

Did Enoch Die?

Translation, “Seeing Death,” and the Two Men Scripture Says God Took

A verse-by-verse examination of Hebrews 11:5 and 2 Kings 2:11, testing whether scripture anywhere exempts a son of Adam from death.

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Anchor Passage

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.*

Hebrews 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Introduction

A. The Question This Study Has to Settle

Two men in scripture are commonly held to have escaped death altogether. Enoch, of whom Genesis says “he was not; for God took him,” and Elijah, who “went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” If that reading is correct, then two sons of Adam are walking somewhere in their original bodies at this hour, thousands of years after every other man of their generation returned to the dust — and the sentence pronounced in Eden has two standing exceptions.

That is not a small claim, and it does not sit quietly. It bears directly on what death is, on whether anyone is conscious between death and resurrection, on whether anyone has ever ascended to God’s presence ahead of Christ, and on whether Christ is in fact “the first that should rise from the dead.” A study of where the dead are cannot leave it unexamined.

The question this study exists to settle is narrower and sharper than “what happened to Enoch.” It is this:

Does “not seeing death” mean “not dying”?

Everything turns on that. If the two phrases mean the same thing, Hebrews 11:5 states an exemption from death in so many words and the matter is closed. If scripture itself distinguishes them — if a man can die without “seeing death,” or “see death” without dying — then Hebrews 11:5 is describing something other than exemption, and the exemption reading has no text left to stand on.

B. Why It Cannot Be Left Open

This library’s own method holds that a position established by many clear, direct verses is not overturned by a handful of unclear ones, and that the unclear ones are held in abeyance rather than forced. That rule is what makes this question urgent rather than optional.

Because the clear verses here are not scarce. That in Adam all die, that death passed upon all men, that it is appointed unto men once to die, that Christ is the firstfruits and the first to rise from the dead, that no man hath ascended up to heaven, that the whole company of Hebrews 11 has “received not the promise” and is “not made perfect” apart from us — these are direct statements, many of them, mutually consistent, spread across both testaments and multiple writers.

Against them stands one clause, in one verse, whose meaning depends entirely on what a four-word idiom means. A study that leaves that clause unexamined is not being cautious; it is allowing a single unexamined idiom to overturn a doctrine the rest of scripture states plainly and repeatedly.

C. The Starting Frame, Stated Directly

This study begins from three observations, stated before a single outside source is consulted, because they carry more weight than any commentary could.

First, the historical records themselves claim no exemption. Genesis 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11 are the actual accounts of what happened to these two men. Neither says either man did not die. Genesis says “he was not; for God took him.” Second Kings says a whirlwind carried Elijah up into the sky. The claim of exemption enters scripture nowhere in the narrative of either event — it enters only in a single interpretive clause written centuries later, in Hebrews.

Second, the phrase in that clause is an idiom, and idioms are tested by usage, not by appearance. “See death” occurs four times in all of scripture. A four-word phrase with four occurrences is exactly the kind of expression this library’s method says to resolve by collecting every occurrence and synthesizing a composite sense — not by reading the English at face value and stopping.

Third, the writer of Hebrews gives his own verdict on Enoch thirty-four verses later, in the same chapter. Whatever verse 5 means, it cannot mean something verses 39 and 40 deny. The writer is the best interpreter of his own sentence, and he has not left us guessing.

Chapter 1: What the Historical Records Actually Say

A. Genesis 5:24 — “He Was Not; For God Took Him”

The whole Old Testament record of Enoch’s departure is one verse, and it is worth reading with nothing added to it:

Genesis 5:24 *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

Read what is on the page. It says Enoch walked with God. It says he was not. It says God took him. It does not say he did not die. It does not say he was carried to heaven. It does not say he remains alive. Every one of those is supplied by the reader, not by Moses.

The observation that Genesis 5 breaks its own refrain here is real and worth granting in full. Seven times in that chapter a man’s record closes with “and he died” — Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech. Enoch’s does not. Something about his departure was unlike the others, and the text marks it deliberately.

But notice precisely what the break establishes and what it does not. It establishes that **the manner** of Enoch’s departure was different. It does not establish that **the fact** of his death was different, because the words Moses used instead of “and he died” are themselves words scripture uses of the dead.

B. “He Was Not” — Scripture’s Ordinary Words for the Dead

The Hebrew behind “he was not” is *’ayin* (Strong’s H369), which Strong’s defines as “as if from a primitive root meaning to be nothing or not exist; a non-entity.”

This is not unusual vocabulary reserved for a unique event. It is the ordinary Hebrew way of speaking about a person who has died:

Job 7:21 *And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.*

Job uses the identical construction of his own coming death, in the same breath as sleeping in the dust. If “I shall not be” describes a man who has died, “he was not” describes one too.

Genesis 37:30 *And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?*

Genesis 42:36 *And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*

Reuben and Jacob both use it of Joseph, whom they believed dead.

Jeremiah 31:15 *Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.*

Matthew quotes this verse of the children slaughtered at Bethlehem (Matthew 2:18). “They were not” means they were killed.

Lamentations 5:7 *Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities.*

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

Six occurrences, and every one of them describes someone dead. There is no occurrence anywhere in the Old Testament where “he is not” means “he is alive elsewhere.”

C. “God Took Him” — a Verb Scripture Uses of Death

The second half of the verse fares no better for the exemption reading. “Took” is *laqach* (H3947), which Strong’s glosses as “to take (in the widest variety of applications):— accept, bring, buy, carry away, drawn, fetch, get, infold, X many, mingle, place, receive(-ing), reserve, seize, send for, take (away, -ing, up), use, win.”

Nothing in that range requires taking a man alive. And scripture uses this very verb of God taking a man **in death**:

Ezekiel 24:16 *Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.*

Two verses later: “at even my wife died.” God’s “taking away” of Ezekiel’s wife was her death.

Psalms 49:15 *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.*

This is the same verb, and the context is decisive: a man redeemed **from the power of the grave** is a man who went there. The psalm’s entire argument, from verse 6 onward, is that no amount of wealth buys any man out of death — “he shall never see life,” “leave their wealth to others,” “like the beasts that perish.” God’s “receiving” of the psalmist, in that setting, is not exemption from the grave but redemption out of it.

Psalms 73:24 *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

D. What Genesis Does Not Say

Put the two halves together and the verse reads, in its own vocabulary: *Enoch walked with God; and then he was gone, because God took him.* Both key words are standard death vocabulary. Neither one, in any other occurrence in scripture, describes a living man relocated.

What the verse does establish, and this study grants it fully, is that God acted directly and that the departure was sudden and unexplained enough that Moses declined to use the chapter’s ordinary formula. Something happened to Enoch that did not happen to Jared or Methuselah. **The question is what — not whether he died, on which Genesis is silent, but how he was taken, on which Genesis is deliberately remarkable.**

Chapter 2: “See Death” — Every Occurrence, Weighed

A. Four Occurrences, and That Is All

The phrase “see death” occurs four times in the whole of scripture. Collected, per this library’s method of building a composite sense from every occurrence rather than resting on one:

Psalm 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.*

Luke 2:26 *And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.*

John 8:51 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

Hebrews 11:5 *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death...*

One of these four is the verse in dispute. The other three are the entire evidence base for what the idiom means.

B. Psalm 89:48 — The Universal Question

The psalmist asks a rhetorical question whose expected answer is *no one*: what man lives and shall not see death? And the second line of the couplet supplies the idiom’s own definition by Hebrew parallelism — “shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” Seeing death and going down to the grave are set as the same thing.

This matters for a second reason. The psalm was written many centuries after Enoch. If a standing, known exception to the rule existed — a man who lived and did not see death — the question loses its force entirely. The psalmist asks it as though the answer were obvious and universal.

C. Luke 2:26 — Deferred, Not Cancelled

Simeon was promised that he should not see death *before* he had seen the Lord’s Christ. The promise concerned timing, not exemption; Simeon died, as Luke’s own account implies when he asks to depart in peace. Here “see death” plainly means a man’s own death, and the promise was that it would be postponed.

So far, two occurrences, both meaning ordinary physical death. Taken alone they would settle the question in favor of the traditional reading.

D. John 8:51 — The Verse That Settles the Idiom

The third occurrence is spoken by the Lord himself, and it decides the question:

John 8:51 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

Every believer who has kept his saying for two thousand years has nonetheless died physically. Abraham died. Peter died. Paul died. Every one of them kept his saying, and every one of them was buried.

And the crowd hearing him heard exactly the claim the traditional reading of Hebrews 11:5 makes, and objected to it on exactly those grounds:

John 8:52 *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*

They understood “never see death” as a claim of bodily exemption from dying — and **they were wrong**. Jesus does not withdraw the statement; he lets it stand in the sense he meant it, and goes on to speak of Abraham rejoicing to see his day.

This is the decisive datum of the whole study, and it must be weighed for exactly what it is. **Scripture’s own usage, in the Lord’s own mouth, establishes that “shall never see death” does not necessarily mean “shall never physically die.”** That is not a rescue reading imported from outside to save a position. It is the identical idiom, in a context where the bodily-exemption reading is demonstrably false, and where scripture itself records people making that mistake and being corrected.

Note also, in the same exchange, that the crowd substitutes “taste of death” for the Lord’s “see death” without comment — the two are interchangeable idioms. And scripture uses “taste death” of one who unquestionably died:

Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

E. What the Lexicons Say: “To Experience”

The word behind “see” in Hebrews 11:5 is *horaō* (Strong’s G3708), which Strong’s defines as: “properly, to stare at... i.e. to discern clearly (physically or mentally); by extension, to attend to; **by Hebraism, to experience**; passively, to appear.”

The Hebrew counterpart, *ra’ah* (H7200), carries the same range: “to see, literally or figuratively... advise self, appear, approve, behold... (make to) enjoy, **have experience**, gaze, take heed...”

This point must be made honestly, because at first hearing it sounds like it favors the traditional reading. If “see” means “experience,” then “not see death” sounds like “not experience death,” which sounds like exemption.

But that is precisely the question the next chapter answers, and scripture answers it itself: **experience what?** The fact of dying, or the process that ordinarily attends it? Scripture draws that distinction explicitly, using this very construction, about a man who unquestionably died.

Chapter 3: The Construction Itself — “Seeing” What Attends Death

A. Christ Died and Did Not See Corruption

Scripture uses the same “see” construction with another death-word, and in doing so it separates the two things this whole study is trying to distinguish:

Acts 2:31 *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

Psalm 16:10 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Christ died. That is the foundation of the gospel, stated everywhere, denied nowhere. And Christ “did not see corruption.” Both are true at once, without contradiction, because “seeing corruption” names something separable from the fact of death — the process that ordinarily follows it.

B. David Died and Saw Corruption

Peter’s argument in Acts 2, and Paul’s in Acts 13, both turn on exactly this distinction being real:

Acts 13:36 *For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

Two men, both dead. One saw corruption; one did not. The difference was not whether they died — it was what they underwent afterward.

Compare also:

Psalm 49:9 *That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*

C. What This Establishes

Scripture’s own “see + [death-word]” construction marks **what a man undergoes, separably from whether he died**. That is not an inference imposed on the text; it is the grammatical structure Peter and Paul both build a sermon on.

Which means the sentence “*he was translated that he should not see death*” is fully capable of describing a man who died — taken suddenly by God’s own hand, spared death’s ordinary approach, decline, deathbed, and grave — without saying anything whatever about exemption from death itself. On this reading, what Enoch was spared is precisely what the verse says he was spared: **seeing** death. Not dying, but meeting it — the long approach every other man in Genesis 5 walked toward for centuries and finally reached.

And this reading accounts for the one feature of Genesis 5:24 the exemption reading rightly presses: why Moses broke his own refrain. Enoch did not die the way the other seven died. God took him, directly and without the process, which is exactly why “and he died” would have been the wrong formula and “he was not; for God took him” was the right one.

D. Bullinger’s Idioma

This library’s standing reference on figures of speech catalogs this whole category under **Idioma, or Idiom**: “Language or usage peculiar to a particular nation, tribe, author, or speaker — expressions that must be understood according to the idiom’s own logic rather than word-for-word.”

Bullinger himself cites Hebrews 11:5 in his own treatment, glossing “was not found” idiomatically as “was not present.” The verse is already, on his reading, operating in idiom rather than plain literal statement — which is exactly the reading this chapter applies to the clause beside it.

The method's own rule is literal-first: take a passage literally wherever the literal sense can be true to fact. Here the literal-exemption sense cannot be held without contradicting many direct statements elsewhere, and scripture's own usage of the identical phrase (John 8:51) rules out treating it as a plain literal claim about physical death. That is precisely the condition under which the method directs a reader to the idiom.

Chapter 4: Hebrews 11:5 in Its Own Chapter

A. The Greek, Stated Plainly

The clause is *tou mē idein thanaton* — a genitive articular infinitive, the ordinary Greek construction for expressing purpose or result. It tells us **what the translation accomplished**: Enoch was translated so as not to see death.

What it does not do is define what “seeing death” is. The construction carries the logic of the sentence; the meaning of the phrase inside it has to come from usage, and usage is Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 above.

Worth noting as well: the writer had a plain verb available and did not use it. Eight verses later he writes that the others “died” (*apethanon*, 11:13) — the ordinary word, used plainly. Of Enoch he does not write “he did not die.” He writes that he was translated so as not to *see* death. The choice of the idiom over the plain verb is the writer's own, in a context where he demonstrably had the plain verb ready to hand.

B. What the Writer Added to the Old Testament Record

Hebrews is quoting the Greek Old Testament here, and the fingerprint is visible: the Hebrew of Genesis 5:24 says Enoch “walked with God,” while the Greek says he “pleased God” — and Hebrews 11:5 says “he pleased God,” following the Greek.

That matters because the Greek Old Testament's rendering of Genesis 5:24 reads, in substance, “*and Enoch pleased God, and he was not found, because God translated him*” — and contains **no “see death” clause at all**.

So the clause on which the entire exemption doctrine rests appears nowhere in the historical record it interprets, in either language. It is the writer of Hebrews' own summary phrase, added as he retells the event — which is exactly why its sense has to be taken from his usage and his context rather than read as though Moses had written it.

C. Hebrews 11:39–40 — The Writer's Own Verdict on Enoch

This is the argument that settles the matter, and it comes from the same writer, in the same chapter, about the same man:

Hebrews 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

“These all” here closes over the entire chapter — Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, the judges, the prophets, and the unnamed sufferers of verses 35 through 38. Its scope is not in dispute; it is the chapter’s own summation.

And the verdict on that whole company is twofold: they have **not received the promise**, and they shall **not be made perfect apart from us**.

Now apply it. If Enoch was taken bodily into God’s presence in the year 987 from Adam, then Enoch **has** received the promise, and Enoch **is** made perfect — without us, and some three thousand years before us. That is precisely what verse 40 says did not happen, written by the same man who wrote verse 5, about a list that begins with Enoch’s own name.

The exemption reading does not merely strain verse 40. It contradicts it directly, within one chapter.

D. A Note on Hebrews 11:13, Honestly Scoped

A related argument is often made from verse 13, and this study will not lean on it without qualification:

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Read as reaching back to verse 5, this would say plainly that Enoch died. But there is a fair counter-reading that has to be granted: verses 14 through 16 go on about those who “seek a country” and “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly,” which fits the patriarchs of verses 8 through 12 specifically — Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, who dwelt in tabernacles in a land of promise as strangers. On that reading, “these all” in verse 13 is scoped to Abraham’s household, not to the whole preceding list.

This study does not need verse 13. **Verse 39 carries the argument by itself**, and its scope is not open to the same narrowing, because it is the chapter’s own closing summation over everyone named in it.

Naming this honestly matters more than winning the point twice. A study that presses verse 13 harder than its context allows invites a reader to dismiss verse 39 along with it.

Chapter 5: Elijah, Read the Same Way

A. “Into Heaven” — Which Heaven?

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.*

The word is *shamayim* (H8064), which Strong’s defines as “the sky (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to **the visible arch in which the clouds move**, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve):— air, X astrologer, heaven(-s).”

The word covers the sky where birds fly and clouds move as readily as it covers God’s own dwelling, and context decides which. Here the context supplies its own answer: the vehicle was a **whirlwind**, which operates in exactly one of those layers — the air where clouds move. The verse says a windstorm carried

Elijah up into the sky. It does not say he was carried into the presence of God, and it would have been an odd way to say so.

B. Fifty Men Searched Three Days for His Body

The men who were standing there did not understand what they saw as a man being received into God's presence:

2 Kings 2:16 *And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. 2:17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.*

Fifty men searched three days expecting to recover him from a mountainside or a valley. Elisha, who had watched the whole thing from a few feet away, did not tell them the search was absurd because Elijah had gone to God — he told them not to go, and then relented and let them go.

C. The Spirit Carrying a Man Bodily: an Established Pattern

Their expectation was not superstition. The bodily relocation of a man by the Spirit of the LORD is a documented pattern in scripture, and Obadiah names it to Elijah himself, about Elijah himself:

1 Kings 18:12 *And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me...*

Ezekiel 3:14 *So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.*

Acts 8:39 *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

Philip was caught away bodily and found at Azotus, still alive, still on earth, still preaching. That is the category the sons of the prophets had in mind, and it is a category scripture supplies.

D. A Writing From Elijah, Years Later

2 Chronicles 21:12 *And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,*

This is addressed to Jehoram king of **Judah**, whose sole reign began after the events of 2 Kings 2. Either Elijah was still alive somewhere on the earth when he wrote it, or the writing was prepared beforehand and delivered later.

This study does not rest on the point, and says so plainly: the second explanation is available and reasonable, and the regnal chronology is itself an inference from the numbers rather than a stated date. But on either explanation, the record is not that of a man received into God's presence and heard from no more. It is corroboration, offered at its own weight.

E. No Man Hath Ascended

And over all of it stands a direct statement, from the Lord himself, made a thousand years after Elijah:

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.*

Acts 2:34 *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,*

Peter's argument at Pentecost turns on this being true without exception. He proves that Psalm 16 cannot be about David by pointing out that David is dead, buried, his sepulchre still with them, and **not ascended**. If two men had ascended, the argument has a hole in it that any hearer could have named on the spot.

Chapter 6: The Order That Cannot Be Broken

A. Christ the Firstfruits

1 Corinthians 15:20 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Acts 26:23 *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*

Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Revelation 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth...*

Four writers, four books, one claim, stated four different ways: Christ is **first**. Firstfruits, first to rise, firstborn from the dead, first begotten of the dead. And Colossians gives the reason it has to be so — “that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

B. What Two Deathless Men Would Do to That Order

If Enoch and Elijah are alive today in bodies that never died, the order stated in 1 Corinthians 15:23 has two men standing ahead of the firstfruits — one of them by roughly three thousand years. Whatever else may be said about their condition, they would have arrived at deathless life before the one whom scripture repeatedly calls the first to do so.

This is the structural argument, and it is stronger than any argument from a single verse, because it does not depend on the construal of any single verse. It depends on a claim scripture makes four separate times in four separate books.

C. The Honest Complication: “We Shall Not All Sleep”

One argument commonly raised for this conclusion needs qualifying rather than repeating, because scripture itself qualifies it. It is often said simply that **all men must die**, therefore Enoch and Elijah died. But scripture names a class of people who will not die:

1 Corinthians 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Believers alive at the Lord's return will be changed without dying. So bodily removal from this life without death is not impossible in principle — scripture provides for it explicitly. "Hebrews 9:27 says all must die" is therefore an argument with a scriptural answer, and a study that leans on it hands an informed reader an easy reply.

D. Why the Order, Not the Rule, Carries the Argument

What 1 Corinthians 15:51 does not touch is the **order**. Note where that exception falls: at the last trump, at Christ's coming, when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible" — that is, at the resurrection, after the firstfruits, in the sequence verse 23 lays down. Scripture's one named class of people who bypass death bypasses it **in its proper place in the order**, not thousands of years ahead of it.

That is the form of the argument this study holds: not that God could not have taken a man without death, but that scripture places the one occasion of that at the Lord's coming, and places Christ first in the order of all who come to deathless life — and states, in Hebrews 11:39-40, that the entire company of Old Testament faithful, Enoch named among them, is still waiting on us.

Chapter 7: Where Previous Treatments Land

A. The Traditional Reading, Stated at Its Strongest

The traditional reading deserves its best case, not a caricature, because it has held widely for good reasons.

It runs: Hebrews 11:5 says in plain English that Enoch was translated so that he should not see death, and the most natural sense of "not see death" is "not die." Genesis 5 pointedly breaks its own sevenfold "and he died" refrain for this one man, which is exactly what a writer would do to mark an exception. Second Kings narrates Elijah's departure in vivid physical detail with no death, no burial, and no body. And the plainest reading of a text ought to stand unless it is genuinely impossible.

That case is real, and this study does not pretend that Hebrews 11:5, read alone and at first glance, favors its own conclusion. It does not. The position here rests on the claim that the many clear texts govern the one contested clause, and that the clause's own idiom, tested by its own usage, does not carry what the traditional reading puts on it.

B. VPW's Chapter, and What It Gets Right

VPW devotes a full chapter of ATDAN to this exact verse, and reaches the same conclusion this study reaches: "Enoch did not see anyone else die, but he himself died."

Three things in that chapter are sound and are carried forward here. First, that *metatithēmi* — "translated" — is a word of **transfer**, carrying no sense of ascent whatever; as he puts it, Enoch "was not

taken from one spot up to another place; he was taken from one place over to another.” Second, that the word is used elsewhere of relocating the bodies of the dead (Acts 7:16, the patriarchs carried over to Sychem) and of a change of standing rather than of place (Galatians 1:6; Hebrews 7:12). Third, that Hebrews 11 closes with a corporate verdict that has to be applied to everyone the chapter named, Enoch included.

C. Where VPW’s Argument Fails — the Genesis 5 Chronology

One supporting argument in that chapter cannot be carried forward, and this study names it rather than quietly inheriting it. VPW reads “that he should not see death” as meaning Enoch never **witnessed anyone else’s** death — that God relocated him away from where his loved ones would die, so that he would not watch them go. He states in support: “In checking the Old Testament, one discovers that Enoch had never seen anybody pass away.”

That claim is checkable against Genesis 5’s own numbers, and it does not survive the check:

Event	Year from Adam
Adam, at 130, begets Seth (5:3)	130
Seth, at 105, begets Enos (5:6)	235
Enos, at 90, begets Cainan (5:9)	325
Cainan, at 70, begets Mahalaleel (5:12)	395
Mahalaleel, at 65, begets Jared (5:15)	460
Jared, at 162, begets Enoch (5:18)	622
Adam dies , aged 930 (5:5)	930
Enoch is taken , aged 365 (5:23)	987

Adam died **fifty-seven years before** Enoch was taken. Enoch was **three hundred and eight years old** when the first man died — and Abel had been murdered centuries before that, the first human death on record.

This library’s own standing rule on sources applies directly here: a source’s factual apparatus can be used without adopting its conclusions, and its conclusions can be kept where they are independently sound without inheriting an argument that fails. VPW’s conclusion stands on the evidence assembled in Chapters 1 through 6 above. **His chronological argument for it does not, and is not used here.**

The distinction has to rest on what the idiom means — established from John 8:51 and Acts 2:31 — not on where Enoch was standing.

D. The Two Witnesses Theory, Named and Declined

A further view holds that Enoch and Elijah were preserved alive precisely so they could return as the two witnesses of Revelation 11, who prophesy, are killed, and rise — satisfying “it is appointed unto men once to die” at last.

It is named here rather than ignored, because it is widely held and it is at least an attempt to reconcile the texts. But Revelation 11 does not name them, or anyone; the identification is built entirely on silence plus the prior assumption that two men must still be alive somewhere to be available for the role. On

this library's own epistemic scale that is inference resting on inference, and it cannot bear weight against the direct statements assembled above.

Chapter 8: What This Settles

A. The Settled Reading, Stated Plainly

Enoch and Elijah died, as every son of Adam since the Fall has died. What scripture records of them is not exemption from death but the unique **manner of their departure**: both were taken bodily, suddenly, by God's own direct act, spared death's ordinary approach — its decline, its deathbed, its burial, and its grave.

Genesis 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11, the actual historical records, never claim either man escaped death. They say "he was not; for God took him" — two expressions scripture uses elsewhere of the dead — and "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the sky," in a book that then records fifty men searching three days for his body.

Hebrews 11:5's "that he should not see death" uses an idiom the Lord himself applies to people who do physically die (John 8:51-52), in a construction scripture itself uses of One who genuinely died and yet did not "see" what ordinarily attends death (Acts 2:31; 13:36-37). And the writer of Hebrews closes that same chapter by placing Enoch among those who have "received not the promise" and shall not "be made perfect" apart from us (11:39-40).

No man has ascended up to heaven but the Son of man (John 3:13). Christ is the firstfruits, the first that should rise from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Acts 26:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5). The two men God took are not exceptions to that order. They are waiting in it, with Abraham and Moses and David and every other name in Hebrews 11, for the same resurrection and the same day.

B. Epistemic Status of Each Claim

Per this library's method, each load-bearing claim above is flagged for what kind of evidence carries it.

Direct scriptural statement. That the whole Hebrews 11 company has not received the promise and is not made perfect without us (11:39-40). That no man hath ascended up to heaven (John 3:13) and David is not ascended (Acts 2:34). That Christ is firstfruits and first to rise (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Acts 26:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5). That in Adam all die (1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 5:12). That one who keeps Christ's saying "shall never see death" though he dies (John 8:51-52). That Christ died and did not see corruption while David died and did (Acts 2:31; 13:36-37). That no man lives and does not see death (Psalm 89:48).

Inference or entailment from scripture. That "these all" in Hebrews 11:39 includes Enoch — forced by the chapter's own scope, and as close to entailment as an inference gets. That "not see death" names death's process rather than its fact — a defensible inference from the Acts 2:31 construction, not a definition scripture states in so many words. That *shamayim* in 2 Kings 2:11 is the atmospheric sky — supported by the whirlwind that carried him and by the word's own primary range, but a contextual judgment. The 2 Chronicles 21:12 chronology.

Extra-biblical or corroborative. Strong's lexical glosses (G3708, H369, H3947, H7200, H8064). Bullinger's classification of Idioma. VPW's chapter in ATDAN — conclusion sound, chronological argument rejected. The Revelation 11 identification — named, declined.

C. The Residual Difficulty, Named Honestly

One thing should not be smoothed over. Hebrews 11:5, taken by itself and read for the first time, does favor the exemption reading. That is why the traditional position has held so widely and among careful readers. This study does not claim otherwise, and it does not claim that its own reading is the first sense an honest reader would reach.

What it claims is narrower: that the clause is an idiom; that scripture's own use of that idiom elsewhere rules out treating it as a plain statement about physical death; that the construction it sits in is one scripture elsewhere uses to distinguish dying from what attends dying; and that the writer of that clause settles his own meaning thirty-four verses later. On this library's own harmonization rule — that the great weight of clear verses governs the few unclear ones — that is where the question lands.

D. Required Changes to *Where Are the Dead Right Now?*

This study was written to settle a question that sits underneath another study in this library, and it hands back a specific list rather than making the edits itself:

1. Chapter 4's section heading "Two Who Seemed to Bypass Death" should change; on this finding they did not bypass death.
2. The subsection "Enoch, Who Was Translated" needs rewriting. Its current statements that the two men were "kept from experiencing death's onset at all" and "kept from death altogether" both reverse.
3. The *metatithēmi* paragraph can stay largely as written — it is accurate, and it now works for the new reading rather than against it. Acts 7:16's use of the word for relocating **dead bodies** deserves more weight than it currently receives.
4. Elijah should be given his own treatment rather than a closing paragraph inside Enoch's.
5. Hebrews 11:13's role should be reduced and Hebrews 11:39-40 promoted to carry the argument, for the scoping reason given in Chapter 4, §D above.
6. Chapter 3's resurrection-order material becomes load-bearing and should be cross-referenced here.
7. Abeyance-List.md should record Hebrews 11:5 as resolved, with this study named as where the resolution is argued.

Sources Consulted

This study was built directly from scripture and from this library's own reference tools, per Research-Method.md's instruction to use the library before the open web.

Scripture. King James Version throughout, per this library's standing base text. The four occurrences of "see death," six of "see corruption," five of "taste death," and the "he is not" idiom occurrences were collected by exhaustive search of the full KJV text rather than by consulting a topical list, per the method's instruction to collect every occurrence of a phrase and synthesize a composite sense.

Strong's Hebrew Concordance (KJV) supplied the definitions of *'ayin* (H369), *laqach* (H3947), *ra'ah* (H7200), *maveth* (H4194), *muwth* (H4191), and *shamayim* (H8064).

Strong's Greek Dictionary supplied the definitions of *horaō* (G3708), *thanatos* (G2288), and *metatithēmi* (G3346).

E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (1898, public domain) supplied the classification of *Idioma* and its own treatment of Hebrews 11:5's "was not found." Per this library's standing note on source authority versus source usefulness, Bullinger's figures-of-speech apparatus is used here as a linguistic tool without adopting his doctrinal conclusions.

Victor Paul Wierwille (VPW), *Are the Dead Alive Now? (ATDAN)* — New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, The Way International; published 1971, copyright assigned to The Way International 1973, third printing 1976; Standard Book Number 0-910068-05-4. Chapter Six, "By Faith Enoch Was Translated (Hebrews 11:5)," pages 67-69. A modern copyrighted work and John's own copy — consulted and cited, not quoted at length or redistributed. Its conclusion is adopted; its chronological supporting argument is examined and rejected in Chapter 7, §C above.

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) rendering of Genesis 5:24 is cited in Chapter 4, §B for the absence of any "see death" clause and for its "pleased God" wording, which the writer of Hebrews follows. This is a textual observation about the Greek Old Testament tradition, held at the ordinary weight this library gives translation evidence, not as a claim about the Hebrew original.

Genesis 5 chronology. The year-from-Adam figures in Chapter 7, §C are computed directly from the genealogy's own numbers (Genesis 5:3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 23) and are arithmetic, not interpretation. They agree with this library's own Age of the Earth Project framework.