

# Enoch & the High Priest

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I am sure with a title like this you might be wondering what this article will be about. What is the connection between Enoch and the High Priest? There does not seem to be any apparent link. Hopefully by the end of the article it will all come together clearly. The Apostle Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” This often quoted verse tells us that Paul saw something so wonderful and glorious in the cross that all other knowledge faded in comparison to it. I have often wondered what Paul really saw in the cross that impacted him like that. Through some recent study I was led to a better understanding and a fresh appreciation of the words of Paul. I began to see the cross from the perspective of Enoch and the High Priest.



## Enoch, Moses & Elijah

Enoch is representative of a very rare class of people. We are told of only three individuals who were taken to heaven from the Old Testament period. Enoch was first among them<sup>1</sup> later followed by Moses<sup>2</sup> and finally Elijah<sup>3</sup>. These three individuals spent hundreds of years in heaven, with Enoch being there the longest. He was taken to heaven approximately 3000 years before the cross.

When Christ came to resurrect Moses we see the devil contending with Him and resisting his effort (see Jude 9). The devil was complaining that Christ had no right to resurrect Moses who had sinned. The significance of this event is that it is the very first time in the history of universe that someone was to be raised from the dead. Christ rebukes the devil and resurrects Moses. Jewish tradition tells us this happened three days after Moses died. If that is true then it makes for a very neat parallel with Christ of whom Moses was a type<sup>4</sup>. Ellen White indicates that Moses “remained in the grave a short time” before he was

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 5:23-24 and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: (24) and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Hebrews 11:5 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.

<sup>2</sup> Jude 1:9 But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings 2:11 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.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

resurrected<sup>5</sup>. Isn't it amazing that the children of Israel stayed around the mount for 30 days mourning for Moses<sup>6</sup> while he was likely already in heaven after a few short days! Moses was resurrected about 1500 years before Christ came to earth. Elijah followed sometime after at about 850 years before Christ. These three men would have grown very close together being the only humans in heaven for a long time.

### **Safe and secure?**

We often think of Enoch, Moses and Elijah as having made it once they were taken to heaven. They have been removed from the earth and taken to the kingdom of Glory. We picture them as being eternally saved and secure forever. But their place in heaven was dependent on an event that was *still* to happen in the future – the plan of salvation. Therefore, though they were safe from the sin and misery of this world, they were not yet permanently secure in heaven. They still looked forward with great anticipation to the time when Christ would come to earth to deal with sin and Satan. No doubt this would have been a common subject of discussion between them and Christ, the divine Son of God. For hundreds of years they eagerly looked forward to that event. After all, they were taken to heaven based on what Christ would *one day* accomplish. Thus their safety and security in heaven was not yet fixed, not until the plan was carried out!

We don't often think of these men in this way. We assume that once in heaven they have nothing more to look forward to, nothing could change their standing and place in heaven. When we realize that their place in heaven was based on a promise that is yet *to be fulfilled* it puts a different perspective on things. The focus all of a sudden shifts from them being in heaven to that which secures them there, namely, the work and cross of Christ.

We can illustrate it this way. They were taken to heaven while their citizenship papers were still being processed. They enjoyed the privilege of being in heaven as *temporary* residents while they waited patiently for their *permanent* resident status to come through. On the cross Christ obtained for them, as well as all humanity, the citizenship of heaven. That is when they were no longer temporary residents of heaven but full-fledged citizens with a permanent irrevocable status!

That helps us appreciate something of the promise of the plan of salvation and the far reaching scope and impact of what Christ was to come and accomplish on earth.

### **The promised Seed**

The promise of salvation made to Adam and Eve in Eden<sup>7</sup> was the hope of humanity. One day this seed of the woman (Christ) would come as a man and deal a crushing blow to

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<sup>5</sup> {1SP 342.2}

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 34:7-8

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Satan's head. This was the promise that a savior would come and redeem mankind from sin and death. This promise was treasured and often repeated from one generation to the next. Over the years God revealed more about this Seed through whom all nations would be blessed<sup>8</sup>. People would exercise faith in this promise of God and their faith would be rewarded. In Enoch, Moses and Elijah we have three shining examples of how powerful that promise really was. Faith in that promise enabled these three men to be taken to heaven *before* the promise was even fulfilled. While in heaven they must have looked on the earth and watched the outworking of the kingdom of Satan. They could clearly see that his head was not yet crushed, that he was not yet defeated by Christ.

We don't often realize that for 4000 years Satan's head was not yet crushed. His defeat was promised, but it would only be accomplished when the Seed of the woman would come as a man. That is when sin and Satan would be dealt with. Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9:24 spells out more details that the Seed would accomplish "*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*"

When Daniel wrote this prophecy none of these six items were yet done. Transgression was not yet finished or sin made an end of. Reconciliation for iniquity was something that he, and others, looked forward to. Only the Messiah, the promised Seed, would accomplish these glorious aspects of the plan of salvation. It is for this reason that Enoch, Moses and Elijah were still temporary residents in heaven. They also were waiting for the showdown with sin and Satan that would be the seal of all these prophecies. All hope in heaven and earth was centered on the coming Seed.

### **The Cross**

In the fall of Adam humanity lost the life that was given to us. Sin brought in death. What mankind desperately needed was *life*. This is the only antidote for death. That's why when the Seed came to earth He said "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28. This eternal life was promised from the start<sup>9</sup> but now the promise was finally coming to pass. Christ, the Seed of the woman, was here to give His life. As Christ met Satan on his ground he defeated him step by step, culminating on the hill of Calvary – the cross.

### **Glory in the cross**

No wonder then that Paul did not want to know or glory in anything other than the cross. The preaching of the cross is not just the death of Christ. The "Cross" represents Christ's

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

battle with Satan from his incarnation to his resurrection and ascension. This battle culminated and was won on the cross when Christ died. But the cross is not just this one event; it is the entire package of victory – from the manger to the throne of God. This victory was publicly proclaimed when Christ declared “It is Finished” just before he died.

### **What was finished?**

What did Christ refer to as being finished? He was referring to the promise of salvation. Salvation was no longer a promise, it was now a done deal – it is finished! This is clearly brought out in a number of places such as Matthew 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: *for he shall save his people from their sins.*” When Christ said it is finished he had saved his people from their sins. He fulfilled the specifications of the prophecy of Daniel. Enoch, Moses and Elijah are part of his people. That’s when salvation was finalized and secured eternally for them as well. The work of saving mankind was finished. It was no longer a future event. The promise of the ages had finally come to pass.

Revelation 12 talks about a war that took place in heaven and the casting down of Satan to this earth<sup>10</sup>. We generally assume that these verses refer to the war at the beginning of creation when Satan was cast out of heaven. The context of the passage gives us a different timing. We see a woman clothed with the sun (A symbol of the church) who is ready to give birth to a child. “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” Revelation 12:5. This child is Christ and this event is his ascension to heaven after his resurrection. It is right after this takes place that Satan is cast out of heaven in that war<sup>11</sup>. Christ’s victory on the cross resulted in Satan losing his place in heaven as man’s representative (that which he had usurped from Adam). Notice how the next verse confirms that “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **Now** is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” (v.10). This loud proclamation declared that salvation is *now* come. This is the salvation was promised for 4000 years and which came to be fulfilled when Christ defeated Satan.

As a result of this pronouncement heaven responded with great joy “*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*” (v.12). Enoch, Moses and Elijah would have been in that choir of rejoicing because now salvation had come for them as well. Now their citizenship in heaven was

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<sup>10</sup> Revelation 12:7-9 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, (8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

<sup>11</sup> The casting down of Satan as an accuser of the brethren in heaven was accomplished by the great work of Christ in giving up His life. {7BC 973.10}

secured. From this point on they are permanent residents for Christ has purchased salvation for humanity. Enoch was waiting 3000 years for this moment!

### **A real risk**

It is important to ask a thought question here to illustrate the significance of what Christ accomplished on the cross. Was it possible for Christ to sin while he was on earth? Ponder this question carefully for a few minutes. The answer is yes. Christ took a real risk in becoming a man to battle with sin and Satan. This battle was real and it could have gone either way. It was not an act or a charade. We praise God that Christ is victor.

Let us consider for a moment what would have happened to Enoch, Moses and Elijah had Christ failed in his mission. What would have happened to all humanity for that matter? There would have been no hope<sup>12</sup> for anyone. Even humans who were already in heaven! Their place in heaven was only dependent on the success of Christ's mission. Had he failed they could not remain in heaven.

When did this risk of failure finish for Christ? When He said it is finished. That's when everything changed. Satan was defeated, salvation was accomplished, Enoch and his friends were secured forever, and humanity was reconciled to God. All these things were dependent on the success of the mission of Christ. It is no wonder then that when Christ was on earth God sent Moses and Elijah to encourage and strengthen him<sup>13</sup>. God did not send angels or any other creature. It was the two humans who had spent hundreds of years with Christ, discussing the details of the plan of salvation. Now that plan was being carried out, and they came to encourage the Lord in the final steps of that plan. It was, in a sense, as a reminder to Christ that these two men can't call heaven their permanent home without him defeating Satan. If the cross of Christ made a difference to those who were dwelling in heaven, how much more for us who are on earth today!

### **The promise and reality**

The promise of salvation and the reality of salvation are two different things. One very practical and obvious difference is the defeat of Satan. All through the period of the promise (4000 years) Satan was not defeated. Only when Christ came and died did he crush Satan's head and defeat him. This is illustrated in his words in Luke 10:18-19 "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. (19) Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." This promised power comes as a result of the victory of Christ. Christ with prophetic vision saw the casting out of Satan as a result of his victory, and in light of that his followers will receive a measure of power that was not possible before. We are

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<sup>12</sup> Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it came upon Adam. Christ and the church would have been without hope. {1SM 256.1}

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 17:2-3 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (3) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

living in this period of advanced power. Let us not behave as if Satan has not been defeated. Let us by faith grasp a hold of that which has been made available to us in the victory of Christ. Let us ever look upon Satan as a defeated foe.

### **Is it fair?**

Someone might think that it doesn't seem fair that after the cross we have more power than those who lived before the cross<sup>14</sup>. We need to remember that our standard of what's fair and not fair is not an accurate reflection of God's thoughts on the matter<sup>15</sup>. God is indeed fair, more so than we imagine. We can illustrate it this way. Two children are born today, one in a heathen home in Africa and another in a Christian home. Does one child have an advantage over the other as he learns and grows? Certainly. Is God unfair in any way because of that? Not at all. Do both children have salvation available to them equally? Yes. In like manner, on larger scale, we see the same thing with people who lived before and after the cross. The circumstances that surround the obtaining of salvation are different before and after the cross. Before the cross Satan was not yet defeated or crushed. After the cross he has been. This makes a big difference. But it is the same salvation both before and after the cross:

Before the cross – Salvation is by grace through faith in the promise to come.

After the cross – Salvation is by grace through faith in the reality that has come.

Everyone will stand equally on the same sea of glass. God is indeed fair and just.

### **The priesthood of Christ**

Another practical aspect that illustrates this difference between before and after the cross is the priesthood of Christ. The first priest mentioned in the Bible is Melchizedek<sup>16</sup>, the king of Salem. He is important because we are told that Christ was to be made a priest after the order of Melchizedek<sup>17</sup>. In light of this we need to ask an important question: Was Christ a High Priest in heaven before the cross? The general assumed answer is yes. The evidence actually indicates that the answer is a no. Christ was not a High Priest in heaven before he came and defeated Satan. In other words, for 3000 years while Enoch was in heaven he did not have a High Priest! The heavenly sanctuary was inoperable for dealing with humanity's sin, for there was no High Priest in it. The Bible makes this clear in a number of places.

Hebrews 5:1 "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." A priest for men is to be taken from men. Christ could not be a priest for men before he became one of us, flesh

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<sup>14</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

<sup>17</sup> Psalms 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

and blood. Not only that, but as a priest he would need something to offer. He cannot function as a priest if he does not have anything to offer.

Hebrews 8:3 “For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.” When did Christ have something to offer? It is when he came as a man to give his life as a ransom for many. This is what he offers. Before he came there was only the promise that one day he would give his life for mankind. It is for this reason that God instituted the entire Old Covenant system of types and shadows to point forward to what was to come. The entire earthly priesthood was established because there was *no high priest in heaven*. Else, why would God give men an inferior Aaronic priesthood if there was a heavenly priest?

Hebrews 8:6 “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” Christ obtained this more excellent ministry when he came as a man and defeated Satan. This is what qualifies him to be the mediator and priest of the New Covenant – the better covenant. Only after taking humanity could he be a sympathetic High Priest<sup>18</sup>.

During the Old Testament period people could exercise faith in the promise to come. They had no heavenly high priest – they had no access to the heavenly Sanctuary. This is spelled out in Hebrews 9:8 “The Holy Ghost this signifying, *that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*” The way there was not manifest, that is why God gave an earthly tabernacle. That served as a stopgap until the real priest would come and give us access to the heavenly sanctuary by making the way there *manifest*. Hebrews 10:19-20 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus, (20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*”.

Christ is now, for the first time in 4000 years, our High Priest. Just like Aaron could not function as a high priest before his anointing<sup>19</sup> so Christ only began his high priestly role after he was anointed<sup>20</sup>. This is what the New Covenant is all about, Christ being our High Priest ministering His very own life to us<sup>21</sup>. The New Covenant is not something to still come about in the future – it is here *now*. It is the very life of the Son of God with his victories over sin and Satan. This is what he ministers to us as our High Priest in heaven.

These two points, the defeat of Satan and Christ’s Priesthood, illustrate for us the vast difference between the Old and New Testament on a practical level. The coming of Christ

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<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 2:17

<sup>19</sup> Leviticus 8:12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 1:8-9 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. (9) Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

<sup>21</sup> Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

established and accomplished things that were only promised before. That is why Paul says God prepared better things for us<sup>22</sup>. The glory and effect of the cross is vast and immense.

### The Mediator

Just because Christ was not a high priest in the Old Testament period does not mean he was not the mediator. Christ has always been the mediator between God and all of creation. This is one aspect of him being the Word of God – God’s thought made audible. But Christ was never a mediator as a man until he came as one. This is what allows him now to mediate as *a man* for the very first time<sup>23</sup>. Mediating as a man is his high priestly office. One day, when probation closes Christ will cease his high priestly mediation for sin. At that time we will live in the sight of God without a mediator<sup>24</sup>. This is why we must now appropriate that which our high priest is ministering to us – his victorious and glorified *life*.

### Conclusion

One of my favorite verses in this context summarizes things really well: 2 Timothy 1:8-10  
“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (9) *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*”

Salvation now is a past thing. It has been done and it is finished. This promise, hidden for ages in Christ, was manifest and revealed when Christ came and fulfilled it. As a result of this death is abolished and life and immortality have come to light. Not only for us now, but also for Enoch, Moses and Elijah.

Let us understand and appreciate what Christ did for humanity by becoming a man. By defeating Satan and becoming our High Priest. We are living in a most privileged and advantageous time. A time that many of our Bible heroes wished to live in! We cannot appreciate what Christ accomplished if we fail to realize the distinctions that exist before and after the cross. The cross of Christ changed everything for humanity. May we indeed realize that the ministration of Christ in the sanctuary is the foundation of our faith and everything to us as a people. ✍

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<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, **the man** Christ Jesus;

<sup>24</sup> Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. {GC 425.1}