

ARE ENOCH AND ELIJAH IN HEAVEN?

For centuries professing Christian churches have tried to get their converts to set their sights on going to heaven when they die. But, do the saved go to heaven when they die?

The references to Enoch being translated so that he would not see death and the prophet Elijah being carried into the heavens by a chariot of fire are often used in an attempt to prove that at death individuals go to heaven to live with God and the angels. However, do either of these mysterious disappearances support the popular teaching that at death a righteous person goes to heaven? Do righteous individuals actually live on after a physical death or do they just die?

The biblical answers to these questions may surprise you, because it is not what is popularly taught in most professing Christian churches today. Therefore, you might want to pay careful attention to the information contained in this broadcast about what the Bible actually says happens to a person after their death.

Who is in Heaven Now?

Before explaining where Enoch and Elijah actually went, it is important to review what the Bible says about who is in heaven. It is without question that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the heavenly host of angels are the inhabitants of heaven. But what about humans? Has anyone besides Jesus ever gone to heaven?

In the third chapter of John's gospel, while having a conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen; and you do not believe our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe them. If I tell you heavenly things, How can you believe them? No man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man . . ." (Jn.3:13 KJV).

How did Jesus know that no man had ascended to heaven? He knew this, because he came from heaven and knew who was and was not there.

The Jews of Jesus' time understood that no human had ever gone to heaven; they believed that, when a person died, they were dead, awaiting the judgment:

When Jesus told the Jews that if a person kept his teachings, he would never die. The Jews said to him " Now we know that you have a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and you say, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? . . ." (Jn.8:52-53 KJV).

In his first major evangelistic sermon after Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostle Peter said,;

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us to this day. . . For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34 KJV).

The apostle Peter made these statements about King David fifty days after Jesus had been resurrected. King David was still dead and buried; he had not been resurrected to life.

The Writer to the Hebrews

In Hebrews chapter 11, there is a very long list of righteous individuals who died without receiving God's promises:

The writer says this in speaking of these individuals:

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:" (vs.33-35 KJV).

If any are worthy to receive the promises of God, it would surely be these champions of faith: Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Moses whom God called his friends, Rahab who had faith that God would protect her for her kindness to the Israelite spies, and King David who loved God with great zeal. All of these are among the great men and women of faith. However, about thirty years after Jesus' death and resurrection when the letter to the Hebrews was written, these righteous individuals were still dead in their graves.

The writer says in verses 39 and 40:

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (vs.39-40 KJV).

Twice in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews, these righteous individuals are mentioned as having died without receiving the promises that God made to them.

The simple truth is that Abel, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, David, the righteous of all ages, and the prophets, including Enoch and Elijah, are not alive in heaven; they are dead awaiting the return of Jesus to resurrect them and give them their reward. See Matt.24:29-31; 1.Cor.15:50-54; 1.Thes.4:16-17; 2.Thes.2:1-8.

JUST WHO WAS ENOCH?

There are two Enochs mentioned in Genesis; however, it is the second Enoch (the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah) who many people think escaped death and went to heaven. Jude calls him the seventh from Adam, which does not mean that he was the seventh person from Adam. It means that he was the seventh preacher of righteousness from Adam, with Noah being the eighth preacher of righteousness. See 1.Chron.1:1-2; Jude 14-15; Lk.3:37-38; 2.Pet.2:5.

Enoch the Prophet

It is this Enoch who foretold the destruction of the world in which he lived (Gen.5:21-27) through the name of his son Methuselah, which can be interpreted as 'man of the spear/weapon' or 'at his death it shall be'. If we assume Methuselah's name means 'at his death it will be', it is easy to see that Methuselah's name pictured the end of that era of humanity.

Methuselah was 187 years old when Lamech, Noah's father, was born; Lamech was 182 years old when Noah was born, and Noah was 600 years old when the Great Flood came upon the earth (Gen.7:6). From Methuselah's birth to his death and the beginning of the flood is 969 years: "And according to Genesis chapter 5, Methuselah was 969 years old when he died" (Gen.5:27 KJV).

According to Jude, Enoch also predicted the end of the next era of humanity, when he foretold the return of Christ with the elect of God to establish the Kingdom of God on earth:

Jude said:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15 Para.). See Isa.9:6-7; 1.Thes.3:13; Rev.17:14.

What actually happened to Enoch?

In the Book of Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 5, the writer says:

"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 KJV).

The translators of the King James Bible interpreted two Greek words, 'metatithemi, (met-at-ith'-ay-mee) and 'metathesis'(met-ath'-es-is) which mean respectively 'put in another place' and 'change of place' into the English word 'translated.'

The translators of the King James Bible reasoning for doing this, was probably because the theology of their day taught that when righteous people died they were taken to heaven. However, by no stretch of the imagination can the two Greek words used in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 5, convey the concept of Enoch being transported to heaven.

Even a casual reading of Hebrews chapter eleven, reveals that none of the men and women mentioned, including Enoch, had yet received the promises given to the patriarchs and other righteous individuals (Heb.11:13, 39-40).

Enoch Walked With God

One thing that is evident about Enoch, is that, he had a very close and special relationship with the Creator God. This relationship was so special to God that he spared Enoch the agony of seeing the catastrophic events of the flood by mercifully ending his life:

The King James version of Genesis chapter 5, verses 22 through 24 says:

"Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God; then he was not, for God took him" (Gen.5:22-24 Para.).

The English phrase 'was not' is translated from a Hebrew word ('ayin'), which has no single meaning. Therefore, its meaning must always be determined by context. The word 'ayin' can never indicate that something continues to exist in one state or another; moreover, it cannot mean that something is transported to another place in time and space. In the context of Genesis chapter 5 verse 24, it can only mean that Enoch was not (That is, he ceased to exist as a living breathing human; he

was not alive from that point on).

If this word ('ayin') indicates something else and Enoch was removed from earth and taken elsewhere, he did not enter God's spiritual realm of existence, because the apostle Peter and the writer to the Hebrews clearly show that the righteous do not go directly to heaven after their death.

Enoch is Dead

Moses did not record that Enoch did not die, nor did he say that Enoch went to heaven. He merely says that "He was not . . . for God took him" (Gen.5:24). The writer to the Hebrews only says that Enoch had a change of place (Greek: 'metathesis') so that he would not see death, and that he was not found because he was put somewhere else (Greek: 'metatithemi').

Did Enoch escape physical death and go to heaven or is he dead waiting for the first resurrection? The scriptures clearly show that Enoch did not escape death; he is waiting for the first resurrection of the dead at Christ's coming just like all the righteous who have died through the ages.

It is obvious from the scriptures that Enoch is dead, but where did he go when he died? Jesus, Peter, and the writer of Hebrews say that none of those who died before Jesus became the perfect sacrifice have received the promises of God; therefore, the only place Enoch could have gone when he died was to his grave where all the righteous dead await the first resurrection. See 1.Cor.15:50-52; 1.Thes.4:13-17.

God Took Moses

The biblical record in Deuteronomy chapter 3, tells us that, God took Moses from among the living, and buried him so that he could not be found.

Both Moses and Enoch were both taken by God. Moses was a healthy vibrant individual when God took him from among the living, and Enoch was only 365 years old when God took him (he was barely a middle aged man according to the longevity standards of his time). Both of these men

could have lived many more years if God had not intervened and cut their lives short.

When Jesus said:

"Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death" (Jn.8:51 Para.). See also Jn.11:25-27, He was speaking of the second death which will come upon all the incorrigible wicked (Rev.20:14; 21:7-8).

The Bible clearly says that no man, other than Jesus, has ever gone to or is in heaven at this time. (Jn.3:13; Acts 2:29;34; Heb. chp.1).

It seems logical that the death that God did not want Enoch to see was the death of humanity in the Great Flood at the end of the age in which he lived (Gen.5:23; Heb.11:15).

Article Offer

One of the major reasons that people believe that a righteous individual goes directly to heaven, paradise, or someplace in-between, is the misconception that humans have an immortal soul that cannot die.

Because this belief in the immortality of the soul is extremely comforting, most people avoid thinking about the reality of death and therefore, the clear logical scriptures that speak of the state of the dead being something other than life are avoided like the plague.

Although the beliefs of Catholics and Protestants differ radically in many respects, both believe in the immortality of the soul. They also believe that humans only die physically, that is, the soul the sentient being remains alive in heaven, hell, or some transitory state in-between.

However, the belief of going to heaven or hell immediately after death cannot be proven from the Bible. Moreover, the Catholic concept of purgatory as a place or condition of spiritual cleansing is also a non-biblical teaching. Neither of these teachings are valid biblical concepts; they are simply figments of theological imagination, which were conceived

to explain the state of the dead in the context of humans having an immortal soul.

If you want to know whether or not humans have an immortal soul according to the Bible, get a copy of my studies, Eternal and Immortal life and the State of the Dead.

DID ELIJAH GO TO HEAVEN?

The Prophet Elijah first appears in scripture in 1st Kings chapter 17, verse 1 to pronounce a drought upon the House of Israel. Elijah was a prophet to the House of Israel during the reigns of King Ahab (between 874-854 B.C.) and his son Ahaziah who reigned for one year (between 853-852 B.C.). At the end of Ahaziah's reign and the beginning of Jehoram's reign in 852 B.C., the events surrounding the end of Elijah's ministry to the House of Israel occurred.

Beginning in verse 1 of 2nd Kings chapter 2:

"And it happened, when the Lord God was to take up Elijah to heaven in a tempest, Elijah and Elisha went from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, Please stay here, for the Lord God has sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said, As the Lord God lives, and your soul lives, I will not leave you. And they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets came out to Elisha, and said to him, Do you know that today the Lord God will take your lord from your head? and he said, Yes, I know. Keep silent" (vs.1-3 Para.).

It was no surprise to Elisha or the sons of the prophets that Elijah would be taken by God.

Continuing in verse 4:

"And Elijah said to him, Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord God has sent me to Jericho. and he said, As the Lord God lives, and your soul lives, I will not leave you. And they came into Jericho. And the sons of the prophets in Jericho came near to Elisha, and said to him, Do you know that today the Lord God will take away your lord from your head? And he said, Yes, I know. Keep silent" (vs.4-5).

Here we see that the sons of the prophets who lived in Jericho also knew that Elijah would depart from them.

Continuing in verse 6:

"And Elijah said to him, Please stay here, for the Lord God has sent me to the Jordan. And he said, As the Lord God lives, and your soul lives, I will not leave you. And they went on, both of them. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went on and stood afar off, across from them and they both stood by the Jordan" (vs.6-7).

Why did Elisha and these fifty men want to follow Elijah around the country? The reason is that they knew Elijah would be taken from them by God and this was a major event in all of their lives, because he was their teacher and leader. However, the scriptures do not say how all these people knew of this event; the scriptures only show that it was common knowledge that Elijah was about to be taken from them and that they wanted to be with him when it happened.

Continuing in verse 8:

"And Elijah took his cloak, and rolled it up, and struck the waters. And they were divided here and there, so that they both went over on dry ground. And it happened, when they were crossing, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you."

At this point in the narrative Elisha asks Elijah to confer a great amount of spiritual power on him to this Elijah replied, "You have asked a hard thing. If you shall see me taken from you, it shall be so to you. And if not, it shall not be."

As Elijah and Elisha were going along talking, a chariot and horses of fire came, and Elijah was taken up into the sky and he disappeared. This was an emotional moment for those who stood by because they were losing fellowship with Elijah who had been their teacher and prophet for many years:

Two Nations

In order to understand what happened to Elijah, it is important to understand that, at the time of Elijah's ministry, national Israel was separated into two distinct nations: the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Each of these had their own central governments. The House of Israel's king governed from Samaria, and the House of Judah's king governed from Jerusalem.

Where Did Elijah Go?

The answer to the question of where Elijah went after he was taken up into the sky in the chariot of fire is not as difficult as some think. Many believe that he was taken to heaven to be with God; however, this was not the case. Elijah was still alive and performing the duty of a prophet long after he was taken into the sky.

A Letter From Elijah

The second Book of Chronicles, chapter 21, contains a letter to King Jehoram from Elijah warning him about the punishment that God would give him and the nation of Judah which proves that Elijah did not go to heaven when he departed into the sky:

Beginning this letter in verse 11:

So says Jehovah, the God of your father David, Because you have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat, and in the ways of Asa the king of Judah, and you walk in the way of the kings of Israel, and caused Judah and the people of Jerusalem to commit fornication like the fornications of the house of Ahab; and also you have killed your brothers, the house of your father, who were better than yourself; behold the Lord God shall strike with a great destruction among your people, and among your sons, and among all of your goods; and you, with many sicknesses, with disease in your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness" (vs.12-15 Para.).

Elijah wrote this letter to king Jehoram of Judah, who began his reign in 848 B.C.. This is a very

important date because Elijah departed Israel by the chariot of fire at the end of Ahaziah's reign and the beginning of Joram's reign in 852 B.C.. This means that, even if Elijah wrote this letter at the beginning of Jehoram's reign, he could not have written it any earlier than four years after he had left Israel.

A careful reading of the account of the conversation between Elijah and Elisha reveals that Elisha asked for two thirds of the spirit that Elijah had. The reason he did not ask for more was that he knew Elijah would continue to live, and to ask for more power and authority than Elijah, would be the same as asking to replace him as the chief prophet. This was an unthinkable thing for Elisha, because he knew that his master Elijah would continue to live.

The four year gap between the reigns of King Joram of Israel and King Jehoram of Judah proves beyond a doubt that Elijah was still alive long after his departure from his office as prophet to the House of Israel:

The record in 2nd Chronicles chapter 21, beginning in verse 18 further documents the date of the Elijah's letter:

"And after this, the Lord God plagued him in his bowels by disease for which there was no healing; and it happened, from days to days, and as the time went out, the end of two years of days, his bowels fell out because of his sickness; so he dies of painful diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem; and he left without being desired, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the graves of the kings" (2.Chron. 21:18-20 Para.).

Jehoram's sickness lasted two years and he reigned eight years. If his sickness started shortly after Elijah pronounced the curse, Elijah's letter would have been written about ten years after he departed Israel.

The biblical evidence seems to show that Elijah lived at least 10 years after his departure from Israel. It is not evident how much longer he lived

than that. However, what is clear from the biblical record, is that, he did not go to the heaven where God is when he left Israel in the chariot of fire.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Although documentation in the books of Genesis, Kings and Chronicle clearly prove that Enoch and Elijah did not go to heaven where God is. Some will say that the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the Mount of transfiguration in Matthew 17 proves that Enoch and Elijah are in heaven. But does this account prove this?

Beginning in verse 1 of Matthew chapter 17:

"And after six days, Jesus took Peter and James, and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became white as the light. And, behold! Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. And answering Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you will, let us make three tabernacles here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And, behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found delight; hear him. And hearing the disciples fell on their face and were greatly terrified. And coming near, Jesus touched them and said, Rise up, and do not be terrified. And lifting up their eyes they did not see anyone except Jesus alone" (Matt.17:1-8 Para.).

Continuing in verse 9, Jesus explains what the disciples actually saw:

"And as they were going down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man is raised from the dead" (v9 Para.). See also Mk.9:2-10; Lk .9:28-36.

This was a vision of Jesus, Moses and Elijah in the glory of the resurrection, which has not actually occurred yet: it was a prophetic vision and not the reality of the moment. See Jn.3:13; Acts 2:29;34; Heb.11:33-35;39-40; 1.Thes.4:16-17; 2.Thes.2:1-8.

A vision is not a material thing, it is a graphic representation of the real thing. Peter, James, and John knew that Moses and Elijah were dead, which is why they asked Jesus in verse 10 about the coming of Elijah:

Verse 10 says:

"And His disciples asked him, saying, Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus said to them. Elijah indeed comes first, and shall restore all things. But I say to you, Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they desired. So also the Son of man is about to suffer by them. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them about John the Baptist" (Matt.17:10-13 Para.).

In Jesus' day, there was a belief that the prophet Elijah would actually be resurrected or reincarnated in another individual just before the first advent of the Messiah.

Before the conception of John the Baptist, an angel told his father, "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah . . ." (Lk.1:16-17 Para.). John was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was not going to actually be Elijah. John would be directed and empowered by the same spirit as Elijah.

Just as John came in the spirit and power of the office of Elijah and preceded the first ministry of Jesus, the prophet Elijah foretold by Malachi will precede the return of Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God. This prophet will not be Elijah incarnate; instead, like John the Baptist, he will come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Only a few who lived during the time of Jesus understood that John was the Elijah of Jesus' day. They only understood this because they had been told by Jesus. The prophet who will come in the end of this age to proclaim the return of Christ will be recognized by all of those who truly follow God. See Dan.12:9-10.

The Creator God said through the prophet Malachi:

"Behold I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction" (Mal.4:5-6 Para.).

Conclusions

It is evident from the scriptures that Moses, Elijah, Enoch, the prophets, and the righteous dead of all ages are not alive in heaven. The only human that has ever gone to heaven is the God who came from heaven to become a man and returned after his death and resurrection (see Jn.3:13; 14:2-3; Acts 1:10-11). All people, including the righteous who have died over the centuries, are still dead and await their resurrection after the return of Christ.

Simple logic should tell us, that if the righteous were to go directly to heaven at death to receive their reward, why would they need to be resurrected (1.Cor.15:52-53)? It simply does not make any sense to resurrect (restore to life) a person who is already alive. Moreover, all of the scriptures that speak in great detail about the resurrection of God's elect would be meaningless, and there would be no reason for Christ to return and bring the elect a reward, if they have already received it.

There are many sincere and dedicated people who believe that they are worshiping God in truth and that the reward of living a righteous life is to go off to heaven at death. However, this is not what the Bible says. Sincerity and dedication do not equal truth! Only truth is truth! Sincerity only shows the attitude with which people do what they do.

Only God determines what truth is and is not. The Bible teaches that "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro.14:12 KJV).

Its apparent that many people are truly dedicated to their religious precepts, but this does not mean that they understand the truth of God. The sad fact, is that, most people today who profess to believe in

the Bible, have been misled by false prophets and teachers, who teach a counterfeit of God's truth.

If this were not true there would only be one truth being taught and only one unified body teaching this one truth. Instead there are more than 20,000 differing associations and organizations who profess to teach biblical truth, but they all differ in what they believe and teach as truth. Logic tells us that, because both the Old and New Testaments record that there is only one faith and only one method of worship that is acceptable to God, if any one of these thousands of differing groups is correct in their worship of God and their understanding of what is written in the Bible, then all the others are incorrect and stand condemned as followers and teachers of a false system of worship and belief.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HUMANS DIE?

The Bible describes two major events that take place at the death of a human being and these events are of extreme importance to the final destiny of each individual, because each event decides whether or not each individual will have a future existence.

What the Bible says about the physical and spirit record and the events that happen to humans after death is very different from what is taught by the religions of this world. According to the Bible, after a human dies, there are two records of their existence: one that is kept in heaven and one that is kept on earth.

NO MENTAL ACTIVITY AFTER DEATH

At death the cerebral functions cease; there is no more thought process, no reward, no memory, no knowledge, and no access to this world. Death terminates an individual's interaction with this physical dimension of existence.

The Psalmist wrote:

"Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for your mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of you: in the grave who shall give you thanks?" (Psa.6:4-5 KJV).

The Psalmist also wrote:

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psa.146:3-4 KJV).

Solomon wrote:

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun" (Ecc.9:5-6 NIV).

Solomon also said:

"Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go" (Ecc.9:10 KJV)

It is obvious by the abundant scriptural proof that all conscious thought and life-functions cease at death. The scriptures that speak of human speech, desires, and admonitions after death are either poetic metaphors or analogies, or in some cases they are speaking of demonic impersonations of dead people in some cases.

There is nothing throughout the entire Bible which indicates that the human life function continues in one state or another after death. Moreover, the Bible indicates just the opposite; it clearly shows that the physical life of a human is a temporary condition, which can be terminated forever.

I see that my time is up, but if you want to know more about what the Bible actually says about heaven, hell, the state of the dead, or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org.

File CB43 6/07

