
Words of Truth

Did Enoch And Elijah Go To Heaven?

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When you study the Scriptures you learn quickly that it can be easy to reach the wrong conclusion on something if you do not thoroughly study it out. When Jesus talked with the erring Sadducees, He told them their error was a result of their not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matthew 22:23-33). We must be careful. We have to handle God's word properly (II Timothy 2:14-18; cf. Galatians 1:6-9 and Revelation 22:18-19).

The inspired Apostle Peter wrote this: *"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen"* (II Peter 3:15-18). We do not want to be guilty of ignorantly twisting the Scriptures. As you just read, the end result of that is destruction.

In the Scriptures, we read of a man named Enoch. It is written that Enoch "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24). Walking with God simply means that such a person is obedient to God, following God's pattern, etc. (Micah 6:8 and I John 2:3-6). That same Scripture (Genesis 5:24) says that Enoch, "was not; for God took him." That statement only means that Enoch was no longer living in this world. It is used in similar ways about other people (i.e. Genesis 42:36 and Matthew 2:16-18). In the book of Hebrews we read: *"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"* (Hebrews 11:5). All of these things often lead people to question if Enoch was taken into Heaven with God.

Like Enoch, even more easily confusing statements made about the departure of Elijah from this world lead people to question if he is in Heaven. Notice: *"And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal... And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing:*

nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:1; 9-11). So, for our brief study, are Enoch and Elijah currently with the Father, Son, The Holy Spirit, and the angels in Heaven right now?

No Man Is In Heaven

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all in “the” Heaven (Matthew 5:45; 48, Matthew 6:9, John 17:1, Acts 1:1-11, Acts 7:54-60, Philippians 3:20, I Thessalonians 1:10, II Thessalonians 1:7, I Peter 1:12, and I John 5:7). There are angels in “the” Heaven (Mark 12:25 and I Peter 3:21-22). Regarding men in Heaven, this is stated: *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him... And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven”* (John 1:18 and John 3:13). Even the chapter that speaks of Enoch being translated later goes on to state: *“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”* (Hebrews 11:39-40).

Words have different meanings in different contexts. We should know this. One man goes to a football game for his favorite team and says [ignorantly], “I have died and gone to Heaven”. Would anyone think he means that literally? A person says, “that smells heavenly”. No one would think he has been to Heaven or that there is a smell that is from heaven. Likewise, we cannot conclude that every time the Scriptures use the word translated “heaven” that we are talking about the eternal home of our Father.

“Heaven” Means Different Things

Sometimes the word translated “heaven” should just be understood to mean the sky above us (Genesis 1:1-15, Exodus 20:11, Deuteronomy 1:10, Deuteronomy 4:19, Job 35:11, Psalms 8:1-8, II Peter 3:7-12, etc.). Elijah was taken into the sky, not into Heaven. Enoch was translated, but not into the Heaven we are all striving to call our eternal home. Don’t get caught up in words. Being “translated” doesn’t mean someone has gone into Heaven (ex. Colossians 1:12-14). No person has been taken into the eternal Heaven as of yet.

Conclusion

The Apostle Paul wrote of a “third heaven” (II Corinthians 12:1-6) referring to paradise (Luke 23:39-45) [a.k.a. hades – Luke 16:19-31]. Therefore, each time you read of heaven, there are at least three possibilities (the sky, the eternal Heaven, and paradise) that you could be reading about. Be careful to rightly discern what is really under discussion.