

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Enoch: Where was He Taken?

Elsewhere, I have offered the idea that Elijah was taken up in an atmospheric event and lived out his days someplace else on earth. Now, Enoch is the other biblical figure that many are taught never died, for he was taken up to heaven. In other words, according to traditional teaching, Enoch is alive and well before the throne of God. However, given that scripture cannot contradict itself, we must conclude that, just like Elijah, Enoch was not taken up to heaven either. He remained on earth. This leads to the obvious question: What happened to Enoch? Of all the men in the Bible, only Enoch and Noah are described as ones who *walked with God* (Genesis 5.24; 6.9). However, Enoch's life is recorded unlike any other in scripture.

So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (Genesis 5.23-24 NASB)

All we are told in the book of beginnings is that Enoch was not. God took him, but we are not told where. It is as if he walked before God for 365 years and then his history stopped. He was not! What does this mean? Where was he taken? Everyone assumes it was to heaven, but scripture does not state this as a fact; we have to assume so or read it into the verse (as opposed to out from it) to make the statement. However, our saying so does not make it a fact. The next place we read of Enoch is in the Hebrews epistle.

By faith Enoch was transferred [metatithemi], so as not to be acquainted with death, and was not found, because God transfers him. For before his transference he is attested to have pleased God well. (Hebrews 11.5 CLV)

The *Concordant Literal Version* reads differently than most translations, but perhaps it gives us a clearer picture of what happened to Enoch. The Greek root word *metatithemi* is translated as *transferred*; implying Enoch was simply transferred from one place to another. The same word is used in reference to bones being transferred to Shechem (Acts 7.16) and one's thinking being transferred to a different evangel or deserting the true gospel for a false gospel (Galatians 1.6). These examples hardly give the impression of one being taken up, especially the reference to transferring dead bones.

The second thing to note about this verse is that Enoch was not acquainted with death. Genesis simply states Enoch was not, but Hebrews states Enoch was transferred so as not to be acquainted with death. The word *acquainted* means "to perceive." In other words, Enoch did not perceive death. Other translations state that Enoch was translated so that he would not see death. Why did the writer state it this way? Why didn't he just state clearly that Enoch did not die? Actually, the writer of the Hebrews epistle, in an indirect way, does claim that Enoch died in faith.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (Hebrews 11:13 NASB)

The phrase *all these* must refer to all the names that precede this verse, from Abel to Sarah, which obviously includes Enoch. In other words, Enoch is included in the *all these died in faith*. Based on this verse alone, we must conclude that Enoch died. But to where was he transferred? We are not told, so we are left to speculate a bit. Here are a few options.

First, perhaps there were wicked men who sought Enoch's life, and God transferred him beyond their reach and beyond his immediate family. After all, Enoch preached judgment to his generation, which would have made him a very unpopular preacher in a day in which the earth was filled with violence and all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth (Genesis 6:11-13).

And "the seventh from Adam," Enoch, also prophesied to these men, saying, Behold, "the Lord came with" myriads "of His saints," "to do judgment against all, and to rebuke all" the ungodly of them concerning all their ungodly works which they ungodly did, "and concerning all the hard things ungodly sinners spoke against Him." I Enoch 1:9; 5:4; 60:8 (Jude 1:14-15 LITV)

All his family knew was that this righteous man was being sought by evil men, and all of a sudden, he was not there. There was no body and no sign of Enoch. So, his days were numbered at that point. Like Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Philip (Acts 8:39), Enoch could have been supernaturally transported (transferred) to another place on earth that kept him from evil men.

Second, some have speculated that Enoch was actually murdered by the evil men of his day, for he only lived 365 days, which was a rather early death compared to the longevity of his relatives who lived into their 800's. According to this view, it is speculated that God removed his body and buried it, just as He later did with Moses (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). An offshoot of this view is that Enoch was not murdered but that God simply caused him to fall asleep instantly without experiencing the death process, and then He buried his body. Enoch, like the millions that followed, waits for resurrection.

At any rate, we really do not know for sure what happened to Enoch, but it is safe to state that he is dead and did not go to heaven. He died just as all born of Adam's race have died, for *in Adam all die* (1 Corinthians 15:22). No human has ascended to heaven except Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man (John 3:13), and no human has immortality except the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

Now, there is one other question regarding both Elijah and Enoch: Are they types of raptured saints? Many teach that they are, but they see them as types being raptured to heaven. I agree that they could be types of *snatched away* (*rapture* not the best term) saints but not as ones taken up to heaven, but as ones who also experience an atmospheric event much like Elijah. I believe the snatching away to meet the Lord in clouds, in air of those asleep in Jesus and those alive in Him when He comes (1 Thessalonians 4:17) presents the same picture as Elijah and Philip being transported in air. When King Jesus comes a second time, the saints will meet Him in the atmosphere of earth and then escort Him to earth, as was done in ancient days with rulers as they were about to enter a city—dignitaries of the city went out to greet the ruler and escort him into the city. Also, in the character of Enoch who was pleasing to God, it could be said of those participating in the resurrection and transfiguration at Jesus' consummational arrival that they too will be pleasing to God, for they more than conquered through Him who loved us.

Finally, a closing thought about Enoch's 365 years. Perhaps it pushes the envelope a bit, but I will give it a try anyway. We know that with God one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day (2 Peter 3:8), and that no man has ever lived a full thousand years or one full day of God or God's day. The most days of life are attributed to Methuselah at 969 years. However, Enoch lived 365 years. Bear with me for moment. According to scientists, since Adam, the earth has continually rotated around the sun approximately every 365.25 days, thus giving us a 365-day calendar (except leap year). Applying the day-year principle, could we not say that man's day is 365 years, in contrast to God's day of 1,000 years. Enoch lived his life fully before God, or if you will, before the Son (Sun) of God. His life of 365 years rotated around the Son. This is what made him pleasing to God. This is what man's day was meant to be like. Could we conclude that Enoch being transferred by God at 365 years signifies a life that fully rotates around (given to) the Son and that this is what man's day is to be like while we live in mortal bodies as we wait for immortality and entrance into God's day? I will leave it for you to decide.