Eternal Life with Elijah, Enoch, and Moses

Summary

Elijah went up in a whirlwind. Enoch was "translated." Moses appeared, glorified, on a mountain. So why does Yah'shua say plainly that "no man hath ascended up to heaven"? This article resolves the apparent contradiction.

- Three different "heavens" distinguished in Scripture: the earth's atmosphere, outer space, and Yahweh's own throne-heaven.
- Elijah's whirlwind "ascension" read as only into the first (atmospheric) heaven, transferring his prophetic office to Elisha rather than granting immortality.
- Enoch's "translation" read as relocation and burial by Yahweh in an undisclosed location (Hebrews 11:13: Enoch "died in faith" without "receiving the promises").
- The Transfiguration's appearance of Moses and Elijah read as an explicitly-labeled prophetic "vision" (Matthew 17:9), not a literal appearance of two already-resurrected men.
- The conclusion: none of the three has yet entered Yahweh's own heavenly presence.

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The Bible says that "**Enoch** was transported that they should not see his death" *(Hebrews 11:5),* "**Elijah** went up by a whirlwind into heaven" *(2 Kings 2:11)*, and "Yahweh took him" *(Genesis 5:24)*, and **Moses** appeared in the transfiguration with Yah'shua *(Matthew 17:3)*. Do these scriptures prove that the three were in heaven *(the throne of Yahweh)* before Yah'shua was sent to Earth as a man?

John 3:13, "And **no man hath ascended up to heaven**, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

These words were spoken by Yah'shua himself at a time when only the Messiah had seen Yahweh *(John 1:18)*. And how did He know that no man had ascended up to heaven...the throne of Yahweh? Because he came from there! Therefore, what heaven did Elijah go to? What about Enoch and Moses?

Elijah

Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind "into heaven" *(2 Kings 2:1)* by "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire" *(verse 11).* Yet, over nine hundred years after this event, Yah'shua Himself said "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 3:13).* Is this a bible contradiction? Did Elijah really ascend to heaven where Yahweh's throne is, even though Yah'shua said he didn't? If Elijah did not go to heaven, then where did he go?

Three Heavens

The Scripture mentions **three** heavens *(2 Corinthians 12:2)*, not just one!

The first heaven is earth's atmosphere where birds fly *(Genesis 1:20, Jeremiah 4:25; 34:20, Lamentations 4:19, Zephaniah 1:3).* One of the Hebrew words for 'heaven' is *shamayim*. This same word is translated as 'sky' in the Scripture, as can be seen by comparing Genesis 7:3, "fowls also of the air," with Genesis 7:23, "fowl of the heaven." The word 'sky' and 'heaven' are used interchangeably from the same Hebrew word *(Psalm 8:8).* So the first heaven is synonymous with 'heights' or 'elevations.'

Here are other examples to illustrate the first heaven. Exodus 19:20 says Yahweh was on top of Mount Sinai when he called Moses up there, and Yahweh describes Mount Sinai as 'heaven' *(Exodus 20:22, Deuteronomy 4:36).* Here, everything above the ground is called 'heaven'.

Another example of the first heaven is in Amos 9:1-3, where Yahweh states that at the time of this judgment, nobody will be able to flee away *(verse 1),* even "though they climb up to heaven" *(verse 2).* This "heaven" is defined in the next verse, verse 3, as climbing to the top of Mount Carmel.

Another example is where the Scripture speaks of the "dew of heaven" *(Genesis 27:28,39, Deuteronomy 33:28, Daniel 4:15-33; 5:21).* The first heaven, from which dew comes, means the atmosphere, where the clouds and the wind roam. Therefore, everything above the ground is called 'heaven."

Another Hebrew word for the first heaven is '*shachaq*.' This same word for heaven *(Psalm 89:6,37)* is also translated as 'sky' or 'skies' *(Deuteronomy 33:26; Job 37:18; Psalm 18:11)*, and as 'clouds' *(Job 35:5; 36:28; Psalm 36:5; 68:34, Pro. 3:20; 8:28).*

The second heaven is outer space where the planets and stars exist *(Genesis 1:14-17; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4, Deuteronomy 1:10; 17:3; Psalm 8:3, Jeremiah 8:2; Matthew 24:29).* Usually the term "host of heaven" or "firmament of the heaven" is used to describe this second heaven.

The third heaven is literally called "the third heaven" in 2 Corinthians 12:2. This third heaven is what the Messiah calls his "Father's house" *(John 14:2),* and both the Messiah and the Apostle Paul call it "paradise" *(Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, Revelation 2:7).*

This is where Yahweh and the heavenly sanctuary exist *(1 Peter 3:22).* This third heaven is also known as the "heaven of heavens" *(Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27, 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalms 148:4)*, "The heavenly Jerusalem" *(Galatians 4: 26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12*), the "kingdom of heaven" *(Matthew 25:1, James 2:5),* the "eternal kingdom" *(2 Peter 1:11),* the "eternal inheritance" *(1 Peter. 1:4, Hebrews 9:15),* and the "better country" *(Hebrews 11:14,16)*. The fact that there are more than one 'heaven' can be shown by Psalm 115:16, "The heaven, even the heavens, are Yahweh's." There are obviously two different 'heavens' being addressed in this one verse.

Since Elijah could not have gone to the heaven of Yahweh's throne, then to which heaven did he go? He was not taken to Yahweh's heavenly throne *(as some imagine).* He was actually taken into this earth's atmosphere, the first heaven. There could be no whirlwind in any other place but in the atmosphere surrounding this earth.

Why Taken Up?

What was the reason for this unusual act of Yahweh? Why did he take Elijah up into the atmosphere? Was it to make him immortal? No! The Scripture says no word about that! In Hebrews 11:13,39, we read about the prophets who lived by faith and died without receiving the promises. So Elijah was not to be made Immortal, for that would give him pre-eminence above Yah'shua. But what does the Scripture reveal as the reason for this removal? 2 Kings 2:3 and 5 has the answer.

Notice what the sons of the prophets said to Elisha: "Knowest thou that Yahweh will take away thy master from thy head to day?" *(2 Kings 2:3)*. Elijah was the leader of the sons of the prophets in that day. Yahweh had sent Elijah as His prophet to wicked king Ahab and to his son Ahaziah. Now Yahweh wanted Elisha to direct His work, as Ahaziah the king had died and a new king was ruling. So what did Yahweh do?

He could not allow Elijah to be among the people with Elisha directing the work now. That would have been the same as disqualifying him. Yahweh never takes an office from a man when that man has been performing his duty well. The only thing Yahweh could do would have been to remove Elijah so that another would fulfill the office. This Yahweh did do. When he was taken up, Elijah's mantle dropped from him and Elisha picked it up *(2 Kings 2:12-15)*. And what did the mantle mean? In *Clarke's Commentary* we note that it was "worn by prophets and priests as the simple insignia of their office" *(Vol.2, p.484).*

The purpose of Yahweh in removing Elijah was to replace him with another man who would occupy Elijah's office in Israel for another fifty years. This work had to start under a new king, for Ahaziah had just died, and Elijah was already aging. So, as not to disqualify Elijah in the sight of the people, Yahweh took him away allowing the mantle which signified the office of Elijah to drop into the hands of Elisha. Thus, Yahweh preserves the name and office of His prophet.

Where did Elijah go?

This has been the perplexing problem to so many. He did not ascend to the throne of Yahweh, because Yah'shua said so! Also, notice in 2 Kings 2:3 and 5 that the sons of the prophets knew Elijah would be taken away by Yahweh in advance. They believed that Elijah was going to be taken to another location, which is why they were fearful that the Spirit of Yahweh might have dropped him "upon some mountain, or into some valley" *(2 Kings 2:16)*. Elisha knew that Yahweh would preserve Elijah from falling, but at their insistence he permitted men to go in search for him, to no avail. And Yahweh did not say that Elijah was to die at that time. If he were, Elisha could have assumed his new office without the removal of Elijah, for we know that Elisha died in office after fulfilling his duty *(2 Kings 13:14).*

The new king of Israel was another son of Ahab, Jehoram, or Joram as he is sometimes called. The beginning of his reign marked the year of Yahweh's removal of Elijah *(2 Kings 1:18 and 3:1).* During this king's reign, Elisha was the recognized prophet of Yahweh *(2 Kings 3:11)*. In the fifth year of Joram king of Israel, the son of the king of Judah began to reign along with his father in Judah *(2 Kings 8:16).* His name also was Jehoram. The first thing he did to establish his kingdom rule was to put his relatives to the sword lest they should claim the throne from him *(2 Chronicles 21:4)*. For nearly six years he followed the ways of the nations about him and did evil in the sight of Yahweh.

Almost ten years had now expired since Elijah was taken from the people. After this wicked rule by the Jewish king, Yahweh chose Elijah to write a letter and have it sent to the king! The contents of the letter are found in 2 Chronicles 21:12-15. From the wording of this letter, it is clear that Elijah wrote it after these events had occurred, for he speaks of them as past events, and of the diseases as future. Two years after the king became diseased the king died, having reigned only eight short years *(2 Chronicles 21:18-20).*

This proves that the letter was written about ten years after Elijah had been taken to another location by the whirlwind. Yahweh used Elijah to convey the message because he was the prophet of Yahweh in the days of the present king's father, and the son was not going in the ways of his obedient father, Jehoshaphat.

This letter proves that he was alive someplace else. The Bible does not reveal how much longer Elijah lived after writing the letter, but it does say that it is appointed for all men to die once *(Romans 5:12,14, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Hebrews 9:27).*

A similar incident to Elijah's took place in Acts 8:39,40. Philip was caught up into the first heaven, as Elijah was, and was transported to another location approximately 30 miles away. Another similar incident happened to Ezekiel, in which His Spirit took him away *(Ezekiel 3:12).* His Spirit lifted him up "between the earth and the heaven" and brought him "to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate" *(Ezekiel 8:3). Afterwards, His Spirit took him up to Chaldea (Ezekiel 11:24).*

Elijah may not have been found because he was transported further away than the fifty men searched *(2 Kings 2:17).* And, as far as being taken into heaven where Yahweh's throne is, we can know that neither Elijah nor Enoch nor Moses were taken into Yahweh's heavenly abode, because Yah'shua said, while he was on this earth, that "no man hath ascended to heaven" *(John 3:13), and "No man hath seen Yahweh at any time" (John 1:18).*

Enoch

Some people believe that Enoch did not die but was taken directly to heaven where Yahweh is. But, Enoch eventually died, as all humans die. How can we know? The apostle Paul mentioned the circumstances associated with Enoch in Hebrews 11:5, along with other men of faith, and then stated: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (Hebrews 11:13). Yes, Enoch died, and he did not receive the promise of heaven *(verse 16)* at the time the book of Hebrews was written.

Based on Hebrews 11:5,13 and Yah'shua's statement in John 3:13, "no man hath ascended up to heaven", how are we to understand the account of Enoch? Genesis 5:21-24 says that Enoch's days, alive on Earth, ended at 365 years old. The question is, did he die, was he taken to heaven alive, or was he transported to another location on Earth?

Let us examine the **bold** phrase in Genesis 5:24, where it says, "And Enoch walked with Yahweh: and **he was not**; for Yahweh took him" and compare the same Hebrew phrase in:

Psalms 37:36, "Yet he passed away, and, lo, **he was not**: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Psalms 39:13, "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and **be no more**."

The Hebrew for the phrases in **bold** are the same Hebrew as Genesis 5:24. As in the Psalms, the phrase means the person "passed away" or would eventually die. Let's look at the same phrase in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 42:13, "And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and **one is not**." This was spoken by his brothers of Joseph. What'd they mean by "is not"?

Genesis 44:20, "And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; **and his brother is dead**, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him." Here, the brothers recount their previous discussion about Joseph with Pharaoh. When they first said, "and one is not," they meant Joseph "is dead."

Matthew 2:18, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because **they are not**." Where were Rachel's children? Dead.

Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should **not see death**; and was not found, because Yahweh had translated him:" Does the phrase that says Enoch "should not see death" mean Enoch never died? Hebrews 11:13, "These all died *[including Enoch]* in faith." But not only that, verse 13 goes on to say that they did not receive the promises. One of the promises was a heavenly country *(verse 16)*. If Enoch were in heaven, wouldn't he have received that promise?

Psalms 89:48, "What man is he that liveth, and shall **not see death**? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah." Why would this Psalmist ask such a question concerning physical death if he believed Enoch did not see a physical death? The fact is, the Psalmist believed Enoch was in the grave and therefore asked this question.

So what does the phrase "should not see death" mean? Notice it is not in the present tense, that he "did not see" death, but that he "should not see death." John 8:51, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall **never see death**" *[see also John 11:26].* This phrase must mean "the second death," since all the Apostles kept Yah'shua's sayings and yet died the first death.

Based on Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men <u>once to die</u>, but after this the judgment:" and Hebrews 11:13, "These <u>all died</u> in faith, not having received the promises," we must conclude that Enoch died the first death. To believe Enoch did not die is to deny the plain word of many other scriptures as well. For example, Romans 5:12, "...so death passed upon <u>all men</u>, for that all have sinned" and Romans 5:14, "...death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned." Are we to believe that Enoch did not sin? Are we to believe that a man who was not yet cleansed of sin by the blood of Yah'shua could enter heaven and dwell in Yahweh's presence?

<u>Enoch's translation</u>

But what about his translation in Hebrews 11:5? Does that mean he didn't die? That's what most people carelessly assume without proof. The Bible does not say that Enoch went to heaven when he was translated. Instead, it says he "was not found." According to *Strong's, Thayer's and Bullinger's Greek Lexicons*, "**translate**" means "to put or place in another place, to transport, to transfer." **Nowhere in the Scripture does 'translate' mean to make immortal!**

The same Greek word is rendered "carried over" in Acts 7:16 where Jacob's body was ‘translated’ or ‘transported’ to Sychem, where he was buried! The Scriptures say Jacob was translated to the place of burial! Yahweh took Enoch and buried him somewhere so as not to be found, just as he did with the body of Moses in Deuteronomy 34:6. No man knows where Moses' or Enoch’s grave is. Yahweh hid them for reasons known only to Him.

Notice another proof that ‘translate’ does not mean to make immortal. Paul wrote that the Father "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath **translated** us into the kingdom of his dear Son" *(Colossians 1:13).* The apostle Paul says that he was already translated, even though he was still physically alive! Although he was once part of the darkness of this world, he was translated, removed from darkness, into the light of the kingdom of Yahweh while he was physically alive!

At the age of 65, Enoch had a son named Methuselah. But how long did Enoch walk with Yahweh?

Genesis 5:22, "And Enoch walked with Yahweh after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters."

So, Enoch followed Yahweh’s ways for three hundred years. Notice that the Scripture does not record that Enoch is still walking with Yahweh. It says that Enoch **WALKED** with Yahweh for three hundred years, and not one year more. Why? Because "all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years" *(Genesis 5:23).* Paul says, in Colossians 1:10, "That ye might walk worthy of Yahweh." Enoch walked with Yahweh and pleased Yahweh. This is what Genesis 5:22,24 means when it says "Enoch walked with Yahweh."

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 says that all die and all shall be resurrected, but **Messiah must be first in the order**. Enoch could not possibly have preceded him, especially if he were still flesh and blood as it says in verses 49-52.

The Transfiguration

The only remaining texts that puzzle people are those relative to the appearances of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration with Yah'shua *(Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10, Luke 9:28-36).* After the Transfiguration, Yah'shua said, while leaving the mountain, "Tell the **vision** to no man" *(Matthew 17:9).* Yah'shua calls the transfiguration a **vision**! A vision is not a material reality, but a supernatural picture observed by the eyes. The same Greek word for "vision" was used of Peter's vision of the unclean beasts being made clean *(Acts 10:3,17,19; 11:5).* They were not real but a supernatural picture. In the case of the transfiguration it was a prophetic vision which would take place in the future. Peter, James and John saw the Son of Man glorified in the Kingdom through a prophetic vision. Here are other examples:

Acts 16:9, "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." This also is something that was to happen in the future.

Acts 18:9-10, "Then spake Yahweh to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." Yah'shua is telling Paul that, in the near future, no man shall hurt him.

Visions should not be interpreted as literal. For example, look at Genesis 37:5-10. When Joseph dreamed that his "sheaf arose, and stood upright," and his brothers' sheaves bowed down to Joseph's sheaf *(verse 7), or when* Joseph dreamed that "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars" bowed down to Joseph *(verse 9),* is this literal? No. This was a prophetic vision of something that was to occur in the future; when Joseph's mother, father, and brothers would bow down to him as King.

Both Moses and Elijah were still in their graves, but in vision both they and Yah'shua were seen in glory of the resurrection, an event to which Moses and Elijah have not yet attained at that time *(Hebrews 11:39).* The vision was granted the disciples after Yah'shua had spoken of the glory of immortality in the coming Kingdom.

Moses

There cannot be any doubt that Moses died and was buried *(Deuteronomy 34:5-6).* Therefore, for him to have been in heaven while Yah'shua was still in the flesh, Moses had to be resurrected from the dead, receive eternal life, and "put on immortality" *(1 Corinthians 15:53).* But the Bible is clear that Yah'shua had to be the first one to be resurrected to eternal life. 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now is the Messiah risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

The Apostle Paul said Yah'shua had to be "the firstborn from the dead" and "have the preeminence" *(Colossians 1:18).* If anyone preceded Yah'shua, then he wasn't the firstborn from the dead. Since some people believe Enoch and Elijah did not die, but that Moses did die, then that would mean Moses had the preeminence over Yah'shua.

Therefore, since Yah'shua had to be the first to be resurrected unto eternal life and the first to ascend into heaven and stand before Yahweh, Moses could not possibly have been in heaven while Yah'shua was on earth.

Hebrews 11:23-28 talks about Moses living by faith. Now read verses 39-40, which say that Moses did not receive the promise of a resurrection unto eternal life and perfection. This should settle any disputes to the contrary.

What about Michael and Satan disputing about Moses' body? Jude 9 does not say Michael won the dispute and then took Moses to heaven. Since there is no mention of heaven here, nor in the entire book of Jude, we should not assume he was taken there.

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