

# What About The Book of Enoch?

By Bill Moore

Until Laurence published his English translation of *1 Enoch* in 1821, hardly anyone had ever heard of the Book of Enoch. Today, little has changed. Many have heard of 1 Enoch, but not too many have read it (even among those who are preparing for the ministry). Part of the problem is purely logistical: Bible bookstores do not stock copies of 1 Enoch; translations with critical notes are expensive; and many Christians do not know where to order a copy. But the real problem has to do with a lack of interest. What can be gained from studying 1 Enoch has not been adequately communicated, even among those who stress the importance of reconstructing the life and times of Jesus (i.e. the First Century A.D.). Indeed, there was hardly anyone who had *not* read 1 Enoch at the time of Christ. This alone should be reason enough to want to study it, even if we accept the classification that Christendom has seen fit to give it: *Pseudepigrapha*, a term used to describe a writing that claims to be written by someone other than its real author. Such was the practice among those who wished to make public what they believed to be new revelation (so it is theorized) after the Old Testament had been “officially” canonized. The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica* has this to say about such books:

*“Pseudepigraphical books ... are not accepted in their entirety by any church, only individual books being considered sacred by the Eastern churches, particularly the Ethiopian. The most important are the Books of Enoch, Jubilees, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Assumption of Moses, the Book of Adam and Eve, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.”*<sup>1</sup>

1. Wigoder, Geoffrey, ed. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica*, “Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” Leon Amiel Publisher: New York, 1974, p. 35.

Regardless how the book of Enoch is classified, the real issue is what influence it had upon those who wrote the New Testament. That it helped shape their expectation of the Messiah’s triumph at the end of the “last days” of the Judean economy is strongly suggested. To what extent 1 Enoch helps us to better understand the New Testament, will determine its value.

For the benefit of those who have not yet read 1 Enoch, a brief description of the text seems apropos considering that 1 Enoch’s 108 chapters might lead one to think that it is a much larger volume than it is — actually about 1100 verses divided into five sections (or books). That 1 Enoch was written at least one-hundred years before Christ seems indicated (among other things) by numerous references to it contained in the *Book of Jubilees*. For example:

*For thus I have found it written in the books of my forefathers, and in the words of Enoch, and in the words of Noah. (Jub 21.10)*

While certain parts of 1 Enoch, such as “The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries,” can be traced to Chasidic origin in the 2nd Century B.C., most Bible scholars admit that certain parts narrated by Enoch and Noah could have been written much earlier. While fragments indicating a Semitic original have turned up at Qumran, modern translations are based on the several dozen Greek, Latin, and Ethiopic copies discovered at various locations during the last two centuries. By identifying a number of corrupted passages and suspected interpolations, textual critics have made considerable progress in determining what might be called a fairly reliable text. As is the case with the New Testament, no major teaching of the book is seriously affected by any of these “textual variants.”

Regarding contents, 1 Enoch includes a somewhat fragmented mixture of narrative descriptions, dream visions, celestial journeyings, parables, apocalyptic warnings, allegories of religious history, pronouncements of woe, and diverse exhortations, all of which may be related to the book's dominant theme: *the final judgment of the ungodly at the consummation of the age, at which time the righteous receive their reward.*

One has only to read a little beyond the first five chapters to realize that 1 Enoch expands on the account in *Genesis* concerning the "sons of God" who lusted after the daughters of men (Gen. 6.1ff). According to 1 Enoch, these were angels (or Watchers), two-hundred of them (6.6). Their leaders (19 in all) are listed by name. That these angels took many wives is only part of the reason for their condemnation. The other part has to do with their teachings — through which the entire race of men became corrupted:

*Semjaza* taught enchantments, *Armaros* the resolving of enchantments, *Baraqijal* astrology, *Kokabel* the constellations.... (1 Enoch 8.3)

While *Semjaza* is mentioned as being over all the other angels, he is in no wise to be considered the worst of the lot. The angel named *Azazel* earns that distinction for teaching men to make instruments of warfare and for teaching women the art of jewelry-making and "the beautifying of the eyelids" (8.1-2). Furthermore, "Azazel ... taught all unrighteousness on earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were preserved in heaven" (9.6). Thus, "to him ascribe all sin" (10.9). *Azazel* is therefore first to be bound hand and foot, and cast into darkness for the duration of "seventy generations," at which time "the judgment which is forever and ever is consummated" (10.4,6,12-13). But all the righteous would be delivered. What then follows is a very sensuous picture of Messianic bliss (10.17-22), the same kind of "prophetic idealism" that often appears in other Old Testament writings.

Further descriptions of the final judgment, the punishment of the angels, and the rewards of the righteous, are repeated numerous times throughout the remaining chapters, including many chapters which focus upon the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Hence, "be hopeful ye that have died in righteousness" (102.4). For "I know a mystery," says Enoch, "the spirits of you that have died in righteousness shall live" (103.2,4).

Enoch's relationship to the angels that sinned is that of a messenger (cf. *Hermes* in Greek mythology). Sent by God to the angels who had already been cast into darkness, Enoch is told to preach unto these imprisoned spirits their doom. He also is required to send their petition to heaven where it is denied (12.3-14.6). Enoch is also given to see all that is contained in the holy books (91.2; 103.2; 106.19), about which he is instructed to teach to his son (*Methuselah*) and also to write everything that had been revealed to him in a book, *a book addressed to a righteous generation that should rise up in the last days, prior to the consummation of the age* (82.1; 38.1).

1 Enoch also expands on the giants, or "men of renown," spoken of in *Genesis* 6. These are the offspring of the angels. While the giants are destroyed by the flood, evil spirits proceeding from their bodies are permitted to have free rein over the surface of the earth until the final judgment, at which time they would be destroyed along with the angels (15.7-16.2). It is also worth mentioning the numerous woes pronounced against the wicked who were to be overthrown on the great day of judgment. The long woe section (94.6-103.15) provides a detailed description of the wicked, characteristics by which they could be easily identified by the righteous who would be living at the time of the end: among them John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude.

These men appear to have been quite familiar with 1 Enoch. Indeed, nothing in the New Testament would indicate that they ever questioned its genuineness or its integrity. But regardless

of what anyone might think about the canonicity of 1 Enoch, the fact remains that at least one New Testament writer (Jude) regarded it as Scripture. If he did not, we have to ask why he quoted an entire passage from it saying that “Enoch” said these things:

*And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (Jude 14-15)*

Compare the above with the text from 1 Enoch:

*And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly; and to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (1 Enoch 1.9)*

According to Jude, there were “certain men crept in privily ... who were of old, written of beforehand unto this condemnation” (Jude 4). Written of beforehand? Who wrote about their condemnation beforehand? According to Jude, Enoch did. In other words, Jude is saying that Enoch wrote about an event that was to take place, not in his own time, but in Jude’s time, the time of the New Testament. In fact, that is how 1 Enoch begins, with God opening Enoch’s eyes, enabling him to see what should befall the elect, “*not for this generation,*” Enoch is told by an angel, “*but for a remote one which is to come*” (1 Enoch 1.2), at which time “*there shall be a judgment upon all men*” (1.7).

According to 1 Enoch 10.12, this judgment was to occur “*seventy generations*” from Enoch, during which time the angels who sinned were to be kept in bonds “*until the day of the consummation, the great judgment in which the age shall be consummated*” (16.1-2). It should be noted that according to Luke (who claims to have “traced the course of all things accurately from the first” in Luke 1.1-4), there are exactly seventy generations from the generation of Enoch to the generation of Jesus Christ (Luke 3.23-37). In other words, it would not have been presumptuous for Jude to claim that 1 Enoch addressed the concerns of the Christians to whom he wrote. The generation of Jesus Christ had not yet passed away.

From a preterist perspective, 1 Enoch adds considerable weight to the many passages in the New Testament which clearly indicate that the consummation of the age together with Christ’s second coming took place in A.D. 70 (in the destruction of Jerusalem). This being the case, it should not surprise us to learn that 1 Enoch was banned by Hilary, Jerome, and Augustine and was subsequently lost to Western Christendom for over a thousand years. ***In short, it was suppressed. Why? Because it could not be made to fit their idea that Christ’s coming had not yet been fulfilled.*** 1 Enoch’s “seventy generations” was too problematic. It could not be made to stretch beyond the First Century. Copies of 1 Enoch soon disappeared, and were it not for the fact that a number of copies have since been discovered and translated, we would have no knowledge of 1 Enoch outside of the references made to it in the Book of Jubilees, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (many of whom regarded 1 Enoch as Scripture: i.e. Barnabas, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Tertullian).

That Jude regarded 1 Enoch as Scripture can hardly be doubted, not simply because he quotes from it, but also because he makes no distinction between 1 Enoch and other Scriptures. “*Now I desire to put you in remembrance,*” Jude writes, after which he alludes to two events recorded in the Old Testament and one recorded in 1 Enoch:

*...the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them...in like manner...are set forth as examples.... (Jude 5-7)*

That Jude would tell his Christian readers to remember something recorded in 1 Enoch is significant. First of all, it indicates that Christians were familiar with 1 Enoch; second, it shows that Christians regarded the contents of 1 Enoch as historically reliable. In other words, it cannot be consistently maintained that Jude's believing 1 Enoch to be authoritative was an isolated case among the first century Christians.

Others believed it as well, for instance, Peter (as his reference to events outside the official OT/NT canon shows):

*For if God spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down into hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. (2 Peter 2.4)*

To what extent other New Testament writers regarded 1 Enoch as Scripture may be determined by comparing their writings with those found in 1 Enoch. A strong possibility of influence upon their thought and diction is evidenced by a great many references found in 1 Enoch which remind one of passages found in the New Testament. The procedure for identifying these closely associated parallels is no different from that used to count the four-hundred allusions to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation.

In closing, we will list a few of the more significant statements in *1 Enoch* which have close parallels in the New Testament writings. We believe these need much closer examination in the interests of not only seeing the intertestamental background of the New Testament writings, but to help understand the preterist view as well.

- 1.9 Quoted by Jude (see above).
- 10.7 "the healing of the earth" (cf. Rom. 8:18-21).
- 12.1 "the great glory sat...more brightly than the sun...no flesh could behold him" (cf. 1 Tim. 6:16).
- 12- Enoch preaches to the spirits in prison that waited in the days of Noah (cf. 1 Pet. 3:18-20).
- 14
- 15.7 Angels not marrying or being given in marriage (cf. Lk. 20:35).
- 16.1- Evil spirits permitted to destroy until the consummation of the age (cf. Mat. 8:29).
- 2
- 19.3 "the end of all things" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:7).
- 22.7 Souls crying out for judgment (cf. Rev. 6:9-10).
- 25.3- Description of the tree of life restored (cf. Rev. 22:1ff).
- 5
- 38.2 The appearance of "the Righteous One" is linked to the appearance of the "light" (cf. John 1).
- 38.4 "those that possess the earth shall no longer be powerful and exalted" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6).
- 38.4 "For the Lord of Spirits has caused His light to appear on the face of the holy, righteous, and elect" (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18ff).
- 41.2 "mansions of the elect" (cf. John 14:2).
- 46.3 "This is the Son of Man...who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden" (cf. Col. 2:3; John 4).
- 48- Numerous New Testament echoes:
- 51
- 48.4 "Light of the Gentiles";
- 48.3 "those who have fallen asleep in righteousness";
- 48.4 "he shall judge the secret things";
- 48.5 "All...shall fall down and worship him";
- 48.6 "chosen hidden before Him before the creation of the world";
- 48.6 "in his name they are saved...according to his good pleasure";
- 50.3 "through his name shall they be saved";

- a**  
**50.3** “all the secrets of wisdom and counsel... the Lord of Spirits hath given to him”.
- b**  
**56.5-** “in those days the angels shall return...shall stir up the kings...shall go up and tread under foot the land of  
**8** His elect ones...shall be swallowed up” (cf. Rev. 20).  
**58.5** “And after this it shall be said to the holy in heaven that they should seek out the secrets of righteousness, the heritage of faith. For it has become bright as sun upon earth and darkness is past” (cf. Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 13:12).  
**62.2** “the word of his mouth slays all the sinners” (cf. Rev. 19:15).  
**62.4** “as on a woman in travail” (cf. Mark 13:8).  
**62.5** “when they see the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory” (Mt. 25:31).  
**62.5-** The Lord will execute vengeance upon “those who rule the world” (1 Cor. 2:6).
- 11**  
**62.1** “wrath of the Lord of Spirits resteth upon them, and His sword is drunk with their blood” (cf. Revelation).  
**2**  
**62.1** “The righteous and elect shall be saved on that day...and with that Son of Man shall they eat...shall have  
**3-16** risen from the earth...clothed with garments of glory...and...shall not grow old” (cf. Mt. 26:29; 1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Cor. 5:1-2).  
**71.5** Translated into heaven, Enoch sees “a structure built of crystals and...tongues of living fire” (Rev. 21:11; Acts 2:3-4).  
**71.1** “the world to come” (cf. Heb. 2:5).
- 5**  
**71.1** “they shall not be separated from him forever and ever and ever” (cf. Rom. 8:35ff).
- 6**  
**90.2** The fate of the sinners: to be thrown into Gehenna — “this abyss was to the right of that house” (cf. Mt. 23:33).  
**6-27**  
**90.2** The Lord of the sheep brings “a new house greater and loftier than the first” (cf. Heb. 3:6; 13:14).
- 9**  
**91.3-** The “double heart” (cf. Jas. 1:8).
- 4**  
**91.7** The increase of sin and violence comes prior to the Lord’s coming in judgment (cf. Luke 21:9; 2 Thess. 2:3).  
**91.1** “And all the righteous shall arise from their sleep” (cf. 1 Thess. 4:15).
- 0**  
**93.1-** The “Apocalypse of Weeks” depicts the rise of “an apostate generation” and its destruction, after which a  
**16** “new heaven” appears (cf. Mt. 23:36; 2 Pet. 3:13).  
**94.8-** “Woe to you ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches...Ye have committed blasphemy and  
**9** unrighteousness and have become ready for the day of slaughter and the day of darkness and the day of great judgment” (cf. Jas. 5:1ff).  
**95.4-** “Woe to you ...” (cf. Matt. 23).
- 7**  
**96:1** “suddenly shall the sinners perish before you” (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1-3)  
**99.2** “they shall be trodden under foot” (cf. Rom. 16:20).  
**100.** “horse shall walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners” (cf. Rev. 14:20).
- 3**  
**100.** “though the righteous sleep a long sleep, they have nought to fear” (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13ff).
- 5**  
**100:** “In blazing flames burning worse than fire shall ye burn” (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 10:27; 12:18, 29; Rev. 18:8; 20:9)  
**9**  
**103.** “the great judgment shall be for all the generations of the world” (cf. Mt. 23:32ff).
- 8**  
**104.** “in heaven the angels remember you for good before the glory of the Great One” (cf. Mt. 18:10); “ye shall  
**1** shine as the lights of heaven” (cf. Phil. 2:15); “cast not away your hope” (cf. Heb. 10:23ff).  
**105.** “For I and My Son will be united with them forever” (cf. John 14:23).
- 2**  
**107.** “generation upon generation shall transgress till a generation of righteousness arises” (cf. Acts 2).  
**1**  
**108.** “in the last days” (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2).  
**2**  
**108.** “written...that the angels may read them” (cf. Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12).

7

**108.** “I will transform those who were born in darkness....And I will bring forth in shining light those who have  
**11-** loved my holy name, and I will seat each on the throne of my honor” (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:13;  
**13** Mt. 19:28).

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