

The Enoch Altarpiece



JAMES C. CHRISTENSEN

For over a year, artist James C. Christensen painted “under the guise” of an obscure, 15th century Flemish painter, best known for, and named after, a multi-paneled masterpiece called *The Enoch Altarpiece*. This piece forms the centerpiece of his series of paintings, *Saints and Angels*.

There are more layers to the paintings Christensen created as “The Master of the Enoch Altarpiece” than meets the eye. Also known as *Jehovah Teaches Enoch the Plan of Salvation*, what remains of *The Enoch Altarpiece* are the two sides that once flanked the (missing) center panel. The two angels, who originally blessed the center scene, are surrounded by symbols of God’s original plan for man’s salvation. At the feet of the left angel are fruit and a serpent, representing the Garden of Eden and the fall of man. Near the angel on the right lay a skull pierced by an Easter Lily, suggesting the triumph of Christ over death and the redemption of man.

The fact that the center panel is missing is rich with allegory as well. According to Christensen, the missing center panel depicted not only Enoch and Jehovah, but the City of Enoch as well.

Enoch himself has only a minor appearance in the King James Bible. However, Enoch, and books attributed to him, are well known in Christian lore. Scholars believe Christ was familiar Enoch’s writings, and pages of his books have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Enoch was regarded by God to be so imbued with the Holy Spirit that he was “translated” or “taken from the earth” rather than suffer physical death. According to the Book of Moses, the city of Enoch was also taken from the earth because it, too, was imbued with such goodness.

“No one is certain what happened to the center panel of *The Enoch Altarpiece*, but the hope is,” says Christensen, with a smile, “it will one day be returned.”

The Enoch Altarpiece is a framed, two-piece canvas print set. The artisan who created the frames for the original paintings was commissioned by Greenwich to create two prototypes for this limited edition print set. These elegant resin-molded frames are distressed and hand-brushed with gold to re-create the look of 15th century art treasures.

A Greenwich Workshop Framed Canvas Set.

Each panel: 14½" w x 24" h. 250 s/n. Sold as a set: \$1595

