

The Book of Enoch: Canonical, Authoritative, or What?

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Many Christians today are fascinated with the Book of Enoch. While traditionally it is not considered Scripture by Judaism and most Christians, the ancient Book of Enoch expands and interprets Genesis chapter six by telling the reader that spirit beings known as the Watchers descended to the earth, had sex with women, and begat a hybrid race of giants known as the Nephilim. Some hold these accounts of visitations produced a subsequent mixed evil angelic human race. Additionally, the biblical book of Jude quotes the Book of Enoch as containing prophecy (Jude 14–15). Hence, many ponder the implications that this book might have greater authority than other non-biblical books.

Fictional writer Brian Godawa summarizes the implication for an “authoritative” Book of Enoch:

If the book is a reliable source, it certainly adds to the controversial flames with this fantastic interpretation, but honest pursuers of truth should not discount any textual assessment because of a preconceived fear of where it may lead. We must follow the truth no matter where it leads us.¹

Websites, social media, and video documentaries are filled with exposés dedicated to the Book of Enoch as a lost or forgotten book of the Bible with secret teaching that even Jesus and his disciples accepted but Christians and the church today largely ignores or suppresses.

In what follows, I attempt to make the case that the ancient Book of Enoch, taken as a whole, is not a reliable source of spiritual information and therefore should not be considered authoritative on any issues related to what to believe, spiritually or doctrinally, except where it duplicates (repeats) what is already contained in inspired Scripture.

The book as a whole is properly considered ancient Jewish folklore or legend, technically classified as Pseudepigrapha,² which is used to denote writings “with false superscription”³ and for important reasons considered outside the canon⁴ of inspired Scripture. This classification covers books of the late centuries BC and early centuries AD. These books, because they contain religious folklore, have rarely been considered inspired by God.⁵ The Book of Enoch is classified as Apocalyptic literature. Unlike other genres of Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Pseudepigrapha books make a claim to be prophetic, inspired, or at least claim prophetic authority. The book of Enoch does this in the first three verses. Often, these books attempt to fill in details, expand upon stories and people found in the Old Testament.

There is certainly historical value to this ancient Jewish book, related to discovering the history of Jewish religious beliefs and culture over the period it was produced and used.⁶ There is also value to the book since it

¹ Brian Godawa, “Book of Enoch: Scripture, Heresy, or What?” accessed September 26, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/8811960/The_Book_of_Enoch_Scripture_Heresy_or_What.

² To clarify terms, Roman Catholics would designate the Book of Enoch as “apocryphal” (meaning hidden or doubtful). However, Protestants use this term for the 14 or 15 books (depending on how they are grouped) accepted as Scripture by Roman Catholics since the Council of Trent (1563), and therefore Protestants use “Pseudepigrapha” to designate other non-inspired books written at the same time. It is interesting to note that the Apocrypha is never quoted in Scripture and 1 Enoch is the only Pseudepigrapha book quoted.

³ James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), xxv.

⁴ The term “canon” is used to identify the collection of books considered inspired by God. For Protestants this is the 66 books of the Old and New Testament.

⁵ Norman L. Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. exp. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 642.

⁶ Probably the most extensive and important recent commentary is the two volume set by George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1, Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001) and

clearly influenced some New Testament authors as well as early church fathers. But in so examining the book, I desire to highlight important features related to the theological principles of canonicity, which clearly show why it should *not* be considered inspired by God and set limitations to its spiritual authoritativeness. In short, I examine the background of the book, theological principles of canonicity applied to the book, and finally address issues and reasons that make taking the Book of Enoch authoritative today problematic.

Biblical Background

The man Enoch ⁷ is first mentioned in Gen. 5:17–24:⁸

So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety–five years, and he died. Jared lived one hundred and sixty–two years, and became the father of Enoch. Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. (Gen. 5:17–19)

Genesis continues,

So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty–two years, and he died. Enoch lived sixty–five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty–five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (Gen. 5:20–24)⁹

Lamech was the father of Noah, making Methuselah Noah's grandfather, making Enoch his (Noah's) great–grandfather. Enoch is mentioned in the genealogy of 1 Chron. 1:2–4 and the genealogy of Christ in Luke 3:37, “the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan.” He is also mentioned in Heb. 11:5:

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Finally, Enoch is mentioned by name in Jude (14–15) which follows with the quote from the Book of Enoch, which we will examine more closely below.

It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

The Book of Enoch

The Hebrew name *Enoch* may mean ‘initiated’. He was translated from earth to heaven (Gen. 5:24; cf. Heb. 11:5), and therefore as F. F. Bruce says, “He was envisaged as a suitable recipient of special

George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, *1 Enoch 2, Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

⁷ There are other uses of the name “Enoch” in the Bible. The son of Cain and a city were named Enoch (Gen. 4:17–18).

⁸ All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

⁹ It is worth noting that Enoch takes on significant influence within Judaism because all other antediluvian patriarchs lived long lives and had their deaths recorded, but not Enoch. He and Elijah are the only ones in the Old Testament who avoid death and are taken up alive.

revelations.”¹⁰ One of the central questions the Book of Enoch attempts to explore is what happened to Enoch after he was translated to heaven.

The Book of Enoch (or 1 Enoch) is about the size of Isaiah and was written and put together in its present form between 190 B.C.–900 A.D. It should not be confused with two latter works (2 & 3 Enoch) with a similar title (see Table 1).

	Title	Original Language	Date written
1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)	Enoch, Book of Enoch or Words of Enoch	Aramaic/Hebrew	190 BC–AD 900
2 Enoch (Slavonic Apocalypse)	The Book of the Secrets of Enoch	Slavonic	Late 1st century AD
3 Enoch (Hebrew Apocalypse)	Hebrew Enoch or Book of the Palaces	Hebrew	5th–6th century AD

Table 1

The Book of Enoch was put together over a century. It concerns itself with traditions associated with the names of Noah and Enoch who received a complex body of divine secrets. It also attempts to explain portions of Scripture especially the marriage of the angels in Gen. 6:1–4 and the prehistory of the Deluge. It attempts to continue the prophetic and apocalyptic traditions of the Old Testament as well as explain cosmic mysteries, sun, moon, and stars. It is believed that some parts of it, especially the Noah traditions, short Apocalypse of Ten Weeks, and Treatise on Astronomy circulated independently for a while.¹¹

Author, Place, and Language

Most scholars seem to agree that the book is a Jerusalem composition by Pharisees, Scribes and/or maybe some parts by Sadducees. The book was also likely written by Jews who viewed the second-temple Judaism as apostate. This is deduced from encrypted statements against the current temple operations in the book. Most scholars also recognize multiple authorship over time. This is especially evident when the second section of 1 Enoch (chaps. 37–71) called Parables is compared to chaps. 1–36, which is of a later date.

The likely original language is Aramaic with some portions (chaps. 37–71) in Hebrew.¹² The book was used by two Jewish sects (that we know of). Evidence suggested 1 Enoch was used or influenced the Magharians (200 BC) and Essenes at Qumran, which also preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS).¹³ First Enoch shows similarities with the Qumran sect calendars and angelology. Bruce asks and answers the question: was 1 Enoch “reckoned canonical by the Qumran community? There is no evidence which would justify the answer ‘Yes’ on the other hand, we do not know enough to return the answer ‘No’.”¹⁴ Indeed, as noted by George W. E. Nickelsburg, there are important differences between the Qumran community and 1 Enoch, such as many other texts attesting to “the notion of covenant and adherence to the Mosaic Torah stood at the heart of the Israelite self-identification in a way that is strikingly absent in 1 Enoch’s sapiential ethic and eschatology. . . . In their later history, the Qumranites tied their eschatology to the biblical prophets rather

¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press Academic, 1988), 13, 85.

¹¹ Leonhard Rost, *Judaism Outside the Hebrew Canon: An Introduction to the Documents* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 136.

¹² Rost, 134–140.

¹³ David R. Jackson, *Enochic Judaism: Three Defining Paradigm Exemplars* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 8.

¹⁴ Bruce, 39–40. Nickelsburg agrees saying, “To what extent 1 Enoch functioned as authoritative scripture among Jews is uncertain.” *1 Enoch I*, 82.

than to primordial, pseudonymous Enochic revelation. . . .”¹⁵ Furthermore, 1 Enoch is not found among mainstream Rabbinic Judaism and therefore was not considered Scripture by them. Hence it would seem, on this basis alone, it is not at all wise to view it on par with the books of the Old Testament canon.

Structure / Divisions

Evidence at Qumran suggests that material was combined in several booklets, and an ancient reader may not have had access to the entire work.¹⁶ The final author or compiler divided 1 Enoch into five parts (perhaps to reflect the Pentateuch) and since the sixteenth century is divided into 108 chapters including two short appendices.¹⁷

- I. The Book of the Watchers (1–36)
- II. Similitudes (also Parables 37–71)
- III. Astronomy Book (72–82)
- IV. Book of Dreams (83–90)
- V. Epistle of Enoch (91–105)
 - The Birth of Noah (106–107)
 - Another Book by Enoch (108)

What follows is a synopsis of some major sections and chapters: Chapters 1–5 is an introduction which also describes the coming judgment of the world. Chapters 6–16 concern angelology, the fall of the angels and announcement of their punishment by Noah and Enoch. Chapters 17–19 and 20–36 contain Enoch’s Journey (two accounts) through the earth, heavens, and underworld. Chapter 37–71 has an introduction (37) and messianology discourse on a future dwelling place of the righteous and ministry of angels, astrological and meteorological information (38–44). Chapters 45–57 contains discourses on the Messiah and his Judgement. Chapters 58–59 concerns judgment of the Son of Man upon men and angels. Chapters 70–71 are Enoch’s entrance into Paradise and his appointment as *the* Son of Man. Chapters 72–82 deals with astronomy and calendar, sun and moon, intercalary days, stars, cardinal points, phases of the moon (72–80; 82:4b–20), and conclusion of Enoch’s journey (81:1–82:4). Chapters 83–90 is a dream/vision of the coming Deluge (83–84), symbolic imagery from Adam to the coming Messiah (85–90). Chapters 91–105 is an exhortation addressed to Enoch’s children (93:1–14 and 91:12–17), Apocalypse of Ten Weeks, which covers human history down to the age of salvation beginning with universal judgment. Finally, chapters 106–108 concludes the book, recounting the birth of Noah accompanied by miracles and the final exhortation by Enoch.¹⁸

Manuscripts

Extant manuscripts (MSS) display various titles for the book. Some of these include: “Enoch,” “Book of Enoch” or “Words of Enoch,” and “Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch.” The earliest fragments are found in Qumran as part of the DSS and include ten Aramaic fragments (1 Enoch 30:1–32:3; 35:1–36:4; 77:3) parts of the fifth book and Apocalypse of Ten Weeks. There are no fragments of any Similitudes (also called Parables) (chaps. 37–71). Seven fragments preserve chapters 1–36, 85–90, 97–100. Four fragments contain only the

¹⁵ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 78.

¹⁶ James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. by James C. VanderKam and William Adler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 34.

¹⁷ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 1.

¹⁸ Rost, 134–140.

Book of the Luminaries (chaps. 72–82). Nine fragments contain parts of the Book of Giants.¹⁹ All in all, these fragments contain about 196 verses of a total of 1062 verses or about 1/5th of the full Ethiopic text.

The Greek version contains about 28 percent of 1 Enoch preserved in fragmentary texts translated from an Aramaic original. The most important is the Chester Beatty Papyrus (Enoch 97:6–107:3), which shows that the Greek translation based on Jude’s citation, Latin fathers, and Greek church fathers were in place by the end of the first century.

The Ethiopic version dates from the fourth and sixth centuries, but there are 1,000 years to the first extant MSS. It preserves the largest amount of its content and was discovered by James Bruce in Abyssinia, Scottish explorer in 1769. The Ethiopic church canonized the Book of Enoch, but it was never placed in the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek Translation of the Old Testament. The Ethiopic version dates about 500 AD and was translated from Greek, and that was likely translated from an Aramaic original. See Table 2 for a list of languages, fragments, and MSS.

Language	MSS or Fragments	Date	1 Enoch
Aramaic	7 fragments	3 rd to early 2 nd century BC	1–36, 85–107
	4 fragments		72–82
	9 fragments		Book of Giants
	(Qumran / DSS)		
Greek	2 fragments Oxyrhynchus Papyrus	4 th century AD	77:7–78:1; 78:8; 85:10– 86:2; 87:1–3
	Chester Beatty Papyrus	4 th century AD	97:6–107:3
	Akhmim (Codex Panopolitanus)	5–6 th century AD	19:3; 1:1–32:6a
	Chronography of George Syncellus	9 th century AD	6:1–9:4; 8:4– 10:14; 15:8– 16:1
	Codex Vaticanus	11 th century AD	89:42–49
Latin (quotations)	Pseudo-Cyprian Tertullian Other Latin Fathers	9 th century AD	106:1–18; 1:9; 99:6–7
Coptic	Coptic fragment Apocalypse of Weeks	6 th century AD	Parts of 93:3–8
Syriac	Excerpt from Book of the Watchers	12 th century AD	6:1–9
Ethiopic Version	49 MSS of 1 Enoch	16–18 th century AD	1–108

Table 2²⁰

The geographic acceptance or rejection of 1 Enoch cannot be established with certainty. Only awareness of 1 Enoch can be established based on extant fragments and MSS. Parts of 1 Enoch existed in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Athens, Rome, and Carthage. Probably the most popular acceptance was among heretical sects and diminishing acceptance among Christians in Egypt.

The first English translation was made by Richard Laurence in 1821, followed by his published Ethiopic text in 1838. Early English translations were primarily based on Ethiopic sixteenth-century MSS. Robert. H. Charles’s English translation is probably the most widely known and used (1893). Ephraim Issac provides a translation as a part of the published collection of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (1983). However, his

¹⁹ The Book of Giants may have been a part of Enochic writings and expands upon 1 Enoch 6–16; however, its relation to manuscripts (codicology) is uncertain.

²⁰ Compiled from Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 9–17.

translation is based on only one 15th century Ethiopic MSS. R. H. Charles (1906) and Michael Knibb (1978) have published critical texts of the Ethiopic version that incorporate recent fragments.²¹ Matthew Black made another English translation and commentary (1985). However, to date, probably the best critical translation with a textual apparatus is the two-volume commentary by George W. E. Nickelsburg (2001).²²

Date / Chronological Development

Dating and constructing a chronological development to 1 Enoch is quite challenging. The following compares three attempts that show some overlap and differences. E. Isaac's work is represented in Table 3:²³

Title of Section	Chapters: verses	Suggested Period/Date
1. Apocalypse of Weeks	91:12–17; 93:1–10	Early pre–Maccabean
2. Fragments of Enochic Visions	12–16	Early pre–Maccabean
3. Fragments of the Book of Noah	6–11; 106f. cf, 24:7–55:2; 60; 65–69:25	Late pre–Maccabean
4. Independent Fragment	105	? pre–Maccabean
5. Dream Visions	83–90	c. 165–161 B.C.
6. Book of Heavenly Luminaries	72–82	c. 110 B.C.
7. Similitudes	37–71	c. 105–64 B.C.
8. Later additions to Dream Visions	91:1–11; 18, 19; 92; 91–104	c. 105–104 B.C.
9. Introductory Chapters	1–5	Late pre–Christian

Table 3

Leonhard Rost provides a similar chronology as follows: The Book of Noah (6–11; 39:1–2a; 54:7–55:2; 60; 65:1–69:25 and 106–107) is likely from Palestine (Jerusalem) around 190 BC, which is before Maccabees. The Apocalypse of Ten Weeks (93; 91:12–17) 170 BC or prior to the Maccabean period. The Similitudes or Parables chapters 37–71 100 BC. Chapters 72–82, Astronomical treatise and chapters 94–105 Enoch's Exhortations, beginning (chapters 1–5) and conclusion (chapter 108) and redactional aspects date from the first century. In short, his chronology displays in Table 4.²⁴ Note that Isaac and Rost agree that except for chapters 1–5, the majority of the book was in existence well before the ministry of Christ (AD 29–33).

Date	Section	
190 BC	Book of Noah	
170 BC	Apocalypse of Weeks, Journey sections	
130 BC	Astronomical sections, Animal apocalypse	
100 BC	Similitudes	
50 BC	Admonitions Section Beginning and end of Ethiopic Enoch	

Table 4

²¹ R. H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906). Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978).

²² Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* and *1 Enoch 2*. See also his English translation (2012).

²³ E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch (Second Century B.C.–First Century A.D.," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

²⁴ Adapted from Rost, 134–140, 199–201.

Finally, James VanderKam, suggests a broader chronological order that does place the Similitudes (Parables) within the 1st century AD (Table 5).²⁵

The Astronomical Book (1 Enoch 72–82)	3 rd century BC
The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36)	3 rd century BC
The Epistle of Enoch (1 Enoch 91–108)	2 nd century BC
The Book of Dreams (1 Enoch 93–90)	2 nd century BC
The Book of Parables (1 Enoch 37–71)	1 st century AD

Table 5
Uses of 1 Enoch

New Testament

Some attempt to show 1 Enoch’s influence on the New Testament by displaying long lists of supposed language/thought parallels or similar/same words and phrases being used.²⁶ However, just finding parallels in language does not necessarily establish dependence as a source. This is because people in the same cultural context, in the same period with similar influences and education will tend to use the same words and phrases regardless of whether they are writing about the same or even different topics. Writing on the issue of pagan religious influences in the New Testament, Ronald Nash points this out:

Suppose a biblical writer, in order to communicate his distinctive message more effectively, adopts certain pagan language used by his audience. Is that accommodation? Imagine that a New Testament author refers to pagan ideas in order to contrast more sharply his own distinctive Christian beliefs. Is that accommodation? I judge not. . . . we find that it is not the mere presence of genuine parallels in thought and language that proves dependence and accommodation. We must analyze the biblical writing to see if the author’s Christian beliefs have been shaped by, or derived from, the non-Christian parallel.²⁷

In other words, sometimes a more vigorous historical connection or literary analysis needs to be made to justify dependence. Some have noted how very little influence and dependence there is with such books as Revelation, given they share the same genre of Apocalyptic literature.²⁸ Still, others point to widespread influence with the use of “Son of Man.”²⁹ While by no means exhaustive, the Nestle–Aland *Greek New Testament* in its list of allusions and verbal parallels lists 14 from the New Testament (Table 6).³⁰

Enoch	Biblical Allusion or Verbal Parallel
1.2	1 Peter 1:12

²⁵ VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” 33.

²⁶ Joseph B. Lumpkin, *The Books of Enoch* (Blountsville, AL: Fifth Estate, 2011), 11–14; and Michael S. Heiser, *Reversing Hermon: Enoch, The Watchers and The Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ* (Crane, MO: Defender, 2017), 204–221.

²⁷ Ronald Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks* (n.p.: Probe Books, 1992), 121.

²⁸ Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 401. For examples of its similarities in Revelation see Ben C. Blackwell et al., eds., *Reading Revelation in Context* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

²⁹ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 83.

³⁰ Adapted from Barbara and Kurt Alan, et al., eds. *The Greek New Testament* (United Bible Society, 1993), 900.

1.9	Jude 14–15 (only quotation)
9.4	Rev. 15:3
	Rev. 17:14
	Rev. 19:16
14.22	Rev. 5:11
25.22	Rev. 15:3
46.3	Col 2:3
51.2	Luke 21:28
60.8	Jude 14
63.10	Luke 16:9
69.27	John 5:22
70.1–4	Heb 11:5

Table 6

The clearest traceable and significant influence of the Book of Enoch on the New Testament is 1 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.³¹ Three verses from 1 Enoch show parallel in the book of Revelation, which is the most similar in genre. But there is far greater literary dependence in the book of Revelation on the Old Testament. There could also be dependence in the New Testament on Rabbinic traditions (see below), which could be a common source of influence on both the New Testament and the Book of Enoch.

Literature Outside the Bible

The *Epistle of Barnabas* (written in Egypt AD 140) is likely the first work to quote 1 Enoch as “Scripture” (4.3). Other works do show familiarity with it, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter*.³² Interestingly, there are some ancient texts that quote 1 Enoch, but these quotations are not in any Enochian MSS extant today. These unknown citations appear in a popular Christian work *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which is a collection of deathbed speeches attributed to Jacob’s sons. This may suggest the text was originally or at some point larger and perhaps had different versions and portions removed or lost.

Early Church Use of 1 Enoch

The significant church fathers³³ that referred to or cited 1 Enoch are as follows:

- Justin Martyr (100–165 AD)
- Tatian (110–172 AD)
- Athenagoras (176–180 AD)
- Irenaeus (130–202 AD)
- Clement of Alexandria (150–215 AD)
- Bardaisan (154–222 AD)
- Tertullian (160–220 AD)
- Pseudo–Clementine Literature
- Julius Africanus (160–240 AD)
- Zosimus of Panopolis (late 3rd century)

³¹ Two popular books attempting to show influence throughout the New Testament include one reflecting evangelical scholarship, Heiser, *Reversing Hermon*, and another reflecting liberal scholarship, Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and its influence on Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988).

³² Other works with possible parallels includes *1 Clement* (ca. 100) and *Gospel of Peter* (2nd century). Many see 1 Enoch as an influence in other Pseudepigraphal books including *Assumption of Moses*, *Book of Jubilees*, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and *Fourth Book of Ezra*.

³³ See Table 8 for a comprehensive list and their citations.

Origen (185–254 AD)
Commodian (ca. 250 AD)
Cyprian (d. 258)
Lactantius (ca. 240–320)
Eusebius (263–339 AD)
Hilary of Poitiers (300–368 AD)
Jerome (347–420 AD)
Augustine (354–430 AD)

From this list, the only author that gives a clear indication of accepting it as Scripture was Tertullian. His reasons include the possible preservation of Enoch’s writings by Noah, or the Holy Spirit renewing it through inspiration, and the book has a prophecy from the Lord as Jude recognized. His primary purpose is to draw support from 1 Enoch that there was an evil connection or influence when women adorned themselves with cosmetics. He also acknowledged that other Christians denied it as part of Scripture. Likewise, some do see Origen as implying it is Scripture, but he also acknowledges others who do not agree and may have doubted it in later writings.³⁴ While 1 Enoch saw use and certainly interpretive value with other church fathers, there are no explicit statements or other arguments that it should be accepted as Scripture. That leaves every other church father’s position on this matter as being either unknown, or as being against it as *Scripture*. In the fourth century, the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* says, “And among the ancients also some have written apocryphal books of Moses, and Enoch, and Adam, and Isaiah, and David, Elijah, and of the three patriarchs, pernicious and repugnant to the truth.”³⁵ Some church fathers were even inclined to exclude Jude from the canon because it quoted a work of doubtful prophetic authenticity.³⁶

Roger Beckwith, in his study of the canon, summarizes 1 Enoch’s role over time in early church thinking:

But the vogue of this kind of literature in the early church was great, it was also short-lived. Even Clement of Alexandria who uses it so freely, seems to admit that its use is confined to ‘initiates’, and Tertullian, in his treatise *On Women’s Dress* 1.3, has to defend at length his use of 1 Enoch against those who, he acknowledges, rejected it as uncanonical and spurious. By the mid third century, Origen is only using this literature with caution. He quotes from it such things as he can approve of, but that is all: he also refers to things there which he does not approve of. . . . in *Against Celsus* 5.54f. he rebukes his opponent for imputing to Christians ideas drawn from 1 Enoch, and for not knowing that “in the churches the books bearing the name of Enoch are not by any means in circulation as divine.”³⁷

As mentioned before only the Ethiopic church canonized the book. Christianity came to Ethiopia in the fourth century. Nickelsburg gives three reasons that may have led to its acceptance: (1) Christian missionaries, who held the book in high esteem, brought the book to them; (2) its stories fit the Ethiopian view of their world; and (3) Ethiopian Christians lacked the theological counterforces that lead to the book’s rejection in other areas of Christendom.³⁸ Beckwith indicates that eventually the church in this region became isolated from time to time from the rest of the Christian world because of Islamic control that lasted about 600 years. After this period, effort was made by Roman Catholics and Protestants following the Reformation to

³⁴ See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 90–92 and VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” 54–59.

³⁵ “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles” (7.16) in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, edited by Alexander Roberts (Hendrickson, 2004).

³⁶ This was the reason given by Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* (4). Eusebius notes its gradual wide acceptance and use in *Ecclesiastical History* (2.23). Jude is included in the Bodmer Papyrus MSS which dates from the 3rd century, cited by early church father as Scripture, it was listed in the *Muratorian Fragment* (c. 170 AD), and was recognized as canonical in the Third Council of Carthage, AD 397.

³⁷ Beckwith, 397–398.

³⁸ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 106–108. He also points out the authority of the book was disputed within the Ethiopian Church.

correct doctrinal errors and Christological heresies with the Ethiopic church. Part of this included an attempt to correct canonical issues but was ultimately unsuccessful.³⁹

At this point it is worth emphasizing that the Book of Enoch, compiled over 1,000 years, in part or in whole, was never included in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament according to the Masoretic Text), and it was never included in the Septuagint (LXX), the Jewish Greek translation of the Old Testament. Parts of it were found in a few New Testament MSS (e.g., Chester Beatty Papyrus) as well as quotes from early church fathers. However, such inclusion does not necessitate it was widely accepted as Scripture. Only one church father shows clear acceptance of it as Scripture (i.e., Tertullian). The fullest manuscripts of the book available today are those preserved in the Ethiopic canon and from the thirteenth century.

Canonicity: Theologically Considered

Definitions and Distinctions

The term “canon” (meaning “rule” or “standard”) has come to be used to identify the collection of books discovered to be inspired by God through prophets. Two inciteful verses describe this process from the standpoint of the human prophet. Peter says, “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet. 1:20–21). Paul describes the result of the process, which is ultimately a preserved, written (i.e., scriptural) text. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

It is not the case that everything said under inspiration by every prophet must become a written text. But what does become a written text from a prophet, under inspiration, is what is ultimately preserved for us and is the very Word of God, which as Paul implies, is sufficient for our faith and practice.

Norman Geisler succinctly defines the process:

Inspiration is the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, who through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors invested the very words of the original books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God without error in all that they teach or imply (including history and science), and the Bible is thereby the infallible rule and final authority for faith and practice of all believers.⁴⁰

Given this understanding, it is left to people to discover or recognize what God has inspired through his prophets’ writings and to separate it from what is not inspired or what is solely the product of a human writer. This does not mean that a merely human book cannot contain prophetic (in the sense of retelling prophetic truth) or spiritual truth. But the only reason we know it is prophetic is that it is also contained in Scripture and therefore confirmed or tested by Scripture. This stands true for every teacher of the Word (Acts 17:11) and tradition. *Sola Scripture* entails not the rejection of tradition or other books, but that tradition, non-scriptural books, and teachers must be checked by the bar of Scripture. Also, the level of authority given to them must be proportionate to their agreement with Scripture.

We will first examine some incorrect reasons that might be thought good to *determine* what is canonical. Then we will present the correct criterion used to *discover* canonicity.

Wrong Reasons for Inclusion

Relevant to our consideration of 1 Enoch as well as other books, there are five incorrect reasons that cannot be used to *determine* what books are canonical. In short, these *incorrect* reasons are age, language,

³⁹ Beckwith, 478–481.

⁴⁰ Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011), 178.

agreement, value, and usage.⁴¹ These incorrect reasons taken individually or collectively cannot be used to discover what is in the canon.

First, the age of a book, ancient or new, does not determine its canonicity. Many ancient books are not in the canon. For example, the *Wars of the Lord* is mentioned in Numbers (21:14), but it was never placed in the canon. And many new books, at the time, were placed in the canon immediately (Deut. 31:24; Dan. 9:2). So, the age of the book, ancient or new, does not determine its canonical status. One cannot say that because 1 Enoch is an ancient book, it should be considered Scripture.

Second, the language, including words, phrases, imagery, etc., used does not determine canonicity. Just because a book was written in Hebrew does not qualify it for inclusion. Not all the Old Testament is Hebrew. Some portions are in Aramaic (Dan. 2:4b–7:28; Ezra. 4:8–6:18, 7:12–26). Not all Hebrew books are in the canon (e.g., Jashar [Josh. 10]). Not all the words/phrases are exclusive to the canon. Books outside of the canon can use the same words, phrases, and imagery. Likewise, genre, the kind of literature, does not determine its canonical status. First Enoch cannot be placed in the canon because it was written in Aramaic or Greek or is Apocalyptic genre containing similar words, phrase, and imagery as canonical books.

Third, mere agreement with known Scripture does not determine its canonicity. This is an important test for exclusion as a book cannot be scriptural if it contradicts Scripture. In short, it is necessary that Scripture agrees with Scripture, but such is not a sufficient condition to be included. Not all books that agree are included (cf. John 21:25). Just because the Book of Enoch agrees in some parts with Scripture does not mean the entire book, or parts of the book, should be included.

Fourth, just because a book is revered as religious or deemed as having devotional value does not mean it should be included in the canon. Not all “inspiring” books are inspired by God in the special sense we have defined. Some of the most widely read Christian inspirational books are not inspired by God. Just because 1 Enoch was greatly revered in ancient times or today by believers does not mean it should be included. This criterion confuses the result of being inspirational to believers, with the cause (inspired by God).

Finally, Jewish or Christian usage, even over a long period of time does not make it canonical. This again is a necessary condition, in that it must ultimately be used by believers to be canonical, but it is not a sufficient condition to include it. This again confuses the result of a wide use or acceptance over time, with a cause of inspiration by God. Just because 1 Enoch was used widely over a long period of time by some believers does not qualify it for inclusion.

There is a common mistake that runs through these views: human recognition does not function as a determination that a book(s) is canonical. Theologically speaking, God’s inspiration of Scripture is the sole determining factor for its inclusion in the canon. After God’s inspiration resulting in a written document, humans can only succeed or fail in *recognizing* it as Scripture.

Right Reasons for Inclusion

There are *correct* principles for canonicity derived from a theistic worldview that helps in the discovery of what God has inspired. These include the following:⁴²

1. It was written by a prophet of God. (Heb. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:20–21)
2. It was confirmed by an act of God. (Heb. 2:3–4; Jn. 3:2; Acts 2:22)
3. It tells the truth about God. (Deut. 6:22f.; Gal 1:8)
4. It has the power of God. (Heb. 4:12)
5. It was accepted by the people of God. (1 Thess. 2:13; Dan. 9:2; 2 Pet. 3:15)

Where do these principles come from? While they are reflected in Scripture, they are grounded in or derived from a theistic view of the world. A defense of these principles can be found in theistic apologetics⁴³

⁴¹ This list is adapted from Geisler, *General Introduction to the Bible*, 208–211.

⁴² Geisler, *General Introduction to the Bible*, 223f.

⁴³ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), part two.

and theological prolegomena.⁴⁴ For example, principles 1, 2 and 4 rely on truth being absolute, the existence of God, and miracles. Principle 3 relies on the nature of God and the possibility of meaningful language about God. Principle 5 relies on knowing historical truth (Table 7).⁴⁵ All must apply, but some may just be implicitly present or confirmed through one book's being accepted by another work that is confirmed as Scripture.

Principles of Canonicity	Basis in Prolegomena
1. Written by a prophet of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian God exists. • Humans can know truth about God. • Humans can know and test for true prophets in the world.
2. Confirmed by an act of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miracles are possible and actual.
3. Tell the truth about God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth is what corresponds to reality. • Humans can communicate truth about God.
4. Has the power of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Word of God brings people to faith.
5. Accepted by the people of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering truth about the past (history) is possible. • An objective interpretation of a text is possible.

Table 7

The Book of Enoch may meet some of this criterion, but not all. For example, it may say some true things about God (principle 3) and be used by the people of God (principle 5). However, if it does not meet all, explicitly or implicitly, then it cannot be included in the canon. For example, it cannot be considered inspired by God unless it was written by a prophet or acknowledged by an inspired book to be Scripture (principle 1). Furthermore, it must be associated with an act of God or miracles in some way (principle 2). If it does not meet these, it is not inspired, and any and all spiritual and doctrinal authority it may have must be based on some other authentic source such as a living prophet in the days of the prophets, or for us today, inspired Scripture. That is, what it affirms spiritually and doctrinally, must agree with Scripture. It cannot establish new revelation, spiritual or theological truth, not contained in Scripture.

There is one other important reason to cite as to why 1 Enoch should not be included in the canon. Jesus Christ identified what the Hebrew Old Testament canon consisted of when He said,

“For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation’” (Luke 11:49–51).

Jesus acknowledges the Old Testament canon by saying, “From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.” Abel is the first prophet martyred in Genesis (4:8). However, Zechariah was not chronologically the last faithful prophet to be martyred. Uriah was in Jeremiah (26:20–2). However, Zechariah was canonically the last faithful prophet to be martyred; hence, Jesus is acknowledging the Hebrew order and canon that lists Chronicles as the last book of the Hebrew Old Testament (see Table 8). It is like saying from Genesis to Revelation for today, but for Jesus, it is saying from Genesis to Chronicles, which are the books known to be the Word of God in His day (Table 7). They are the same 39 books of the Protestant Old Testament today just in a different order.

⁴⁴ Norman L. Geisler and Douglas E. Potter, *Prolegomena to Evangelical Theology* (Indian Trail, NC: NGIM, 2016). See also Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology in One Volume*, part 1.

⁴⁵ Adapted from Geisler and Potter, *Prolegomena*, 115.

THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT ARRANGEMENT		
The Law	The Prophets	The Writings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Former Prophets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joshua 2. Judges 3. Samuel 4. Kings B. Later Prophets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isaiah 2. Jeremiah 3. Ezekiel 4. The Twelve 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Poetical Books <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psalms 2. Proverbs 3. Job B. Five Rolls (Megilloth) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Song of Songs 2. Ruth 3. Lamentations 4. Esther 5. Ecclesiastes C. Historical Books: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daniel 2. Ezra–Nehemiah 3. Chronicles

Table 8⁴⁶

This phrase is very significant to establishing the Old Testament canon; Jesus Christ is implicitly excluding from the canon the Book of Enoch, at least the vast majority of the book (see above) completed before His ministry (AD 29–33). He is siding with mainstream Rabbinic Judaism as to what constitutes the canon. Given that He did not hesitate to counter and argue with Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees on numerous occasions about many issues (Luke 11:37–54; 20), it is safe to say He did not counter or disagree with them on what constituted the canon of Scripture. Some even see Luke 11:49–51 as Jesus acknowledging the cessation of prophecy until John the Baptist.⁴⁷ Indeed, this was the period over which much of 1 Enoch was composed.

Reasons for and against 1 Enoch as an Authority

Reasons for an Authoritative 1 Enoch

Brian Godawa summarizes the case for taking 1 Enoch as authoritative, even if it is not canonical.

But the preponderance of evidence shows that not only does the New Testament letter of Jude quote directly from 1 Enoch 1 (Book of the Watchers), but the entire letter and its alternate version in 2 Peter, show signs of literary and theological dependency on the rest of the Book of the Watchers (Chaps. 1–36), as well as chapter 80 (Book of Luminaries), chapter 46 (Book of Parables), and chapter 100 (Epistle of Enoch). 2 Peter shows evidence of structural and thematic dependency on 1 Enoch 17–22 and 108 (Additional Books). But the fact is, the entire New Testament shows such a multitude of allusions and linguistic echoes of the entire corpus of 1 Enoch, that one can safely say, *the book and its basic interpretations may not be Scripture, but are surely legitimated by the Bible and are therefore worthy of study and high regard by the Christian Church.*⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Adapted from Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Us* (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 14.

⁴⁷ See Beckwith, 373 ff.

⁴⁸ Godawa, “Book of Enoch.”

Hence, the case for an authoritative 1 Enoch can be summarized as follows:

1. Authoritatively quoted by early church fathers
2. Common word usage, phrases, and influence on the New Testament
3. Quoted as prophecy in Jude (Scripture)
4. Provides the interpretation of Genesis 6.

Reasons for an Authoritative 1 Enoch Examined

Early Church Fathers

Similar to some today, there is no doubt that writers in the 2nd and 3rd century appealed to 1 Enoch, or parts of it, authoritatively.⁴⁹ But as Nickelsburg says, “Alongside these teachers of the early church is the vast majority who ignore or do not use the Enochic material or polemicize against it.”⁵⁰ Since the book is not to be included in the canon (see above), it does not itself have the authority of Scripture; it can only repeat truth already contained in Scripture. It cannot add new spiritual or doctrinal truth. Indeed, 1 Enoch’s interpretation of Scripture may agree with others, but all interpretation must appeal to the text of Scripture and consistent use of hermeneutical principles for its justification and truthfulness.⁵¹ Regardless of how the early church used and quoted it, this fact still stands. An examination of the church fathers shows that most used it to support the interpretation of angels who sinned with women.⁵² This, at best, shows it to contain *an interpretation* some church fathers agreed with, but not the only interpretation (see below), and it is not at all clear that in so doing they are accepting it or using 1 Enoch as inspired Scripture. Perhaps they are using it in a similar manner as Jude (see below), but not under divine inspiration, and just to support their interpretation or maybe as the best statement of their interpretation. As mentioned before, only one church father (i.e., Tertullian) explicitly states the Book of Enoch is Scripture (Table 9).⁵³

Church Father	Literature	Use/View
Justin Martyr (100–165 AD)	<i>The Second Apology</i> (5)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Tatian (110–172 AD)	<i>Address of Tatian to the Greeks</i> (20)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Athenagoras (176–180 AD)	<i>Embassy for The Christians</i> (24, 25)	Supports Angelic Interp./Source of Prophecy
Irenaeus (130–202 AD)	<i>Against Heresies</i> (16,2) <i>The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching</i> (18)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Clement of Alexandria (150–215 AD)	<i>Prophets</i> (2.1, 53.4), <i>Excerpts of Theodotus</i> (2); <i>Apostolic Constitution</i> (authorship ?) (7.16)	Source of Prophecy

⁴⁹ This at least includes Barnabas, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.

⁵⁰ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 101.

⁵¹ For a defense of the historical grammatical, single meaning interpretation of a text, which is followed here, see Thomas A. Howe, *Objectivity in Biblical Interpretation* (Advantage, 2004).

⁵² Another significant use concerns the person of Enoch as one of the witness in Revelation 11. This can be found in *The Apocalypse of Peter*, *The Apocalypse of Elijah*, *The Apocalypse of John*, the work of Tertullian and Hippolytus.

⁵³ See the assessment of early church fathers use of 1 Enoch in VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature” and Nickelsburg *1 Enoch 1*, 87–95.

Bardaisan (154–222 AD)	<i>The Book of the Laws of Countries</i>	Supports Angelic Interp.
Tertullian (160–220 AD)*	<i>On the Apparel of Women</i> (1,3); <i>On Idolatry</i> (15);	Accepts as Scripture
Pseudo–Clementine Literature	<i>Greek Homilies and Latin Recognitions</i> (8:10–20)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Julius Africanus (160–240 AD)	<i>Chronicle Preserved by Eusebius and Syncellus</i> (19–20)	Rejects Angelic Interp.
Zosimus of Panopolis (late 3 rd Cent.)	<i>Quotation Preserved by Syncellus</i> (14)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Origen (185–254 AD)*	<i>De Principiis</i> (1.3.3); <i>Contra Celsus</i> (5.54, 55); <i>Commentary on John</i> (6.25)	Accepts as Scripture may have later doubted
Commodian (ca. 250 AD)	<i>Instructions of Commodianus</i> (3)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Unknown Author (ca. 253–257 AD)	<i>A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian</i> (16)	Accepts as Scripture
Cyprian (d. 258)	<i>On the Dress of Virgins</i> (14)	Supports Angelic Interp.
Anatolius of Alexandria (ca. 270)	<i>Paschal Canon 5</i>	Cites Astronomical Calendar
Lactantius (ca. 240–320)	<i>Divine Institutes</i> Book 2 (14–17)	Supports Angelic Interp.**
Eusebius (263–339 AD)*	<i>Church History of Eusebius</i> (7.32.19); <i>Preparation for the Gospel</i> (9.17)	Not Stated
Hilary of Poitiers (300–368 AD)	<i>Tract. Super Psal.</i> (132.6)	Not Stated
Epiphanius (320–403 AD)	<i>Panarion</i>	Not Stated
Jerome (347–420 AD)*	<i>Lives of Illustrious Men</i> (4); <i>Catal. Script. Eccles.</i> (4); <i>Homily 45</i>	Rejects as Scripture
Rufinus (345–411 AD)	<i>Commentary</i>	Not Stated
Augustine (354–430 AD)*	<i>City of God</i> (15.23)	Rejects as Scripture

*Acknowledges use and rejection by others.

**Subsequent authors consistently follow the Sethite interpretation of Genesis 6, including Theodoret, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria.

Table 9

Furthermore, there are clear instances where the book is spiritually deficient and if not contradictory to Scripture at least contrary to it in at least some important doctrinal areas (see below).

Common Word Usage, Phrases, and Influence

As indicated above, language is not a sufficient criterion for canonicity, and neither is it sufficient to establish its authority. The New Testament is influenced by 1 Enoch, but it also makes use of words, phrases, and allusions from many non-canonical works. Aland's *The Greek New Testament* identifies the following works that show allusions and verbal parallels: Ascension of Isaiah, Assumption of Moses, Baruch, 1 Esdras, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Psalms of Solomon, Sirach, Susanna, Tobit, Wisdom, and a few pagan sources.⁵⁴ No one is saying these works are authoritative, in part or in whole, because of influence, verbal parallels, and allusions. Just as no one is willing to say that because a book today cites a Bible verse it is authoritative. One must examine the spiritual teaching and doctrine and compare the

⁵⁴ Aland, *The Greek New Testament*, 900.

content of what is being said to Scripture. Because this book claims to be inspired, which is false,⁵⁵ the only level of authority that should be given is the degree to which it correctly affirms what is already contained in Scripture.

Jude Quotes 1 Enoch as Prophecy

What should we make of Jude’s quotation of 1 Enoch as prophecy? A comparison of the scriptural quote with Ethiopic Enoch is in Table 10.⁵⁶

<p>Jude 14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, . . .</p>	
<p>Jude 14–15 Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.</p>	<p>1 Enoch 1:9 Behold, he comes with the myriads of his holy ones to execute judgment on all and to destroy all the wicked and to convict all flesh for all the wicked deeds that they have done and the proud and hard words that wicked sinners spoke against him. (Nickelsburg trans.)</p>

Table 10

Before presenting options regarding the quotation, it is worth asking why Jude quotes 1 Enoch. It is likely that his readers, being influenced by false teachers (Jude 4), are questioning if there will really be a judgment from God. Jude emphasizes judgment from the Old Testament on unbelievers (5), angels (6), Sodom and Gomorrah (7) so how much more certain there will be judgment on false teachers, “men” (14).

The Book of Enoch is likely cited because it is a source that his readers knew and would drive home the point of judgment to come. Or more importantly, it would drive them back to the Enoch of Genesis and the expectation of the worldwide judgment to come in the reoccurrence of the “days of Noah” (Matt. 24:37–39) that now Jude applies to the expectation of eschatological judgment of the ungodly false teachers of his day.

The difficulty is how can Jude quote the Book of Enoch and not imply that the entire book is prophetic, authoritative, or Scripture? There are at least three ways to take Jude’s introduction to the quotation:

It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, . . . (Jude 14).

Option one: By writing, “Enoch . . . saying” Jude is not citing the Book of Enoch, but giving an oral prophecy passed down from Enoch (the Old Testament prophet). Hence, it is the Book of Enoch that is quoting the same oral prophecy as Jude.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ This does not preclude the possibility that prophecy has been preserved in the book.

⁵⁶ Jude’s quotation shows familiarity with the Greek but is likely a translation of the Aramaic. R. J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Bible Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 93–98. Jude’s quotation from 1 Enoch includes modifications such as the replacement of “Lord” for “God,” which is the antecedent to 1 Enoch’s pronoun (“he”), the altering of “comes” to the future tense (aorist), the omission of “destroy all the wicked,” the substitution of “ungodly” for “flesh” and “wicked,” the omission of “great” or “proud.” In effect, as noted by Bauckham, these changes turn what is a divine theophany into the advent of Christ.

⁵⁷ See Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992), 549–550. While still an option, most do not hold this because of the approximate time of writing and because Jude gives no indication that such was unheard.

Option two: “Prophesied”⁵⁸ saves us from having to embrace the entire work as written under divine inspiration of God. Had he said, “as it is written” or simply said (the book of) Enoch says . . . or Scripture says . . . , we would then need to take the position that Enoch (as it existed in Jude’s day) is Scripture. This was a prophecy given by Enoch (of the Old Testament) orally and written down and preserved (even through the Flood by Noah) and found its way into some Enochian MSS that Jude cites under divine inspiration.⁵⁹

Option three: Jude’s quotation refers only to *the* Book of Enoch (as it existed in Jude’s day) that repeats what is contained in Scripture elsewhere (see parallel chart Table 11), and Jude cites it because his reader would appreciate it coming from the Book of Enoch. Hence, it can be called prophecy because it says the same thing that Scripture says.

Jude 14–15	Old Testament
It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam	Jared lived one hundred and sixty–two years, and became the father of Enoch. (Gen. 5:18) Enoch lived sixty–five years, and became the father of Methuselah. (Gen. 5:21)
prophesied, saying,	Scripture (=God) says,
Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,	The Lord came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them. (Deut. 33:2)
to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way	‘A clamor has come to the end of the earth, Because the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He is entering into judgment with all flesh; As for the wicked, He has given them to the sword,’ declares the Lord. (Jer. 25:31)
and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.	For the Lord will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the Lord will be many. (Isa. 66:16)

Table 11

It is not necessary to discover which view is correct or even the best, as just having options is enough to show how Jude can cite the Book of Enoch without having to extend authority, prophecy or inspiration to the entire Book of Enoch.

This point is especially noteworthy given that there are instances of Rabbinic teaching, not contained in the Old Testament, but affirmed in the New Testament as true. This entails that once a cultural or traditional belief is spoken or written in Scripture, under inspiration by a prophet, in a context that affirms its truth, it must be true. This may be the case with the following:

- Paul seems to accept the story of the Rock that followed the Israelites in their wanderings (1 Cor. 10:4).
- Paul gives the names of the magicians who resisted Moses before Pharaoh (2 Tim. 3:8).
- Paul recognizes the work of angels in giving the Law (Gal. 3:19).

⁵⁸ This term is used in the New Testament to introduce a quotation from the Old Testament (Matt. 15:7 to Isa. 29:13), and a cognate is used by Paul to quote a heathen poet (Titus 1:12).

⁵⁹ This is Tertullian’s view, who accepts 1 Enoch as Scripture, “On the Apparel of Women” 1.3 and Augustine’s view, who rejects 1 Enoch as Scripture, *City of God*, 15.23.

- Stephen speaks of Moses as learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).
- Hebrews (11:37) alludes to the tradition of Isaiah’s death (*Ascension of Isaiah*).
- James (5:17) limits the drought predicted by Elijah to 3 ½ years.

Jude may be doing a similar thing with the quotation from 1 Enoch. What is important is that just as the rest of Rabbinic tradition is left out of Scripture, so too, the rest of the Book of Enoch is left out as well. Only Jude and other biblical authors, under divine inspiration, have the authority to take from non-scriptural sources, tradition or cultural beliefs and pronounce it as true or in some cases prophetic. This is certainly the way that 1 Enoch, as well as other Pseudepigrapha books, influence the New Testament. The reader only needs to embrace the affirmation or teaching of the biblical text as true, not the entire cultural and religious beliefs of the author or their sources used (See Figure 1). Other times, it is worth noting that the New Testament brings significant correction to Rabbinic tradition. This is the case with Christ and traditional Rabbinic Judaism, the Gospels themselves, and some even take 1 Peter 3:18–20 as a correction to the Book of Enoch. It is Christ who goes to proclaim his victory to the angels, not Enoch who goes to the angels who have sinned (1 Enoch 10–16).

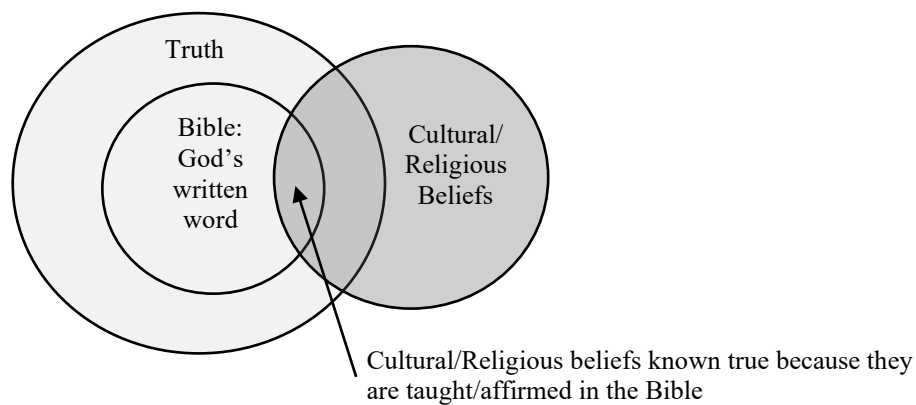


Figure 1

Provides the Interpretation of Genesis 6

The passage from Genesis (6: 1–4) which 1 Enoch incorporates is as follows:

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” Then Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

1 Enoch’s View: The Enochian view is more of an elaboration (6:1–19:3) than an interpretation since it provides many more details and assertions, not to mention assumes cultural beliefs. In short, the account in the Book of Enoch adds that the “watchers” (=angels) numbered two hundred. They descended in the days of Jared to Mount Hermon (6:5). Under the leadership of Asael⁶⁰ (also Shemihazah), seven chief watchers are named (6:7). Not only do the watchers “go in to” the daughters of men, but also they teach them sorcery and charms (7:1). Great giants⁶¹ are conceived as a result and these begot Nephilim (7:2). The giants kill men and

⁶⁰ “Azazel” mentioned in the Ethiopic MSS. According to Nickelsburg the material about Asael is imported from the Greek myth of Prometheus or some version of it (*1 Enoch 1*, 29).

⁶¹ The giants of Enoch (7:2–3) in the extant MSS are (1) not given a height; (2) said to be 3000 cubits high (3,420 meters or 11,250 ft.) or (3) said to be 300 cubits high (342 meters, 1,120 ft.). Nickelsburg considers the MSS with height

devour them (7:3). Each chief watcher continues to reveal secrets to men include every “instrument of war” to men and “ornaments” and “eye paint” for women (8:1). Such great sin, death, and destruction results in the world that complaint is made to heaven (9:1f.). As a result, four archangels (Michael, Sariel, Raphael, and Gabriel, 9:1) are commissioned to imprison Asael (10:4ff), destroy the giants, also called “half-breeds” (10:11ff), and cleanse the earth (10:16 ff.). Enoch, after he is taken up, is commissioned to address and eventually intercede on behalf of the watchers (13:4). But eventually the watchers, Enoch tells them, will be bound for all eternity (14:5). We are told that the giants become evil spirits (demons) who inhabit the earth (15:6–9).

The 1 Enoch account clearly adds additional material not only to the Genesis account but the rest of Scripture, that, to be considered true, would necessitate 1 Enoch’s account as being inspired or Scripture. Any approach that takes 1 Enoch’s elaboration as just spiritually authoritative must show how other interpretations that seek to explain Genesis 6 in the context of Genesis and the rest of Scripture are faulty, or minimally give reasons why 1 Enoch’s elaboration fits the context of Genesis and the rest of Scripture better than any other interpretation. There are two prevailing interpretations that attempt to explain Genesis 6 (1–4) within the context of Genesis, the Pentateuch and the rest of Scripture. They are the line of Seth view and the angel view (Table 12).⁶²

Line of Seth View (or *Sethite View*): Some interpret “sons of God” as referring to the godly line of Seth⁶³ from whom the Redeemer would come (Gen. 4:26). This line intermingled with the godless line of Cain. Humans are referred to in the Bible as God’s “sons” (Isa. 43:6; Luke 3:38; Gal. 3:26). “Sons” seems to indicate a direct creation of God, as Adam is a son of God (Luke 3:38; Gal 3:26). The line of Adam through Seth constitutes God’s image since Seth was begotten in Adam’s image (cf. Gen. 5:1–3).

Angel View: Others interpret the phrase “sons of God” (Gen. 6:2) as referring to angels (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7). The Greek Old Testament (LXX) translates this “angels,” and the New Testament may be referring to these as angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6–7). Yet, Jesus taught that angels “neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Matt. 22:30). So, some suggest that the “sons of God” were already demons who possessed human beings that interbreed with “the daughters of men,” thus producing the “men of renown.” This seems to avoid the problem that angels as such are bodiless (Heb. 1:14) and sexless spirits (Matt. 22:30) and cannot cohabit with women.

Line of Seth View	Angel View
“sons of God” = godly line of Seth	“sons of God” = Angels (Job 1:6)
This line intermingled with the godless line of Cain, thus producing the “giants” and “men of renown.”	angels who possessed human beings that interbreed with “the daughters of men,” thus producing the “giants” and “men of renown.”

Table 12

Why is this story here in Genesis? Regardless of which interpretation is correct, the “sons of God” saw that the daughters of humankind were “beautiful.” Thomas Howe, an advocate of the Sethite view, shows that the language used would suggest this is a reenactment of the fall (Gen. 3:6). Moses used this story in Genesis 6 to warn Israel not to abandon God’s instruction. God is the one who tells Israel what is good, and Israel was

to be a secondary gloss that eventually was dropped. The immense height may be attributed to a Jewish tradition that ascribed immense height to angels. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 182 (note c), 185–186.

⁶² There are more than two views, but these are the most widely held. See Thomas A. Howe, “Who are The Sons of God in Genesis 6?” *Christian Research Journal* 7, no. 3 (2004). See also his more technical analysis Thomas A. Howe, *Who Are the Sons of God: Parts 1–4* (2004), accessed May 29, 2016, http://www.richardghowe.com/index_htm_files/WhoAretheSonsofGodinGenesisSix.pdf.

⁶³ Julius Africanus is thought to be the first to suggest this interpretation. It was also held by Augustine (*City of God*, 15.23).

to be on guard against the enticement of the world that would lead them away from the pure worship and dedication to the God of Israel.⁶⁴

Michael Heiser, an advocate of the angel view says, “The reason Genesis 6:1–4 is in the Bible is because the writer sought to target the deeply held religious beliefs of Mesopotamia and, most pointedly, the myth of Babylonian superiority.” Enochian literature and Genesis 6:1–4 records “a transgression of heaven and earth that would corrupt humankind and produce a lineage that would later be a threat to the very existence of Israel.”⁶⁵

Still others have observed that this event is mentioned in Genesis 6, so it would not interfere or confuse Israel concerning the promised Messiah in Gen. 3:15 who was born of a virgin (Isa. 4:14) as “the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:19–25) not angels.

According to the Lexicon, “Nephilim” means “giants.”⁶⁶ However, this is likely based on the LXX translation. The etymology is “fallen ones.” The only other occurrence is in Num. 13:33: “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim), and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” They are giant sized humans who live in the land and who serve as a terror to the spies. Also, of interest is why the parenthetical note, “and also afterward” (Gen. 6:4). The author, Moses, wants the reader to connect these two groups in some way. Howe explains what Moses may be doing:

Just like there are fallen ones in our time, so there were fallen ones then too. And if Moses’ connection is of value, it at least serves to connect these two groups by way of their similarities. The Nephilim after the flood in the land of Canaan were giants and enemies of the people of God. They were apparently warriors who had a terrible reputation.⁶⁷

Given 1 Enoch’s non-inspired status, those who take 1 Enoch’s account as authoritative must answer why 1 Enoch’s elaboration, which introduces new revelation not contained elsewhere in Scripture, really happened (i.e., authentic). Appealing to the worldview of certain biblical authors is not sufficient.⁶⁸ They must show how it fits the context of Genesis and the rest of Scripture. They should make a clear demarcation between what the Bible affirms is true, not just mentions something, and what is left out because it is inauthentic in non-biblical works or a worldview.⁶⁹

This difficulty can be illustrated briefly by comparing and contrasting Genesis 6 with 1 Enoch, assuming the angelic view of “sons of God”: Angels by nature are immaterial (or bodiless) according to Heb. 1:14. So we can ask and answer the basic question: what does the Bible alone, affirm about the incident? According to Jude 6–7 angels left their domain. That is the spiritual realm. And “they [angels] . . . indulged in gross

⁶⁴ Thomas A. Howe, *Who Are the Sons of God: Part 3 The Sethite View* (2004).

⁶⁵ Heiser, 49–50.

⁶⁶ Francis Brown, et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Clarendon Press, 1951), 658; R. Laird Harris, et al. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:587, adds that the term is of unknown origin and is therefore transliterated “Nephilim” and may mean “heroes” or “fierce warriors.”

⁶⁷ Howe, *Who Are the Sons of God: Part 3*, 11.

⁶⁸ The world view of biblical authors is certainly helpful in understanding the original context or a biblical theology of their book(s), but systematic theology is a higher discipline because it integrates general revelation with biblical revelation through retroduction to formulate doctrine, thus attempting to excluding all error that may be in an author’s worldview. (See Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 159–164.)

⁶⁹ Heiser, *Reversing Hermon*, attempts to do this. While he does not accept 1 Enoch as “inspired and canonical,” (4) he does take the book as not “entirely inauthentic” (5) and “the Watcher story seriously” and “necessary” (7) for interpreting some New Testament passages. Hence, he gives the impression that the story of the Watchers as told in 1 Enoch must be authentic to some degree because it was a belief held by Jews and some biblical authors but never draws a clear line or sets up criterion (the degree) by which one can discern what in 1 Enoch is authentic vs. inauthentic.

immorality and went after strange flesh.” Presumably these angels possessed men or assumed material bodies. However, possession seems more likely as there are no instances of evil angels assuming material bodies, but demonic possession is very real in the Bible. Neither are there instances of good angels possessing humans, but there are instances of good angels assuming or appearing in bodies.⁷⁰ In the angelic view then, the aforementioned evil angels possessed men who took wives, and this is what is described in Gen. 6:2. This took place during the days that the Nephilim were on the earth. They were killed in Noah’s flood. These demonically possessed men had sexual intercourse with women who bore children. “Those” children became well known as mighty men. As a result, those demonic angels have been kept in eternal bonds until their judgment (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4).

But even giving this interpretation of the passage, one need *not* embrace as true the elaboration found in 1 Enoch (6:1–19:3) that goes beyond what Scripture affirms. This includes, for example not having to accept the number of angels involved, the names or titles of the angels involved, the location, the revealing of secrets to men in the evil arts, warfare, witchcraft, etc. It does not have to accept the giants killing men, the killing of the half-breeds or giants, the dispatching of archangels and intercession of Enoch, or the spirits of giant’s becoming evil spirits (demons) on the earth. None of this is affirmed in Scripture. There is no way for us to today know any of this is true apart from Scripture’s affirmation to affirm it. First Enoch’s account, or some variation, may indeed be the view of some biblical writers, but we are not obliged by Scripture to accept the author’s religious and cultural views. Such may help us understand the background and help interpret Scripture, but we are only obligated to accept what is affirmed or taught by the text of Scripture. Anything else is mere speculation.

Reasons to Reject an Authoritative 1 Enoch

As stated before, I am not interested in rejecting all value to the Book of Enoch. It is an important book that adds much to our understanding of the Ancient Jewish world as well as other literature, including the New Testament. However, there are good reasons to put forward to reject 1 Enoch as Scripture, and therefore it cannot add new spiritual or doctrinal truth. Summarized below are some Jewish as well as Christian reasons to reject 1 Enoch as being authoritative or able to add additional prophetic revelation to Scripture.

Jewish Reasons

Jewish reasons to reject it as a source of spiritual and doctrinal authority can be summarized as follows: First, the genre is Jewish folklore and legend. It is not narrative grounded in the real events and people in a Jewish historical setting. Its only possible prophetic authority is its attribution to an ancient prophet (Enoch). However, the textual history and development would make it very unlikely if not impossible for the entire work to have come from the ancient biblical prophet Enoch. Hence, *prima facia* it makes a false claim. Such a claim is being made with no known prophet or prophecy backing up the book. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible to defend a one–author, compiler or prophet school hypothesis, especially given the almost 1,000 years it took to come into its present form. This does not negate holding that some portions could be from biblical Enoch, but only another prophet, under divine inspiration, could know what was and was not truly prophetic in an otherwise uninspired text. Second, it claims to give revelation earlier than the writing of Hebrew Scriptures but shows clear literary reliance on many Old Testament books especially Isaiah and Psalms, but no quotations.⁷¹ Many of the texts of 1 Enoch seem to closely parallel the language and form of

⁷⁰ See Genesis 19 for example. Also, Geisler observes, “It would appear that only some, not all, angels have this ability. This may be inferred from the fact that some angels only appear in visions (not materializations) and that some angels (demons) seek embodiment in other physical beings, apparently not having any way to materialize” (*Systematic Theology*, 655).

⁷¹ The one exception to this may be the use of “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isa. 6:3).

canonical Old Testament books.⁷² Such false claims from a book that claims to be prophecy cannot be overlooked in any assessment of its authority. Third, there is no place in the Book of Enoch for the Law of Moses or the elaborate sacrificial system. Some of those who wrote the book considered those who built the new temple were impure and apostate. Fourth, there is hostility to Enoch, and presumably any book bearing his name, by some Jewish teachers in the earliest Christian centuries.⁷³ Fifth, it offers a detailed interpretation of Genesis 6⁷⁴ that includes an alternate (from Satan) kingdom of evil with its own account of the origin of evil, not easily reconciled with Genesis and the rest of the Old Testament. Sixth, for these reasons and more, it is never placed in the Jewish canon. If it was truly of prophetic origin, Rabbinic Judaism would have recognized it as they did many other inspired books as they were written (Deut. 31:24–26). But this book likely only became popular among some Jewish sects, and it is not clear that they even accepted it as Scripture. As Nickelsburg summarizes, “The exclusion of the Enochic works from the canon of the Hebrew Bible was probably due to complex factors in the sociology and religious thought and practice of late Second Temple Judaism.”⁷⁵

Christian Reasons

The Christian rejection, which builds upon all the Jewish reasons for rejection, rests on the fact that it contains very difficult contraries, and perhaps actual contradictions, to the New Testament.⁷⁶ The following coverage of such difficulties and problems here is not exhaustive, but these are included because they seem most problematic in accepting its authority. They include an incompatible view of hell, the origin of evil, and the son of man.

Incompatible View of Hell

The Christian, to accept Enoch as authoritative, must adopt a view of a third maybe a fourth compartment for souls, and perhaps even annihilationism is insinuated. A compartmental “Purgatory like” view of the afterlife (Enoch 22:9–13) can be found in The Book of the Watchers (1–36):

9. And he answered me and said, “*These three* were made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And this has [1] *been separated* for the spirits of the righteous, where the right fountain of water is. 10. And this has [2] *been created*, <the spirits of the> *sinner*s, when they die and are buried in the earth, and *judgment has not been executed on them in their life*. 11. Here their spirits are [3] *separated* for this great torment, until the great day of judgment, of scourges and tortures of the cursed forever, *that there might be a recompense* for their spirits. There he will bind them forever. 12. And this has been [4] *separated* for the spirits of them that make suit, who make disclosure about the destruction, when they were murdered in the days of the sinners. 13. And this was created for the spirits of the people who will not be pious, but sinners, who were godless, and they were companions with the

⁷² For example, Enoch 1:1-3 closely parallels Num. 24:15-17. See the extensive analysis by Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1, 1 Enoch 2*.

⁷³ “He was not inscribed in the roll of the righteous but in the roll of the wicked. . . . Enoch was a hypocrite” *Genesis Rabba*, 25, in H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, *Midrash Rabbah* (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 205, accessed May 29, 2017, <https://archive.org/details/RabbaGenesis>.

⁷⁴ Philo of Alexandria shows no evidence of using 1 Enoch and suggests the option of interpreting “sons of God” as excellent and good “men” which later favors the Sethite interpretation (*Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.92). Josephus also sees Genesis 6 as referring to the Sethites instead of the watchers (*Antiquities* 1.3.1).

⁷⁵ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 82.

⁷⁶ To be contradictory something must be affirmed as true and not true (A is non-A) at the same time or in the same sense/relationship such that if “A” is true, the opposite “non-A” must be false. To be contrary is to recognize a difficulty but allow for a possible reconciliation (A is not B).

lawless. And their spirits will not be punished on the day of judgment, *nor will they be raised from there.* (Nickelsburg trans., emphasis added)

In other places, the afterlife of sinners may result in annihilationism as indicated by the phrase “perish forever and ever.” First Enoch 53:2, in part, reads,

And from the presence of the Lord of Spirits the sinners will perish, and from the face of this earth they will be taken, and they will perish forever and ever. (Nickelsburg trans.)⁷⁷

From these passages, a few things emerge that seem incompatible with the New Testament. First, there are three compartments for sinners, one for those who die and face no judgment in this life for their sins, one for those who die and “might” make recompense for their sins, and one for those who “make suit” and some will not even be raised for judgment. This seems contrary to the Old Testament that has just two destinies, one for believers and one for unbelievers, who will all be raised: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). Even Jesus Christ taught there will be two resurrections (John 5:28–29; cf. Rev. 20:4–6). The New Testament, while not opposed to degrees of punishment for sinners in hell (Rev. 20:12–13), makes no room for the purging of sins. The Apostle Paul said, “These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” Furthermore, there is no notion of annihilationism present in the New Testament, as such a notion is contrary to the character of God who made all humans in His image and likeness.⁷⁸

Incompatible View of the Origin of Evil

One of the important claims of the Book of Enoch is that all sin entered the world through Asael as stated in 1 Enoch 10:8 (cf. 9:6):

And all the earth was made desolate by the deeds of the teaching of Asael, and over him write *all* the sins. (Nickelsburg trans., emphasis added)

Nickelsburg agrees this may have been a reason for its eventual rejection as authoritative. “Enochic writings all but ignore the Eden story and thus identify the watchers as the source of all substantial evil”⁷⁹ This, to say the least, is contrary to Genesis chapter 3. The Book of Enoch has little mention of Satan (53:3, 54:6).⁸⁰ Instead, 1 Enoch says that men were taught the art of witchcraft by two angels Uzza and Asael, who showed their discontent at the creation of Adam, gave up the bliss of heaven, and afterward fell in love with a woman and were punished by God.

Incompatible View of the Son of Man

At the end of the Parables of Enoch (not found in the DSS), Enoch is transported to “the heavens of heavens and told by an angel ‘You are *the* Son of Man’ ” (1 Enoch 71:14, emphasis added; cf. 60:10.) The context of these passages are the Similitudes (also called Parables 37–71) that date c. 105–64 B.C.⁸¹ Three English translations are as follows:

⁷⁷ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 67 (see note *a*) suggests this as a possible meaning for the phrase “perish forever and ever” (1 Enoch 53:2).

⁷⁸ See Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, chapter 81 for a critique of the annihilationist view.

⁷⁹ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 102.

⁸⁰ The *Secrets of Enoch* (2 Enoch) a much later work presents a demonology that some think attempts to reconcile Satan and the Watchers.

Then that angel came to me [Enoch], and with his voice saluted me, saying, **You are the Son of man**, who art born for righteousness. (Richard Laurence trans., emphasis added)

And he (i.e. the angel) came to me and greeted me [Enoch] with His voice, and said unto me '**This is the Son of Man** who is born unto righteousness, And righteousness abides over him, and righteousness has rested upon you. And the righteousness of the Head of Days forsakes him not.' (R. H. Charles trans., emphasis added)

And he came to me and greeted me with his voice and said to me, “**you (are) that Son of Man** who was born for righteousness, and righteousness dwells on you, and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not forsake you. (Nickelsburg trans., emphasis added)

Prior to this pronouncement (45–57), the Messiah is described. E. Isaac summarizes this depiction:

The Messiah in 1 Enoch, called the Righteous One, and the Son of Man, is depicted as a pre-existent heavenly being who is resplendent and majestic, possesses all dominion, and sits on his throne of glory passing judgment upon all moral and spiritual beings.⁸²

Consider the following comparison (Table 13):

Description of The Messiah	Description of Enoch
<p>And I asked the angel of peace, who went with me and showed me [Enoch] all the hidden things, about that son of man—who he was and whence he was (and) why he went with the Head of Days. And he answered me and said to me, “this is the son of man who has righteousness, and righteousness dwells with him. And all the treasures of what is hidden he will reveal; . . . 1 Enoch 46:1–3 (Nickelsburg trans., emphasis added)</p>	<p>And he came to me [Enoch] and greeted me with his voice and said to me, “you (are) that Son of Man who was born for righteousness, and righteousness dwells on you, and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not forsake you. 1 Enoch 71:14 (Nickelsburg trans., emphasis added)</p>

Table 13

The Christian reader, to say the least, should be baffled given this Messianic description as the “son of man”⁸³ and then the claim soon after that Enoch is *that* son of man. How should we take 1 Enoch’s designation as the son of man? Nickelsburg comments on the use of the definite article,

The term “son of man” is introduced. Here and throughout the Parables (with the exception of 69:27) the term is qualified: “this/that son of man” or “the son of man who . . .,” but, as is often the case in Ethiopic, which has no definite article, the demonstratives, “this” and “that” very likely reproduce the

⁸¹ There is debate over chapter 71 not being a part of the original or early editions. That is chapter 71 may have been inserted much later. See extended discussion in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 2*, 330–332. However, this does not seem to diminish the perplexity of a Christian reader, and there is some evidence that a Christian scribe may have altered the conclusion to the Epistle of Enoch (105:2) to introduce God and his Son.

⁸² Isaac, “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, 9.

⁸³ VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” sees its Jewish use in Enoch as a “superhuman eschatological judge” (89), and Nickelsburg sees the titles used as indicating his function “as the agent of God’s judgment” George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Son of Man” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, Doubleday, 1992), 6:139.

article in the earlier Greek form of the Parables. Thus, the text refers back to a known “son of man,” one already introduced.⁸⁴

This, according to Nickelsburg, is a figure probably derived from Daniel 7. He comments further,

Enoch is greeted by the Lord of Spirits, who identifies him as the protagonist in his own visions. He is the son of man born for righteousness. This turn of events is totally unexpected. Previously, there has been no hint that the heavenly deliverer had an earthly existence, much less that Enoch had been seeing visions about himself. The text is probably an addition to an earlier form of the Book of Parables.⁸⁵

In the Old Testament, only God designates who receives the title “son of man” or “the son of man.” In the New Testament Christ (=God) designates himself as “the son of man.”⁸⁶ But in the Book of Enoch, an angel⁸⁷ designates Enoch as “the son of man” and is said to be born in and dwells in righteousness.⁸⁸

It is true that the title “son of man” is used of the prophet Ezekiel in the Old Testament. Feinberg sheds some light on why.

Ezekiel is addressed as “son of man,” a phrase of great significance for him. It is found more than ninety times in this prophecy and always refers to Ezekiel. The title appears once in Daniel (8:17) but is not used of any other prophet. When used of man it points out the prophet’s position as a frail creature in the sight of the majestic Creator.⁸⁹

This is far from the use found in 1 Enoch. In the New Testament, the title is used over 80 times for Jesus Christ. Only the promised Messiah in the Old Testament (Psa. 8:4, 80:17, 144:3; Isa. 51:12, 56:2) and Jesus Christ in the New Testament is titled “the son of man.” Jesus Christ alone fulfills the law, all righteousness (Matt. 5:17), has all authority given to him (Matt. 28:18), and will establish his Kingdom on earth (Matt. 16:28; cf. 26:64).

Some Jews may have thought Enoch or another prophet would come as the Messiah to liberate them. But if the Book of Enoch is describing the prophet Enoch as the promised Messiah,⁹⁰ then the Book of Enoch is

⁸⁴ Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” 139.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸⁶ Only in his ascended resurrected state as given in Revelation is he described “like a son of man” (Rev. 1:13, 14:14).

⁸⁷ The text mentions four angels. It is not clear which one pronounces Enoch as “the son of man” (1 Enoch 71:13). See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 2*, 327–328.

⁸⁸ While 1 Enoch does use the phrase elsewhere similar to Ezekiel (cf. 1 Enoch 60:10), this use likely is to create a composite figure taken from Daniel 7, Isaiah. 11, Psalm. 2, and Isaiah 42, 49, 52–53. See Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” 138. Nickelsburg argues that it should be taken more technically here: “. . . in the present context, the juxtaposition of ‘Head of Days’ and ‘Son of Man’ and other allusions to its original Danielic context all but *require* us to read the expression as the technical term that occurs fifteen times in the Parables. . . . The primary characteristic of the Son of Man here is his righteousness (9v. 14bc), which is defined as a quality of God (v. 14d).” *1 Enoch 2*, 328.

⁸⁹ Charles Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), 22. The phrase “son of man” is also used in Job (25:6; 35:8) but not directly of Job.

⁹⁰ Granted other options/interpretations have been given that reject Daniel 7 as background and see ‘the son of man’ in 1 Enoch as being a hybrid between man and angels or just an angel with divine qualities to counter the sin of the angels. But from a Christian standpoint, these options are just as objectionable, if not more so, given the argument about Son of Man needing to be human to serve as our high priest and yet not sharing the nature of angels (Hebrews 1-2). See Pierpaolo Bertalotto, “The Enochic Son of Man, Psalm 45, and the Book of the Watchers,” *Journal of the Study of Pseudepigrapha*, 19.3 (2010): 195-216.

just as wrong as some people were in Christ's day about the Messiah (Mark 8:27–28). First Enoch, to say the least, is a poor source for spiritual authority, especially concerning who is the Messiah. If 1 Enoch's depiction as the son of man, should be taken as the Messiah, then the Book of Enoch (at least the Similitudes) is in error. For this not to be the case, one must show that the translation is wrong, or the manuscripts are not reliable, or the interpretation is wrong.

Some might say that 1 Enoch, especially given that this part of the book was written before or during the time of Christ, should not be taken literally as the Messiah, but as a typology for Christ, the way some Old Testament figures were prefiguring Christ. In response, the Old Testament never presents Enoch as a type of Christ (i.e., doing in the Old Testament what Christ does in the New).⁹¹ So, 1 Enoch would be giving additional or new revelation, and it therefore would be assuming an authority for the book that it has not demonstrated. Second, the Book of Enoch does not prefigure his doing anything that Christ does in the New Testament. And given how Enoch is described and ascribed with Messianic titles in 1 Enoch, it seems to go well beyond a prefiguring typology.

Some might respond that the Book of Enoch may be wrong on these things but still right on other things. This may be so, but how do we know if it is not Scripture or repeating Scripture? To make use of the kind of argument that Jesus made to Nicodemus (John 3:12), if we cannot trust the Book of Enoch on the big issue like who is the Messiah, how can we trust it on smaller issues like angels and giants?

Conclusion

No doubt, some Jews were accustomed to accepting rabbinical explanations or additions to Scripture as having authority. Jesus Christ rightly criticized them for placing their traditions over Scripture. However, inspiration and inerrancy entail that only what is affirmed or taught in Scripture has divine authority. Men (prophets and apostles) in a certain culture and time, using their background, vocabulary, etc., wrote the Bible under the inspiration of God. If they affirmed under inspiration doctrine, teaching, events, and passages from non-biblical books from their culture, not found elsewhere in Scripture, then what they specifically affirmed should be understood to be true. What however is not present in Scripture, from their culture and religion, cannot in the same way be understood to be true, as its source does not have the authority of Scripture. Such a source can though repeat what is already contained in Scripture, and by so doing repeat something from a source that does have authority, i.e., Scripture. And like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul, an Apostle, was saying was according to Scripture, we also must do likewise (Acts 17:11) with any ancient or contemporary teacher or book. Believers are in no position to play the role of a prophet or apostle in dealing with ancient non-biblical books and assigning authority to their statements and teaching beyond what is affirmed in Scripture. It is certainly dangerous, potentially faith wrecking, to do so. As Norman Geisler is often known for saying to his students, "Only one book I read to believe, the Bible, all others I read only to consider."⁹²

⁹¹ Enoch, in the Old Testament at least according to a pre-millennial eschatology, is prefiguring what happens to believers at the first resurrection when they are taken up (raptured) before the judgement of God or Tribulation (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

⁹² Terry L. Miethe, ed., *I Am Put Here for the Defense of the Gospel* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2016), 432.