

Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 22

Last time we looked at the parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus and saw that it was a reply to those who ridiculed Jesus for teaching that it was impossible to serve both God and riches. *“The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves”* and refused to repent, *“not having been baptized”* by John - **Luke 7:29**. They also refused to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, although **Moses and the prophets - Luke 16:31**, had clearly foretold what Jesus was doing.

- Jesus chose to give his warning in a parable which was based on one of their superstitions, “the Bosom of Abraham.” In fulfilment, Caiaphas and his family tried to kill Lazarus rather than accept the fact that Jesus had raised him from the dead - **John 12:10** - to provide indisputable evidence that Jesus was sent by God. Neither would they accept the later testimony of witnesses that Jesus had risen on the third day - **Luke 16:31; Matthew 28:12**.

We now turn to consider another widely held opinion - that Enoch went to heaven. Irenaeus, a Christian theologian of the 2nd century, for example: “Enoch was a man raised to heaven by pleasing God...” - Book iv, 16, 2. This is based on **Genesis 5:24**, *“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”* and **Hebrews 11:5**, *“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death...”*

- Does this mean that Enoch did not die? That would be to contradict Paul’s summary, that *“death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam”* - **Romans 5:14**.

That this encompasses Enoch is shown in **verse 12** *“...through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* Enoch is nowhere called sinless, neither is any other man except Jesus. So Enoch must have also died .

- Completely missing is any reference to Enoch having travelled to heaven. **Hebrews 11** begins with the names of seven people whose spiritual attainments were *“by faith”*. Of them it says, **13** *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises...”*

Enoch is the second name in that list. So Enoch must also have died. Jesus told Nicodemus, *“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven...”* - **John 3:13**, clearly showing that whether Enoch was still alive, or he died - which he had to, he could not have gone into heaven.

- So for Enoch to *“not see death”* must mean something other than to “not die”. **Jude 4** opens up the picture when speaking of the *“ungodly men”* in his day *“who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”* in opposition to the teaching of Jesus.

Jude says that **14** *“Enoch...prophesied about these”* same sort of *“men also, saying...the Lord comes... 15 to execute judgment on...all who are ungodly...”* The violent attitude in those times was expressed by Lamech, *“...I have killed a man for wounding me... 24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold”* - **Genesis 4:23**.

- At a time when “the earth was” being *“filled with violence”* - **Genesis 6:11**, the men addressed by Enoch in his prophesying would want Enoch dead. It seemed that his doom was sealed, but he could not be found! *“he was not, for God took him”*.

He was taken *“that he should not see death”* - so escaping the vengeful torture that these ungodly men had in store for him, before they dispatched him. And so God permitted Enoch a more peaceful death. But there was another godly man afforded a similar escape. Next time, God willing.

