

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Enoch and Elijah: Where Are They Now? (Part 2)

What Then of Enoch?

Isn't the Bible clear that he was transfigured and transferred to God's presence in heaven? Genesis 5:24 says: "He [was] not, for God took him." The Hebrew text has no main verb. We'll come back to the phrase. The other verb "took" is from a common Hebrew verb *laqah*, meaning "take, take away, remove, carry off." Its usage covers the "taking away" of purchases from a market, of a woman from her father's house through marriage, of life by violence.

It is a feature of *laqah* that "when *nepshesh*, 'life, person,' is the object in every instance in the OT the meaning is 'to take away life, to kill.'"¹ Elijah, for example, uses it to refer to his opponents' plans for him: "They seek my life [*nepshesh*] to *take it away*" (1 Kings 19:10, 14). The psalmist says, "They plotted to *take away* my life [*nepshesh*]" (Ps. 31:13). Ezekiel has, "If the sword should come to *take away* a life [*nepshesh*] from among them, he is *taken away* in his iniquity" (Ezek. 33:6). Most interestingly we have in Proverbs, "The reward of the just will be a tree of life, but the lives [*nepshesh*] of the unjust will be *taken away*. The man who is just on the earth will receive what he deserves; how much more the unjust and the sinner" (Prov. 11:30, 31).²

Jonah actually prays to God, "O Lord, *take away* my life [*nepshesh*]" (Jonah 4:3) and Elijah earlier had prayed, "O Lord, *take away* my life [*nepshesh*]; I am no better than my fathers before me" (1 Kings 19:4).

As in the last two examples, God may be the one who "takes away" being (*nepshesh*). So the phrase "God took him" (Gen. 5:24) is not unique. Hosea speaks for God: "In my anger I gave you a king; in my wrath I have *taken* him *away*" (Hos. 13:11). But it needn't mean "destroyed." The Psalmist can say: "With your counsel you will guide me, and with glory then *take* me *away*" (Ps. 73:24), and "God will ransom my being [*nepshesh*] from the power of Sheol [the Unseen world of the dead], for he will *take* me *away*" (Ps. 49:15).

¹ Robert Bratcher in *Bible Translator* 34, no. 3, July 1983, p. 337.

² The Greek (LXX) has: "the lives of the unjust are taken away." The OT "a wise man takes away lives" should probably read "violence takes away lives."

The phrase "God took him" would not then be a surprising one to the Hebrews. It would not of itself suggest a unique experience for Enoch. They would read it as implying an ending of life by intervention of God such as that prayed for by Elijah and Jonah. More than the phrase itself would be required to indicate that Enoch bypassed death, or that he was removed into God's presence in heaven. The Old Testament gives us no further information beyond saying that "all the days of Enoch were 365 years" (Gen. 5:23). But we should note that the phrase "he was not" would itself be taken to mean "he died" (cf. Job 7:21; 8:22; Ps. 39:13; 103:16; Prov. 12:7). Hebrews 11:13 says that Enoch (v. 5) died along with all the rest of the heroes of faith.

The Septuagint

The Greek-speaking community of expatriate Jews in Alexandria required the Old Testament to be translated into Greek. This was completed between 250 BC and 170 BC and is known as the Septuagint (LXX). It was important to the early church and frequently quoted. It renders Genesis 5:24: "He *was not found* because God *transferred* him." "He was not" has become "he was not found" (perhaps influenced by the Elijah story). "God took him" has become "God transferred him." This translation goes beyond the Hebrew original "God took him," but needn't mean more.

The Greek word rendered "transferred" is from *metatihemi* which means "place or position differently, change the position of, relocate, resite, transfer."³

a. It appears in the LXX of the Old Testament as follows: "Cursed is the one who *transfers* his neighbor's landmarks" (Deut. 27:17). "Ahab...sold himself to what was evil in God's sight as Jezebel, his wife, *transferred* him" (i.e. changed the position he took, 1 Kings 21:25; 20:25, LXX). "The mountains are *transferred* into the depths of the seas" (Ps. 45:3). "Do not *transfer* the eternal landmarks" (Prov. 23:10). "I will proceed to *transfer* this people and I will *transfer* them" (Isa. 29:14). "Lebanon will be *transferred* as the mountains of Carmel" (Isa. 29:17). "The rulers of Judah have become like those *transferring* landmarks" (Hos. 5:10). Here we see the main use as *repositioning* landmarks (Deut. 27:17; Prov. 23:10; Hos. 5:10); *resiting* mountains moved from one place to another (Ps. 45:3; Isa. 29:17);

³ *Methistemi* is a different verb occurring in the NT at Luke 16:4; Acts 13:22; 19:26; 1 Cor. 13:2; Col. 1:13.

displacing people and *relocating* them (Isa. 29:14; and the *transferring* of allegiance from Yahweh to Baal, effected in Ahab by Jezebel (1 Kings 21:25).

b. It appears in the New Testament as follows: “Jacob died, he and our fathers, and they were *transferred* to Shechem” (Acts 7:16). “I’m astonished that you are *transferring* so quickly to another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). “The priestly office being *transferred*, a transfer of law of necessity also occurs” (Heb. 7:12). “By faith Enoch was *transferred*...God *transferred* him” (Heb. 11:5). “Persons *transferring* the grace of God...” (Jude 4). The noun (*metathesis*) occurs at Hebrews 7:12; 11:5; 12:27.

Usage of the verb in the LXX and New Testament strongly suggests that we understand it in Genesis 5:24 (LXX) as God’s transferring Enoch from one location or site to another. (It is not a word for transfiguration or transformation and does not speak of being taken *up* to immortality.) Elijah was transferred alive from one place in Palestine to another. Was Enoch similarly transferred? Or is the reference to the transferring of the dead Enoch for a secret burial like that of Moses (Deut. 34:5, 6; Jude 9)?⁴ Or is it something else?

Josephus

The Jewish historian, Josephus, says: “As for Elijah and for Enoch (who was before the flood) it is written in the sacred books that they disappeared” (*Antiq.* IX. 2.2). He gives no hint that he thought Enoch had ascended immortal to heaven. But he does indicate mystery in his “disappearance” and links it with that of Elijah.

Writings Between the Old Testament and New Testament

a. About 180 BC we find in the *Book of Sirach*, or *Ecclesiasticus*: “Enoch pleased the Lord and was taken away. He was an example of repentance to all generations” (4:4). A Hebrew version of this passage says, “He was a sign of knowledge to all generations” (Cairo Genizah B text). The whole verse is missing from the Syriac version and from the Masada scroll. Whatever the reading should be, it does not advance our search, beyond showing profound regard for Enoch.

b. About 100 BC we find a substantial legend surrounding Enoch. The *Book of Jubilees* (4:16-26) suggests that he was the first to learn writing and to write prophetically, that he devised the astronomical signs and constructed the first calendar, that he was foremost in knowledge and wisdom. In his sleep he was taken on a

⁴ The Hebrew here (Deut. 34:6) has been taken as: “he buried him” (RSV); “he buried himself” (Rashi. Ibn Ezra); “he was buried” (JB); “buried him” (GNB); perhaps it’s simply “someone buried him”; the LXX has “they buried him.”

tour of the earth and the heavens; he met the fallen angels who had had sexual relations with women and fathered the nephilim (Gen. 6:1-4; Jude 6: 1 Pet. 3:19). God finally carried him off to the Garden of Eden where he remains, recording the wickedness of mankind in preparation for the final judgment. *Jubilees* is a fictional work which carries us well outside the Bible. But it allows us to see one view, which may have become widely held. But that view puts Enoch in Eden, not heaven.

c. An important collection of five writings, mostly from the second century BC, is known as *Ethiopic* or *1 Enoch*. The section “The Watchers” (1:36) quotes the same prophecy of Enoch’s as Jude does (Jude 14, 15; Enoch 1:9). Another section, “The Giants,” was replaced by “The Similitudes” (37-71) which was probably written at least as late as 100 AD. It is not found at Qumran. In “Similitudes,” the legend of Enoch is further developed. Enoch is identified with “the Son of man” (Enoch 71:14) and reference made to his “sitting on the throne of glory” (45:3; 61:8; 69:2).

It has been improbably suggested that this work may pre-date Jesus and that Jesus is referring to Enoch in John 3:13: “No man has gone up into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man [Enoch] who is in heaven.” Is there a comparison of Enoch and of the Messiah, both as “Son of Man”? Are we to see both as ascending to heaven, both as making proclamation to the imprisoned angels? Intriguing though this is, it is unconvincing. John 3:13 probably refers to Jesus entering, during his life, into the secrets of God through his intimate relation to God.

d. In *Slavonic* or *2 Enoch*, a later Christian work which may include Jewish material, we find Enoch petitioning God on behalf of the fallen angels and reporting back to them God’s negative response. He then returns to earth for 30 days and is taken permanently to Eden (2 Enoch 68:1-3).

Summary

We have strayed some way from the Biblical data in order to explore material that may have been available to the early Christian community. To recap: Genesis 5:24 simply says, “He [was] not, because God took him.” The Hebrew does not imply anything unique by “took.” The LXX makes this “God transferred him,” a Greek word that suggests change of location. Josephus says he “disappeared,” echoing the LXX “he was not found” for the Hebrew “he not.” If the Old Testament and Josephus were our only sources, there would be no grounds for assuming anything different to have happened to Enoch than happened to Elijah. But we have inter-testamental Jewish writings which have Enoch transferred to the Garden of Eden — not to heaven. And we have one work,

later than John's gospel, which has Enoch in heaven as the Son of Man.

New Testament

Genesis 5:24 is quoted in the New Testament, in its LXX form: "He was not found, because God *transferred* him" (Heb. 11:5). The writer prefaces the quotation with "Enoch was by faith transferred, in order not to see death" (Heb. 11:5). This well-known chapter tells us what was accomplished by means of faith; and Enoch "by faith was transferred." We are not told what this involved. If it meant relocation, we do not know the whereabouts. We are not told that he ascended "to heaven." The mystery remains.

The purpose of his being "transferred" was "not to see death." This very phrase occurs in Luke 2:26 where Simeon saw the infant Messiah as God had promised. He was ready then to "see death," to be "released in shalom" (v. 29). To "see death" is the opposite of to "see life." "The one who does not obey the Son shall not *see life*" (John 3:36). "See" as "experience" is used with "decay" (Acts 2:27, 31) and "grief" (Rev. 18:7), as well as with "life" and "death." It occurs with a different verb in John 8:51 where the Greek has, "If anyone keeps my word, he will in no way see death eternally" (cf. the next verse where Jesus talks of us "tasting" death eternally: John 8:52; Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; Heb. 2:9).

In what sense did Enoch not "see" or "experience" death? Was it a deferment like Simeon's (Luke 2:26)? Was it the means of his avoiding the "eternal death" (John 8:51, 52), the "second death" (Rev. 20:14)? Which "death" did he not "see"? If "the first," for how long did he "not see" it? One suggestion is that both Enoch and Elijah were faced with violent death from which God rescued them: "In Hebrews 11:5 it is said 'By faith Enoch was translated' (that is, transferred from one place to another) 'that he should not see death' (that is, a martyr's death) at the hands of the ungodly world, no doubt for his prophecy of a coming judgment upon them (Jude 14, 15). In the same way Elijah was no doubt translated (that is, transferred), certainly not to the planets, that he might not meet with a martyr's death at the hands of Jezebel."⁵

Did Enoch die? The writer to the Hebrews states clearly that he did. Having listed many who trusted God, including Enoch, he says, "these *all died* in faith" (11:13). Besides, "All these...received not the promise" (11:13, 39). Enoch has not yet received it. Nor will he till the resurrection. Paul does not except Enoch (or Elijah) from death. He says, "Death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12). Whatever in reality happened to Enoch, whatever Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5 mean, ascent into heaven

to receive immortality before the resurrection is not claimed for Enoch or Elijah in the Old Testament or New Testament.

Conclusion

Enoch and Elijah, having "died in faith," are asleep. With all who "sleep in Christ," they have no awareness of the passage of time as they "await" his coming. Yet his return will bring their awakening to life and immortality at the first resurrection (Dan. 12:2; 1 Thess. 4:13-15; 1 Cor. 15:20, 51-54; John 5:25, 28; Rev. 20:1-6). Jesus will come back and reign for 1000 years in a renewed earth with all the saints of all the ages. Following the progressive eradication of all that is evil, a further renewal will bring "heaven" to this planet (Rev. 21:1-4). "Even so, come Lord Jesus." ✧

Jesus the Messiah, "Lord, Son of David" (Matt. 15:22; 20:31)

"Jesus is God" has become for many the badge of correct understanding about who Jesus is. In the context of the first-century New Testament, however, it would have been heard as "Jesus is the One God of Israel." Since that one God was known to be not a man, anyone one some six foot tall walking around Palestine could not have claimed to be GOD without appearing to have become deranged. The worst they could say of Jesus at his trial was that he claimed not to be the Creator of heaven and earth, but the Son of God. And in those days, unlike ours, no one thought that Son of God = God!

Everyone in Israel knew that the One God was in heaven ruling the universe. He was not confined to a Jewish human frame — having abdicated His position in the universe (and let it control itself?).

Jesus never once said anything as mad as "I am the one God." He claimed always to be the Messiah and everyone knew that the Messiah was the promised anointed King of Israel, not God but the Son of God. Happily in our day, the clouds of confusion are rolling back and the sunshine of truth is once again emerging. Not that this truth has not been known before, but it is largely lost in dusty libraries or learned tomes.

At the very famous Fuller Theological Seminary in California the distinguished systematist has written "To be called Son of God in the Bible means you are not God."⁶ With that simple statement the world of Bible study is dramatically advanced. Dr. Brown has merely been good enough to show us what we can all check for ourselves, that "Son of God" in the Bible means a creature, either Israel the nation, or angels, or Adam, or supremely Jesus, the Son of God and Son of David. The Messiah (Christ) is the **Son** of God and on that rock

⁵ George Waller, *A Biblical Concordance on the Soul, the Intermediate State and the Resurrection*, 1906.

⁶ *Ex Audit*, 1991.

foundational proposition (certainly not on the proposition that Jesus is God!) the church of Jesus Christ is to be stably founded (Matt. 16:16-18).

How is Jesus the Son of God? When did he become Son of God? This is an easy question, but it is not answered well by church tradition. Try it out on your friends, for a lively conversation. Luke has answered the question in a way which should silence all objections (though in practice you may find that it may not!).

It was the mission of the mighty angel Gabriel to inform us, through a conversation with the young Jewess Mary, about how Jesus was the Son of God. What a joy and blessing that we can be party to that conversation, recorded copied and preserved so meticulously over these many years. We can listen in as Gabriel engaged Mary in a brief dialogue, revealing the secrets of the universe.

We must be ready, however, for some real shocks. The theology of Gabriel about the Son of God is far removed from the later traditional Trinitarian teaching about an "eternal Son" who had no beginning!

Mary is promised that her firstborn son is to be the "Son of the Most High" (i.e. of God). This is no ordinary son. God, his Father, is going to give him the throne of his father David. So then, David is also his father, or ancestor in this case. Mary is his mother. And "the one fathered [*gennethen*] in her" (Matt. 1:20) is a product of the supernatural activity of God through his creative spirit. The Son of God and of David is the head of the New Creation. He is the firstborn, we are delighted to report, among many brothers and sisters. Thus his vital importance for all of us interested in the pursuit of immortality.

Jesus is the Son of God and son of Mary in this way: "Holy spirit will come over you, Mary, and the power of the Highest one will overshadow you, and that is precisely why he will be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Is that clear? The *reason* and basis for the title Son of God is the miracle in Mary. It is that creative miracle which, marking the greatest event of human history thus far (besides the Genesis creation itself), brings into existence (that is what "beget" means) the Son of God.

Now note what happened three centuries later when church councils (Nicea, 325; Constantinople, 381; Chalcedon, 451), thinking no doubt "that they were doing God a service" (John 16:2), decided formally to anathematize anyone who dared to say "there was a time when the Son did not exist."

Gabriel and Mary would have been in dire trouble in those days! They would have been excommunicated for being anti-Christian. The cult label would no doubt have been applied. But did Mary and Gabriel really deserve the cult sticker, or had the Church long lost its pristine understanding of who the real Jesus was and is?

Gabriel had announced to Mary how the son of David and of God was going to come into existence, that is be begotten. (To beget, *gennao* in Greek, means to cause to come into existence.) It was precisely because of (*dio kai*) the divine miracle of God in Mary that the Son was produced without the benefit of a human father.

That theology was enough to provide a clear theology of the Son of God, an indispensable "Christology" (the science of who Jesus is). But man being man, and the Devil being subtle, managed to wreck that simple story of God's wonderful creative act. The notion was cleverly advanced that Jesus had preexisted. Preexisted? You mean, he existed before he existed? He *was* before he was? Explain that, if you can, to your friends, or to your children. The attempt to explain it will probably leave you baffled and hopefully driven back to the biblical drawing board. You cannot come into existence if you are already in existence. You cannot be human and pre-human. So, under the guise of the very misleading term "preexistent Christ" another *pre-historical* Christ was added to the biblical story, affecting it adversely at its very heart. The *origin* of the Christ, the Son of God, in Mary was thrown into confusion.

Once there was a *preexisting* and a post-existing Jesus, a "before and after Jesus," it was impossible for him to have a *beginning* in Mary. But to be *begotten* one must be brought into existence. That is the case with all human beings. That is what begotten means: to be brought into existence.

Thus, ingeniously, the Jesus who was descended from David and brought into existence as God's Son in Mary according to God's oathbound promises to Abraham and David (Gen. 12; 13; 15; 17; 2 Sam. 7), was really eliminated. There could be no real lineal descendant of David as the Messiah if that Son of God was *already alive*.

This may take some careful pondering (even Mary pondered all these things in her heart), but you cannot preexist yourself. You cannot be before you are. A "preexisting" Jesus appears to be "another Jesus" altogether, one who cannot by definition be the lineal and biological descendant of David (which he must be to qualify as the Messiah). He must of course be the Son of GOD Himself, and this truth is supplied by the virginal conception. Thus a denial of the miraculous conception/begetting in Mary also disfigures the identity of the true Jesus. Christology is indeed important and is not some abstruse doctrinal issue for learned and remote theologians! Knowing the Jesus of the Bible is important for the life of the age to come. Jesus said this in John 17:3.

An eternally preexisting Jesus, Son of God, cannot by definition be begotten (=brought into existence) in Mary, if he is *already* in existence. Matthew gives us the true

Messiah's *origin* (Matt. 1:18, *genesis*). It was in his mother's womb. Not in pre-history, except in the mind and plan of God. His *genesis* in Mary of course makes him indeed a man, a member of the human race, and allows him to be the firstborn of the new creation, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters.

If you preexist your birth, you are not begotten as a human being; you are metamorphosed from one existence to another. Preexistence makes begetting impossible. Or as Harnack and others long ago protested, virginal begetting and birth contradict the idea of literal preexistence. Churches have managed to muddle the two contradictory ideas together and seem to hope that you will not think long enough about them to see that they cancel each other out.

Here is the biblical scheme for identifying the real Messiah in the considerable confusion which plagues our religious scene today after many years of dispute and disagreement. The backbone of Scripture is provided by the marvelous promise that the God of Israel would one day become the Father of a unique Son, the last Adam and son of David. The revelation granted to David is unmistakably clear:

2 Samuel 7:13, 14:

Messiah will be the descendant of David.

God will be his Father. He will be God's Son.

He will have the throne of David forever.

Luke 1:32, 33, 35:

Mary's supernaturally begotten child will be the Son of God.

His father is David. He will have the throne of his father David forever.

Romans 1:1, 2, 4:

The Gospel of God was promised in the prophets.

God's Son (v. 3) was to come into existence (*egeneto*) as a descendant of David.

He was to be declared Son *in power* later by the powerful act of God which brought about his resurrection.

Hebrews 1:5:

The Son of God is the one prophesied in **2 Samuel 7:14**.

Psalms 2:7: God begat him.

Hebrews 1:6: God brought him into the world.

Hebrews 7:14: Our Lord is a descendant of Judah.

Acts 13:33:

God raised up, produced, Jesus by begetting him (**Ps. 2:7**), and later raised him *from the dead* (**Acts 13:34**).

How beautifully the plan of God for His Messianic Son unfolds. And God is really one, and His Son is the pinnacle of His amazing creation and purpose for us all. ✧

Comments

"I feel like I can see so much more clearly now than ever before the things of God. To look at God as one, solely and completely one only, changes my views on Jesus forever, and allows me to have a more clean and direct love for God, the creator, the beginner of all things, the holy one of whom there is no other, the only true and powerful God, the wise God. I can understand his emissary Jesus now as a real but unique man. Before, there was always this silent confusion of who I was speaking to in prayer and why. Even unspoken, the 'Oh, Lords' and 'Creator Jesus' things somehow redirected me from God Himself and pointed to Jesus as if it were just a synonym for heavenly Father. Or worse — to try and speak to God 'the holy spirit' just didn't seem right. It didn't seem completely wrong because I knew I was speaking to God but the dance we do to say that God is somehow all the same Person but a different persons was maddening. Now it's just clean. If I speak to God He is spirit. I am speaking to Him clearly, cleanly and fully. Also, the part message — he (Jesus) died, rose from the grave — seemed to be the whole of the message. I am forgiven by faith because of the blood covenant he made, but to finally allow the return of the King brings such depth to my beliefs. It makes for such great hope! It turns all my thoughts not to heaven at death as a bodiless soul, but to the glory of God Himself who has done this thing, and puts a purpose in my heart and head as to why I am here and what I must do or look forward to. Dying now seems so natural as being in the dirt. It doesn't grieve me now. It's exciting, and I look forward to the idea that my death is a great silence before the great awakening in the new Kingdom. I just can't think of it any other way, and I find myself very exasperated with folks who just can't see it as the whole point. This is the circle I am in. It truly grieves me again — even now we can't speak on the truly most important matter on earth to those who are entrusted with its message. They so quickly reject me, but I can at least speak on the King coming back. They hear it until I speak on death or speak without mentioning heaven. Perfect undying LIFE for 1000 unmarred years of perfect rule and a fully blessed unending and indestructible life. How could we have missed that? Jesus not being God aside, even death not being in an immediate heaven aside, the future Kingdom, all this — how could we have missed it? I am sure being one with much knowledge you understand the Scriptures that say that wise men are familiar with grief. I am not proclaiming myself wise, but I can see the beginnings of the grief. I used to think that the days of the restoration of all things were before the Christ's return, and we would all see the church perfected in every way like the beginning. Now I am wondering, as it seems like the restoration doesn't happen till after his return, executed by him and of course the Creator

himself. Are we never going to see the Gospel restored in full before his return? It grieves me to think not.” — *California*

“I’ve just begun reading your new book (*The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*) and am so very happy to have it. I love how simply and directly it is written and that you are covering the whole story.” — *Texas*

“We feel that Anthony’s work regarding focusing on the Kingdom is very important and we want to help support that work.” — *Arizona*

“I love your website and it helps confirm my beliefs which do not match the teachings in most Christian churches.” — *Washington*

“I am a minister among the people living in the mountain and remote areas, by doing door to door evangelism, home Bible study and house fellowship. I’m writing to you because I just want to express my heartfelt gratitude for continuing to send me your newsletter *Focus on the Kingdom*. I’ve been receiving it for almost three years and to be honest I was not able to read it. But around 8 to 9 pm on October 14, 2006, I read your newsletter volume 7, no. 7 and vol. 8, no. 1, about the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Truly I was astounded and enlightened by the message of the Kingdom. For many years I was blind about it, but thank God now I can see. It is so refreshing to know there are folks like you who preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It is not ‘watered down’ with fancy words of man but it is presented with all Biblical truth. I have to tell you the message of yours has put a new fire within my heart to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Oh, Glory be to God!” — *Philippines*

“A couple of weeks ago, I posted a blog about the gospel of the kingdom in which I quoted a few paragraphs from one of your articles, and I linked back to that article. Here is the link to my blog: <http://musings-from-the-chariot.blogspot.com> I will be adding a permanent link to your website as well. I have been ‘non-trinitarian’ for quite a while. Actually, I’d never really thought much about it until my dad started researching it and passing along the information that he had found. Learning this made me wonder what other errors the church was teaching. As a kid, I never quite grasped the concept of people burning forever in hell, so I researched that idea and now firmly believe that there is no ‘hell’ as the church traditionally teaches. (I wrote some blog articles about it, mostly to clarify things for myself — but my ideas were well received by my readers even if they didn’t completely agree.) Recently, my endeavor has been to learn whether or not Jesus preexisted himself (that phrase sounds so ridiculous now that I think about it!), and I was delighted to find your articles about that subject...I am not in church now, nor have I been in some

time. My background is eclectic — I attended the Assembly of God as a small child; then we attended the Worldwide Church of God for a while. As a teenager and young adult, I attended a Methodist church until church politics turned me off. Now I am very content not being part of a congregation, as I have come to understand that church today bears little resemblance to what Jesus envisioned for his church and what the early Christians practiced. I find most of my teaching on the internet, through print material and podcasts (you should do a podcast!). And I spend a lot of time doing research on my own (in between grading my students’ papers — I teach writing to college freshmen). Thanks again for all your great resources. Keep up the good work!” — *Tennessee*

“I received my copy of *Focus* today and devoured it, as usual, absorbing the teachings with relish! In the issue I learned of your appearance on **thebyteshow.com**. I accessed it and listened to your teaching on ‘Daniel’s Kingdom Prophecy.’ Wow! Everything you said, except perhaps for the ‘beast’s’ origin (the Middle East) resonated with my understanding of Scripture and gave me some insights I had not considered before, especially the devastation predicted in Isaiah 24 (the travail prior to Yeshua’s return). I will be accessing other teachings and trying to assimilate all that you bring forth from Scripture. May Adonai bless you and the work you are doing. My prayers are with you and your family.” — *Texas*

Churchgoers Beware

It is rare for us to comment on the events of the contemporary evangelical scene, but has the public realized how completely deceived large bodies of believers can be? A massively influential leader has recently admitted that he was, while ministering to millions of churchgoers, “a liar and a deceiver.” Note the sort of dangerous claims which attended the “success” of such a leader. He had frequent visions, saw demons and routinely “spoke in tongues.” Everything looked good. His own church had 14,000 members. Each year the sanctuary was transformed into a theatre with an extravagant passion play worthy of Broadway. This pastor was promoting the work of C. Peter Wagner and his “New Age Apostolic Reformation” and “International Coalition of Apostles.” He held to a “latter rain” theology. He taught his devoted audiences that there are foundational apostles and prophets today in the Church. One congregation member spent seven years in this church and described how they would fill five-gallon spray cans with anointing oil and attempt to spray whole towns and cities.

This leader’s theology and religion were bankrupt. “The show” fooled a mass of uninformed pew-sitters. The warning is for all of us. Truth is the safest criterion for

spirituality. "Miracles," without truth, are proof of nothing. ✧

2007 Theological Conference

March 29-April 1, 2007

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

We want to extend a warm invitation to you to be with us March 29-April 1, 2007. This is a unique gathering of Abrahamic believers, bringing people together from various countries. A number of speakers will present papers on subjects of interest to us all, with time for questions following. The conference is a rich time of fellowship and an opportunity to meet and encourage others of Abrahamic persuasion. There will be opportunities, as usual, for shorter faith story presentations. This is not an academic occasion, for specialists only! It is a meeting for Christian education and fellowship to confirm and strengthen our grip of the great truths of Scripture. Perhaps for you the social dynamics which happen in between sessions will be the highlight. Many of the participants have newly discovered the Abrahamic faith and are excited to meet others of similar persuasion.

The new venue (see www.simpsonwood.org) will provide many advantages in terms of the convenience of being all together at one location. No need for shuttles to a hotel. The conference is only as good as the combination of its participants allows. Please do not deprive us of the privilege of having *you* with us to encourage and embolden us in a hostile world.

Previously the cost of the conference was divided up between hotel and conference fee. This year room, meals, breaks, and conference fee are all included in one price: \$200 for a single, \$170 per person in a double room (plus 6% tax). See the cost comparison chart below to compare the cost of the 2006 conference with the 2007 conference.

The registration deadline is March 8. Please register by phoning Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or 404-362-0052 or mail the form on the back page. The conference will begin in the afternoon of Thursday, March 29 and end on Sunday afternoon.

For those flying into Atlanta, we will provide round-trip transportation between the airport and Simpsonwood at the most economical rate possible. For those requesting transportation, we will contact you regarding arrangements and fees.

Please do consider joining us. It is so important for us all to gather from time to time to celebrate our common faith.

Intensive Course

Following the conference, Monday-Wednesday, April 2-4, Anthony Buzzard will teach "The Destiny of the Righteous." The course will be held at Simpsonwood.

Cost Comparison for Single

Last Conference	This Conference
3 nights @ \$75=\$225	3 nights @ \$60=\$180
Conf. fee = \$105	Conf. fee = \$20
Total: \$330	Total: \$200* (+airport trans.)

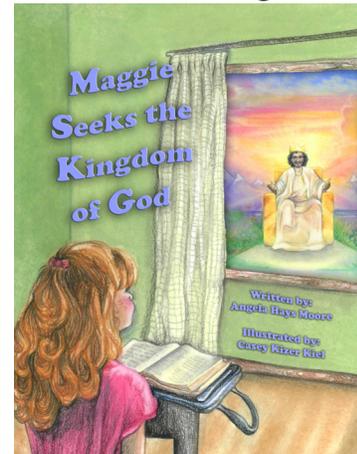
Cost Comparison for Couple

Last Conference	This Conference
3 nights @ \$75=\$225	3 nights @ \$100=\$300
Conf. fee (2x\$105)=\$210	Conf. fee (2x\$20)=\$40
Total: \$435	Total: \$340* (+airport trans.)

*Plus 6% tax

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Anthony is heard on thebyteshow.com interviewed weekly by GeorgeAnn Hughes. At the site, click on **Library** in the left column to access the archived interviews.