** who lived during the time of Noah - *except* Noah and his immediate family - became corrupted by the wickedness of that time. As a result, **everyone else** who lived during that time was killed by the flood.
4. The fact that Enoch had such a *short* life means that he did **not** live during the time of Noah. As a result, Enoch did not have a chance to become “corrupted” by the wickedness of Noah’s time.

So, here is one *possible* understanding of what Hebrews 11:5 means:

“Since Enoch had great faith, God ended Enoch’s life *prematurely* - so that Enoch would not get *corrupted* by the wickedness of Noah’s time - and wind up being **killed by the flood.**”

In other words, when that verse states that Enoch “should not see death”, it *may* mean that Enoch “should not see death **in the flood.**”