

Are Elijah & Enoch in Heaven?

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Millions of Christians believe that when you die, you go to either heaven or hell! To substantiate this belief they use the examples of Enoch and Elijah. Does the Bible say that Elijah and Enoch are in Heaven?

The Prophet Elijah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. At the end of his ministry it says that, “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.*” (2 Kings 2:11). But wait, didn’t Jesus say, “**And no man hath ascended up to heaven**, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13)? Does the Bible contradict? It certainly appears so! But a closer examination of the scriptures reveals **no** contradiction whatsoever!

What Happened to Elijah?

Did Elijah die and go to heaven? Nowhere does it say that Elijah died in 2 Kings 2:11! In fact we will see that Elijah was very much alive 20 years after this event!

The prophet Elisha who followed Elijah and would not leave his side knew as the “sons of the prophets” knew that Elijah was to be taken that day. “And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, *Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?* And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace.” (2 Kings 2:3, 5). They all knew that God was going to take Elijah away-but where? Did the prophets believe it was heaven? Let’s see!

“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.” (2 Kings 2:11). Elijah, contrary to popular opinion did not ride on a chariot to heaven. The account says that the chariot “parted them both asunder.” After Elisha was some distance away that Elijah “went up by a whirlwind” (or tempest, *not* the chariot of fire). Now before we examine this scripture more closely *where did the sons of the prophets think Elijah was, knowing that God was going to take him?*

Notice verse 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.” **It never entered into the prophets heads that Elijah was going to go to heaven!** If they *knew* he went to heaven, *why* would they come up with the notion to look for him on earth? Were they just looking for his body? **Nowhere in verse 11 does it say Elijah died!**

Elisha told them don’t bother looking for him? Why? As we go on we shall see the reason. But the next verse states, “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.**” (v.17). They continued to asked Elisha for permission to look for him, and Elisha said Yes! Why say *yes* if he knew Elijah was in Heaven? The reason was obvious, **God did not want Elijah found!** Just like Enoch as we shall see! They “found him not.” And God wanted to keep it that way!

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Elisha told them, “And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?” (v.18). Why did God permit this to happen? Gill’s Commentary states, “to *confirm*...the truth of Elisha being a prophet of the Lord.” (emphasis added). That they could trust in Elisha to tell them the truth and that God was with him.

The word “Heaven”?

Back to verse 11. Did Elijah go to heaven of God’s throne? Jesus said no one has ascended up to heaven, and he meant the heaven of God’s throne. There are three heavens in the Bible:

“(1) The aerial, including the clouds and the atmosphere, the heavens above us, until we come to the stars.

(2) The starry heavens, the heavens in which the sun, moon, and stars appear to be situated.

(3) The heavens beyond the stars. That heaven was supposed to be the residence of God, of angels, and of holy spirits.” (Barnes Notes). God “inhabiteth eternity,” (Isa 57:15), that Jesus called “Heaven.” (Matthew 6:9). To which “heaven” did Elijah Go?

The Hebrew word for “heaven” is “Shameh” and, “...from an unused root meaning *to be lofty; 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).” (Strong’s #8064, emphasis added).

One or two outstanding examples of the interchangeable usage of this *one word* should suffice, although there are MANY in the Bible.

Notice! “And the windows of *heaven* were opened ...” (Genesis 7:11). “The windows of *heaven* were stopped. ..” “The *rain* from *heaven* was restrained...” (Genesis 8:2). “...Whose top may *reach unto heaven* ...” (Genesis 11:4).

These are only three examples of literally *dozens* in the Old Testament where the word “heaven” is **OBVIOUSLY** referring to this earth’s *immediate atmosphere*. In the first few quotations, reference is made to the flood of Noah. The “windows of heaven” refer to thunderous *rainstorms*, and are therefore dealing with the immediate *envelope of air* which covers this earth like a mantle and is, in fact, a literal PART of our earth and its immediate environment.

The scripture from Genesis 11 deals with the famed “Tower of Babel,” when mankind attempted to construct the very first “skyscraper.”

Now, notice how the *identical word (shameh)* is used for the word “air:”

- “The fowl of the *air* ...”(Genesis 1:26,28).
- “... And every fowl of the *air* ...”(Genesis 2:19).
- “... Gave names ... to the fowl of the *air*. ..”(Genesis 2:20).
- “Winged fowl that *flyeth in the air* ...”(Deuteronomy 4:17).
- “The birds of the *air* to rest on them ...”(2Samuel 2:10).
- “The way of an eagle in the *air* ...”(Proverbs 30:19). (see also 1Kings 14:11, 1Kings 16:4, 1Kings 21:24, Job 12:7, Job 28:21, Psalms 8:8, Eccl 10:19-20).

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In *each* of these, and in *other separate* examples in the Old Testament, the *identical Hebrew word* translated “heaven” is rendered “air.” Why? Because the translators *knew* that, when the Bible was referring to that “firmament” above the earth in which *birds fly*, it *must mean* “the air,” and not the heaven of *God’s throne*.

What Elisha saw, then, was the *disappearance of Elijah*, by a miracle from God, “went up by a whirlwind” (or tempest, not the chariot of fire) *into the AIR or the SKY*, until he was taken up out of Elisha’s *sight!* Since there is no wind in *outer space*, the whirlwind could hardly have transported Elijah all the way to heaven. Thus the heaven that Elijah went was simply above ground, the “sky” to use the modern term.

Elijah did not go into the *heaven of God’s throne*. Jesus Christ of Nazareth SAID so!

Where did he go? Where did God take him? No one knows! The Bible does not say! As indicated by the above scriptures *God did not want him found!*

But why did God *not* want Elijah to be found? Notice what F.F. Bruce’s International Bible Commentary says, “...*Like Moses* he had no known grave. As Elisha realized (18b) there must be no backward look, such as a venerated tomb might bring. Elijah’s work was done; a fierce work of judgment that came symbolic (Mal 4:4-6), even idealized (John 1:21), and seen at the *end of the era of John the Baptist* (Matt 3:1-10). After Moses and Elijah God had nothing fundamentally new to say...” (p.420, emphasis added). It was the end of Elijah’s ministry and the start of Elisha’s. These two were a type of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ’s ministries. And John said, “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.” (John 3:30). But it also goes deeper than this!

Deuteronomy 34:6 says no one knows where Moses’ grave is, why? Jude 1:9 says that Satan tried to take the body of Moses! Why? The simple fact is, “It is probable that the reason why Moses was buried thus privately was, *lest the Israelites, prone to idolatry, should pay him Divine honors*; and God would not have the body of his faithful servant *abused in this way*. Almost all the gods of antiquity were defiled men, great lawgivers, eminent statesmen, or victorious generals. See the account of the life of Moses at the end of this chapter, Deut 34:10 (note).” (emphasis added). A Religion would have been built around Moses and God was not going to allow that to happen, and Satan the devil would have been behind it all. The same could be said of Elijah! This is why God did not want Elijah found; eventually *when Elijah died* he would have been venerated and worshipped and a religion would have been built around him as well.

A letter from Elijah 20 years later! (see Below for Chronology)

Here is more proof that when God took Elijah, he was still alive! The Bible records that Elijah was still on this earth 20 years later during the days of King Jehoram: “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,

“But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father’s house, *which were* better than thyself:

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“Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:

“And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.” (2 Chronicles 21:12-15).

Where was Elijah? The Bible does not say! God did not want him to be found. But Elijah was still alive! Elijah must have come out from his place of retirement and gave the letter to one of the King’s messengers and then went back to his place of hiding. Elijah still knew what was going on in Israel and Judah enough to send that powerful letter to the King.

Elijah is dead!

Eventually Elijah died! The Bible says that he is dead, yet *has not yet* received eternal life!

Notice, in Hebrews the 11th chapter it lists all the great men and women of the Bible and it says “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.” (vv.13). Does this include Elijah even though his name is not here?

Yes! Even though his name is not listed it includes all the great Patriarchs and *prophets* in general, notice, “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the *prophets* [Elijah was one of the Prophets]:” (v.32).

It goes on to say, “Women received their dead raised to life again” (v.35). Did not Elijah as in the case of the woman of Zarephath, raise her child to life again, 1Kings17:19-24?

Also, “they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins;” (v.37). “Sheepskins dressed with the wool on. This was probably the sort of mantle that *Elijah wore*, and which was afterwards used by Elisha; for the Septuagint, in 2 Kings 2:8-13, expressly say: Και ελαβεν Ἠλίας την μηλωτην αὐτου· and Elijah took his Sheepskin (mantle.) Και ὑψωσε την μηλωτην Ἠλίου, ἡ επεσεν επανωθεν αὐτου· And he (Elisha) took the Sheepskin of Elijah which had fallen from off him.” (Clarke’s Commentary; see also JFB Commentary and others).

Verse 38 states, “(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and *caves of the earth*.” (Hebrews 11:38). Did not Elijah dwell in a cave at Horeb (1 Kings 19:13)? Clearly the Apostle Paul had Elijah in mind, and said, “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*: [Eternal life see 1 John 2:25]

“God having provided some better thing for us, that *they without us* should *not* be made perfect.” They were not perfected yet. Paul said without “us” Christians living during his time alive on this earth, they, those Patriarchs and prophets were NOT perfect and DID NOT receive the promises yet *not without US*. They were dead! (Heb 11:13) Elijah is dead!

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What about the Transfiguration?

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.” (Matthew 17:1-3).

This a favorite passage of those who try and prove that we die and go to heaven, we have to look no further than the immediate text to dispel that belief. “And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, ***Tell the vision to no man***, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.” (v.9).

The disciples saw a VISION of the future kingdom and the glorification of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom. Moses and Elijah appear with Christ in the vision in Christ’s *post* resurrected state showing that Jesus fulfilled both the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah). He would be exalted and glorified. Moses and Elijah appeared *not* in person *but in vision*.

In this vision Luke states, “Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” (9:31). Moses and Elijah appeared in their ***resurrected*** glorified state, and the spoke of the events of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection, and Luke adds, “which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” which should read, which he “*was about to accomplish*. ‘Accomplish,’ or ‘fulfil,’” (*Vincent Word Studies*).

The Jamieson Fausset and Brown Commentary renders it, “[h]een (G3739) eemellen (G3195) pleeroun (G4137), ‘*which He was going to fulfil*’] at Jerusalem” (emphasis added). This was meant for his readers to understand, not that Elijah and Moses were speaking about the future time of his crucifixion as some allege.

Interestingly enough Jesus said *before* this about his glory: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. “Verily I say unto you, *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom*. (Matthew 16:27-28). Jesus promised that his disciples would see him in glory in his kingdom before they died, and they did *in the vision*.

Knowing what the scribes said, and a fair amount of the Scriptures, they asked Jesus, “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes *that Elias must first come*?

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

“But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

“Then the disciples *understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist*.” (Matthew 17:10-13).

Note well this important discussion!

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The reason James and the others asked Jesus about what the scribes really meant concerning “Elijah must come first” was because they KNEW Elijah had not yet been resurrected! They KNEW that what they had seen was a VISION! Jesus plainly TOLD THEM SO!

Unlike millions of professing, church-going Christians today who ASSUME Jesus literally brought Elijah and Moses “down from heaven” to be with Him for a temporary stay, and to let the startled eyes of James, Peter and John SEE these two great men who were allegedly already “up in heaven,” the disciples KNEW that they had merely seen a VISION!

In the remainder of the discussion, you see how Jesus revealed to them that John the Baptist was a type, a “forerunner,” of the prophesied end-time prophet who is to come in “the power and the spirit of Elijah”!

The ministry of John the Baptist was one of PREPARING THE WAY for the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of the latter-day prophet who will come in the power and the spirit of Elijah is to PREPARE THE WAY for the second coming of Christ! (*read our booklet “Who are the Two Witnesses” for details*).

Can anything be plainer?

If you believe Christ, and not what you have “always assumed,” or what you have “always been taught” by religious teachers, then you KNOW, and YOU KNOW THAT YOU KNOW, that Elijah was not then IN HEAVEN! You KNOW that what the disciples saw was merely a VISION!

Enoch; Dead or Alive?

What about Enoch? Is he alive? Many quote Hebrews 11:5 which says, “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.” But again, later in this chapter it says that ***Enoch is dead*** and has ***not*** received the promise of Eternal life! “***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.” Does the Bible contradict? Jesus said no one has ascended up to heaven (John 3:13)!

So what about Enoch?

Genesis 5:24 we see a brief description of what happened to Enoch, “And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not [“and he is not”-Young’s Literal Transl.]; for God took him.” So what does it mean that Enoch “did not see death”?

What does it mean “and he is not,”? Notice other scriptures with the same expression, (Gen 37:30; Gen 42:13; Gen 42:36; Job 7:8; Jer 31:15; Mat 2:18). Other versions give a different rendering of the phrase. The Syriac text has: “He ceased to be;” the Arabic text has: “He died;”

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Three of the scriptures speak of the death of Joseph! The “child is not” “not in the pit, nor in the land of the living, *but is dead*, which is sometimes the meaning of the phrase, Jer 31:15;” (Gill Commentary, emphasis added). Jacob said about Joseph, “Joseph is no more” (Gen. 42:36, NIV), that is to say, “He is gone/dead” (see also Job 6:8; Ps. 39:7)

The prophecy of Jeremiah speaks of the slaughter of the children that took place during Jesus’ childhood (Matthew 2:18). This meant “cease to be” or “death.”

So Genesis 5:24 is telling us that Enoch is dead! And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not [died]; for God took him.”

One may notice that this notice of Enoch occurs in the course of a catalogue of the descendants of Adam, from the Creation to the Deluge. The formula for each man is the same. So-and-so lived, begat his heir, the next in the series, lived on after that so many years, having anonymous children, lived altogether so long, and then died. The same is here for Enoch! Enoch died! Yet added here was an extraordinary circumstance “for God took him,” is added.

God “Took” Him

What does it mean “for God took him” This is ambiguous; It could mean that God “took him” in the sense that he died (see Ezekiel 24:16; Jonah 4:3), or that God delivered/preserved him (Gen. 7:2; Gen 9:15). With Paul’s comment on the matter in Hebrew 11:5, we understand that it is the *latter* that is the meaning for God taking or delivering Enoch.

It is interesting that the King James translators used the word “for” when it is only used here. Others translations have “because.”

This word is “kîy” and is “primitive particle (the full form of the prepositional prefix) indicating *causal* relations of all kinds, antecedent or consequent; (by implication) very widely used as a relative conjugation or adverb; often largely modified by other particles annexed: - and, + (forasmuch, inasmuch, where-) as, assured [-ly], + but, certainly, doubtless, + else, even, + except, for, how, (because, in, so, than) that, + nevertheless, now, rightly, seeing, since, surely, then, therefore, + (*al-*) **though**, + till, truly, + until, when, whether, while, who, yea, yet,” (Strong’s #3588, emphasis theirs and mine). 48 times it is translated “though.” The Greek equivalent “hoti” same meanings apply, “Neuter of G3748 as conjugation; demonstrative *that* (sometimes redundant); causatively *because*: - as concerning that, as though, because (that), for (that), how (that), (in) that, **though**, why.” (Strong’s #3754, emphasis theirs and mine).

With the context being Enoch died, “for” or “because” does not make much sense when compared with Hebrews 11:5. The word “though” however does!

So the passage can read, “And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not [died]; for [though] God took him.” “Though” means “despite the fact that; although” (Cambridge Dictionary). So Enoch died *despite the fact that God took him*. Took him where? God must have taken him BEFORE he died somewhere? This is where the book of Hebrews fills in the details!

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The Apostle Paul wrote, “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 11:5). The Apostle Paul is not quoting scripture verbatim, but just telling his audience what happened to Enoch.

Now *before* Enoch died, Enoch was “translated that he should not see death; *and was not found*, because God had translated him”

First, the word “translated.” The word is “metatithēmi” and is used *only* in Acts 7:16, Galatians 1:6, Hebrews 7:12, Hebrews 11:5 (twice) and Jude 4. This word means “carried over-Removed”! Strong’s states, “to *transfer*, that is, (literally) *transport*, (by implication) *exchange*, (reflexively) *change sides*, or (figuratively) *pervert*: - *carry over, change, remove, translate, turn*.” (Strong’s #3346, emphasis theirs and mine). Never does the word connote a translation *into* heaven!

Notice Acts 7:16 using the identical Greek word: “And were carried [metatithemi] over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.” Here the very word “translated” is used as “carried over” concerning the *bodies* of Jacob and others of the fathers.

Now notice the next example: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed [metatithemi] from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:” (Gal 1:6). Notice how *none* of these expressions have *anything to do about being taken up to heaven!* The other examples show a substituting or a changing.

One has to do with *removing from* true beliefs, from the body of truth of God’s church.

Another has to do with the *change* in the priesthood.(Heb 7:12)

Another had to do with the carrying of *dead bodies* from one place to another!

Now, note the example in Jude 4. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men *turning* [Greek, *metatithemi*] the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The word “turning” means CHANGING, EXCHANGING, SUBSTITUTING.

So God “carried” or “removed” Enoch, why? “that he should not see death.” Why was he facing death? Notice, the Apostle Paul said “that he should not see death; *and was not found*” Why was he not found? Because there were those who were *looking for him!* Why? The Apostle Paul answers that question, “for *before his translation he had this testimony*, that he pleased God.” Enoch gave a testimony!

During the time before the flood Enoch “walked with God,” and those looking for him, were people that were going Satan’s way, *the enemies of God and his prophets*. We are given none of the details, but it is interesting to note that Jude quotes Enoch saying: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, *prophesied of these*, [Satan inspired wicked ungodly people] saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

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“To execute judgment upon all, and to convince *all that are ungodly among them* of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches *which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*” (14-15). Enoch was one of God’s prophets living in a violent time (Gen 6:11), a sinful period and he was preaching the Gospel as a witness and a warning to those sinful satanic people. Jesus said that giving a testimony will cost a person’s life in certain situations (Matt 10:16-22). Enoch gave a testimony in a time of great evil, and so they, the evil people were looking for him to KILL HIM! But Enoch did “not see death;” “because God had translated [removed] him.” God took him or REMOVED HIM AWAY FROM those people who were LOOKING FOR HIM TO KILL HIM! God decided to spare his life from murder at the hands of these antagonists, just like he removed Elijah! God *delivered* him from his enemies!

Where did God take him? The Bible just does not say; God did not want Enoch found for the simple reason, people were looking to kill him and God hid him some where on earth to avoid him being killed! *Nowhere* in the scripture does it say God “took him to heaven” it just says God “took him.” And Jesus said, “And *no man hath ascended up to heaven*, but he that came down from heaven, *even the Son of man which is in heaven.*” (John 3:13).

So as Genesis 5:24 says, Enoch *still* died despite the fact that God removed him to save his life from the evil men. Why *reiterate* the point that he still died in Genesis 5:24? Because *no one saw Enoch die*, for God hid him on earth. So God is reassuring people that he did or else, like Moses, like Elijah, a *religion could be built around Enoch* if people still thought he was alive, and not dead. The only one who conquered death and is alive today that God wants you to know is alive is Jesus Christ and none other!

Elijah’s Letter 20 years After...

Elijah’s translation took place during the days of Ahaziah son of Ahab. He began to reign *solely* over Israel in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah (1 Kings 22:51). Jehoshaphat reigned for 25 years (1 Kings 22:42). However many recognize that Ahaziah was co ruler with Ahab 3-4 years before this, before Ahab went up to Ramoth-giliead (see Trapp Commentary & Gill).

Now *after* Elijah’s translation Jehoram son of Ahab began to reign 2 Kings 3:1 in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. So 8 years later, after Elijah’s removal, Jehoshaphat’s reign was over and Jehoram Jehoshaphat son reign for 8 years. It was during the *end* of his reign that Elijah sent the letter to him (2 Chron 21:12) about his death that took place 2 Chronicles 21:18.

The 17th year of Jehoshaphat reign Elijah’s was taken up by a whirlwind, and then Jehoshaphat died 8 years later. Then at the end of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat’s reign another 8 years is 16 is when he receive Elijah’s letter. But Ahaziah was co-ruler for 3-4 years, and many of these events either overlap or take place *during the co-reign or sole reign* of these monarchs so Elijah’s translation could have taken place during this time. The Chronology is not *specific* to which time during his reign did this event take place. So added up it’s about 20 years.