

Appendix C: What About the Canonicity of the Book of Enoch?

Dating The Book of Enoch

The dating and the origin of this book is shrouded in mystery. It purports to be written by Enoch—a pre-flood figure. He was seventh in lineage from Adam. He never saw death. (Gen. 5:22; Heb.11:5.) The text purports to be accounts of Enoch being swept up into heaven and back again potentially over a long period of time. The conventional view by critics is the text was written somewhere around 150 B.C.-50 B.C., but this is conjecture. All that is truly known is the work existed for a long time prior to Christ. Portions were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls some of which date to 250 B.C. It could be much older than 150 B.C.. No Jewish source ascribes any specific source *other than Enoch* for this work, nor is there any Jewish tradition that rules it out existing from the period in which Enoch lived.



Stelae (pillar) in Ethiopia from pre-Christian era

There is a lore about the book's origin that traces it to Enoch's time. Josephus (37-38 A.D.) is understood to be talking about the Book of Enoch when he says the secrets of Seth in astronomy were etched pre-flood into two pillars (also called *stelae*), one of stone and one of brick. (Enoch is filled with amazingly accurate and advanced astronomy.)¹ These two stone pillar-tablets for Enoch's writings are referred to six times in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the *Book of Giants*. In the Persian fragment of the *Book of Giants*, it ascribes to Enoch the writing on the two tablets.² Armenian and Byzantine Christian writings later thereafter claimed the Book of Enoch was preserved

1. Andrei A. Orlov, "Overshadowed by Enoch's Greatness: "Two Tablets" Traditions from the Book of Giants to Palaea Historica," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 32 (2001) 137-158, reprinted online at <http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/giants>. Orlove is referring to Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 4.33.

pre-flood on these two pillars. The Byzantine Christian tradition said one was made of marble and one was made on bricks.³ The marble was to survive a flood. The bricks were to survive a fire.

Yet, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* is entirely silent on the nature of the early Jewish tradition on this book. There may have been another tradition than the pillars. Tertulian in the 200s claimed the Book of Enoch was preserved by Noah on the ark.

In light of the above, perhaps it is best to say the origin of the Book of Enoch is shrouded in mystery. We thus should judge it on its verifiable prophetic nature, not whether we know precisely whom wrote it or when. Furthermore, as long as its original source were *stelae* made of marble and brick that survived the flood, it does not much matter when the *papyrus* version was first preserved.

Use in the
New
Testament.

Christians cannot ignore this book for three important reasons. First, this is the book to which Jesus and the apostles are repeatedly alluding. As the *Jewish Encyclopedia* notes, the New Testament writers (*i.e.*, the words from Jesus) “undoubtedly often [are] us[ing the Book of Enoch] without special reference being made to it.”⁴ Second, Jude explicitly quotes it as Scripture. (Jude 14,15 “Enoch ... prophesied,” quoting Enoch 2:26.) In fact,

2. *Id.* The Dead Sea source is from F. García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997) 1.221. The Persian fragment is from W. Sundermann, “Ein weiteres Fragment aus Manis Gigantenbuch” *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemain emerito oblata* (Acta Iranica, 23; Leiden: Brill, 1984) 495-6.

3. *Id.*, quoting *Armenian History of the Forefathers* 40-45 and the *Armenian Abel* 4.3-4.6 and quoting the Byzantine *Palaea Historica*

4. Richard Gottheil, “Books of Enoch,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, reprinted at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=384&letter=E&search=enoch>

Jude's clear endorsement of Enoch led some to assert Jude should be removed from canon based on their pre-supposition that Enoch should be deemed noncanonical.⁵

Third, the Jews never have accepted the Book of Enoch because it contains a distinct prophecy of Jesus the Messiah that justifies the doctrine of His divinity. The Book of Enoch specifically says the Son of Man pre-exists creation, is the Messiah, and the Lord of Spirits appointed the Son Man to judge the earth. The Book of Enoch goes on to say God Almighty wants all creation to worship this Son of Man. As Archbishop Laurence, who tried to revive interest in the Book of Enoch, wrote in 1838: "The Jews rejected it ...[because] it speaks of Christ."⁶

Uniqueness of the Book of Enoch

What is uncanny is how the Book of Enoch *alone* in Hebrew writings supports doctrines later taught by Christ. Also, here alone do we find the Prophecy of the *Son of Man* as a Christ-figure, explicitly called *Messiah* and that He was from eternity, who is to be worshipped and will sit on God's throne. Enoch alone contains these novel prophecies and viewpoints prior to Christ. They appear in no other Hebrew Scripture. Then we find these ideas repeat themselves in Jesus' mouth in the Gospels or Revelation, which indirectly endorses the validity of the unique teachings of *Enoch*.

5. Jerome in *Lives of Illustrious Men* discusses Jude in Chapter 4 (only one paragraph long). Jerome notes "because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many. Nevertheless by age and use it [*i.e.*, Jude's epistle] has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures." (For an online copy of *Lives*, see http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-03/Npnf2-03-27.htm#P7086_1823364.)

6. *The Book of Enoch, The Prophet* (1883) (trans. Archbishop Laurence, posthumously updated.)

Jesus
Endorsed
These
Unique
Truths from
Enoch

The unique concepts in Enoch that Jesus endorsed but which are not present in the Hebrew Scriptures include:

- Hell is a place of fire. (Enoch 10:7 “thrown into the fire”; 18:11, “deep abyss...fire”; 54:6 “burning furnace”).
- The righteous “inherit eternal life” (Enoch 40:9; 58:3.)
- The wicked are being held in a place of chaos separated from the righteous pending the great day of Judgment when the wicked will be thrown in the fire. (Enoch 21:6.)
- The righteous will be given “dwelling places” “mansions.” (Enoch 39:5; 41:2.)
- The righteous then are blessing God “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Spirits.” (Enoch 39:12.)
- There is a reference to *Wisdom*, which in Hebrew is transliterated as *Logos* in the Septuagint. In Enoch 42:2, we read: “Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men, And found no dwelling-place: Wisdom returned to her place.” This would be a prophecy of the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus.
- In a clear Christology, it says “My Elect One shall sit on the throne of glory and shall try their works.” (Enoch 45:3.) They will cause “Mine Elect One to dwell among them.” (Enoch 45:4.) At this point, God says “I will transform the earth and make it a blessing.” (Enoch 45:5.)
- God as the “Elect One of righteousness and faith” shall descend to rule on earth (Enoch 39:6a).
- There is a coming “day of tribulation and pain.” (Enoch 55:3.)

Most important of all is Enoch’s Prophecy of the Son of Man. Nowhere in Hebrew Scripture is this title *Son of Man* used the way it is in Enoch. Ezekiel refers to Son of Man, but not in any Christological way. Therefore, we know from Jesus’ words that He intended us to see He was fulfilling Enoch’s vision of the Son of Man as Messiah, and no other.

Early
Christianity
Accepted It
Universally

Then why is the Book of Enoch not included in our Scripture? Jude cited it as “prophecy” in Jude 14. Why do we then omit it?

The Book of Enoch was extant centuries before the birth of Christ. It was considered scripture by most early Christians for the first 300 years. The early leaders of the church repeatedly make reference to the Book of Enoch. The early second century *Epistle of Barnabus* frequently refers to it. In the 200-300 A.D. period, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria each refer to the Book of Enoch numerous times. Tertullian (160-230 C.E) even called the Book of Enoch “Holy Scripture.”⁷

Book of
Enoch Was
Preserved
in Ethiopic
Christian
Canon

Furthermore, the Ethiopic Christian Church for 2000 years has maintained and preserved the Book of Enoch as part of its official canon of pre-Christian Hebrew-era Scriptures. This continues to be true up through today for the 20,000 Ethiopian Christian churches. (See R.W. Cowley, “The Biblical Canon Of The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* (1974) Volume 23, at 318-323.)

7. Archbishop Laurence in his 1838 introduction to his translation of Enoch explains its background: “Reverting to the second century of Christianity, we find Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria citing the Book of Enoch without questioning its sacred character. . . . Tertullian, who flourished at the close of the first and at the beginning of the second century, . . . speaks of the author as ‘the most ancient prophet, Enoch’ an of the book as the divinely inspired autograph of that immortal patriarch, preserved by Noah in the ark. . . . Tertullian adds [that it was] ‘disavowed by the Jews like all other scripture which speaks of Christ.’ . . . Origen (A.D. 254) assigns to the Book of Enoch *the same authority as to the Psalms* [but] affirms that the work of the antediluvian patriarch was not accepted in the Churches as Divine.” (Laurence, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet* (Minneapolis: 1976) at iv-v.)

The
Unusual
Role of the
Ethiopian
Christians

Incidentally, Ethiopia is a nation of 58 million people today, with a political history going back 3,000 years. Its Christian church has a long tradition that their ancestors have protected the Ark of the Covenant. It was originally rescued, so the story goes, by Jews who took it from Israel to protect it during the evil reign of Manasseh several hundred years prior to Christ.

The Bible actually supports the idea the Ark was never lost but somehow was relocated.⁸

At least by the 4th Century A.D., the Ark found its way to Axum, Ethiopia and is maintained in a church treasury there. The Ark is kept in the treasury under guard.⁹ While the Ethiopians apparently do not permit the Ark to be examined, there is concrete evidence to substantiate the claim. The Ethiopian island where the Ark was housed supposedly for 900 years prior to 400 A.D. clearly appears to have items of the High Priest who alone could carry the Ark (*i.e.*, his unique breastplate). Also, in the island's monastery, there are items for sacrifice from Solomon's Temple despite Jews not having done sacrifices for 2,000 years. Also, the place where the Ark was kept on this island has deep holes for three poles to support a tabernacle *precisely* matching the dimensions of the tabernacle described in the Bible for the Ark.¹⁰

8. The Bible never mentions the Ark's disappearance. The Bible simply stops mentioning the Ark. Also, the Ark is not mentioned in the account of the looting and destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians. (2 Kings 25:13-17 and Jeremiah 52:17-23), nor does it figure in the story of the rebuilding of the Temple after the Jews are released from their Exile in Babylon. The Ark seems simply to have vanished without a trace. There is no comment by the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures on its location or disappearance from between the completion of Solomon's Temple and its destruction. This suggests strongly the Ark was never lost, but was, as tradition states, moved to protect it.

9. For more details, see the book by Graham Hancock (a journalist with *The Economist*) entitled *The Sign and the Seal - A Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant* (William Heinemann: 1992).

Modern
Recovery
of the Book
of Enoch in
Ethiopia

It was this same Ethiopian church who was the source of the Book of Enoch's modern recovery in the West. In 1773, James Bruce, an explorer, went to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) where he obtained the Book of Enoch from a church using the Ethiopic canon. He came back with three copies. These now circulate in the West as the *Ethiopic Enoch*. As one source puts it:

The longest Biblical canon belongs to the Ethiopian church. Their Old Testament contains the Septuagintal books, Jubilees, the Ethiopic Enoch....¹¹

Why Enoch
Was Lost In
the Western
Church

How did the Book of Enoch disappear in the West? This book along with many other books were removed from the canon list by the Roman Catholic Council of Laodicea of 365 A.D. Yet, no explanation was offered. In Canon LX of the Council, the Book of Enoch is simply dropped from approved Hebrew 'Old Testament' Scriptures.

What can explain such a radical removal of the Book of Enoch after centuries of Christians treating it as canon? The explanation largely lies in the fact that Revelation was simultaneously being dropped from the New Testament. Canon LX of the same council failed likewise to mention Revelation by Apostle John as approved canon.

Due to the influence of the Council of Laodicea, the Book of Enoch gradually passed out of circulation so thoroughly that only fragments existed among the Western Churches.¹² The Book of Revelation fared better. It was restored in the canon list put forth in 397 A.D. by the

10. "Digging in the Past," *National Geographic Special* (2/9/05, TV documentary). A scholar from the Bible Archaeological Review accompanied the investigator on the journey. He says these artifacts and relics prove adequately that the Ark was on the island at one time.

11. Lieuwen, *The Emergence of the New Testament Canon*, *supra*.

three bishops of Africa. They said they were sending their list onto Rome for its input. Their list has now become our modern list of New Testament books.

**The Reason
The West
Dropped It** What motivated dropping the Book of Enoch in the Western canon while it was kept in the Ethiopic canon? Politics, pure and simple.

As noted above, the Book of Enoch was dropped from the Roman Catholic canon in 365 A.D. without any explanation. It along with the Book of Revelation was banned at the Council of Laodicea of 365 A.D. While no reason was given for either decision, the answer appears obvious. There is no controversial salvation theology in Enoch. There are no impossible statements or contradictions of earlier Scripture. What the Book of Enoch does have, however, is very substantial support for the validity of the Book of Revelation. At this juncture of 365 A.D., the Book of Revelation itself had become controversial. This was the time when the Roman ruler Constantine and his bishops were very adverse to the Book of Revelation. This book created expectations that Rome would be the center of Anti-Christ, and happy days were *post-Roman*. This was not good politics. Thus, the Council dropped the Book of Enoch in 365 along with the Book of Revelation. There must have been lobbying thereafter to restore the Book of Revelation to canon, which took place in 397 A.D. However, the political capital to revive the Book of Revelation was not sufficient to revive the Book of Enoch.

12. R.H. Charles puts it this way: "From the fourth century of our era onward it fell into discredit; and under the ban of such authorities as Hilary, Jerome and Augustine, it gradually passed out of circulation, and became lost to the knowledge of Western Christendom..." (*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913) Vol. 2 at 163.)

The Parallels to Revelation Are Striking

Scholars indirectly confirm that the Book of Enoch suffered due to its close affinity to the Book of Revelation. Scholars put it this way: the Book of Enoch heavily *influenced* the Book of Revelation. As one scholar put it:

“The materials in I Enoch [*i.e.*, Ethiopic Enoch] range in date from 200 B.C.E. to 50 C.E. I Enoch contributes much to intertestamental views of angels, heaven, judgment, resurrection, and the Messiah. This book has left its stamp upon many of the NT writers, *especially the author of Revelation*.¹³

Thus, this same parallel could not have gone unnoticed by the critics of Revelation in the 300s. If *Enoch* was inspired, there is no doubt that *Revelation* was too. However, the Roman Emperors were making Christianity the official religion, and they extracted a price from the Christians. They wanted both *Enoch* and *Revelation* to be eliminated. As a result, the Book of Enoch perished in the West. Yet, it was just too hard to deny that Apostle John wrote *Revelation*, and it recovered eventually. This is why the Book of Revelation eventually survived, but the Book of Enoch was lost in the West.

The Messiah Prophecy of the Book of Enoch

Realizing now, as you might, that a book of Hebrew Scriptures has been potentially wrongly excluded, open your heart to hear the most glorious prophecy of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, especially Enoch 48:10 where He is called *Messiah* (“Anointed One”). Also, watch for the Triune-function of God as *Son of Man*, *Head of Days* (*i.e.*, the Father?), and Lord of Spirits (*i.e.*, Holy Spirit?). Beginning at chapter 46 of Enoch, we read:

13. Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (1992) at 23

46 1 And there I saw One who had a Head of Days, And His head was white like wool, And with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, And his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels 2 And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that 3 **Son of man**, who he was, and whence he was, (and) why he went with the Head of days? And he answered and said unto me: This is the **Son of Man** who hath righteousness, With whom dwelleth righteousness, And who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, And whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever. 4 And this **Son of Man** whom thou hast seen Shall raise up the kings and the mighty from their seats, [And the strong from their thrones] And shall loosen the reins of the strong, And break the teeth of the sinners. [And he shall put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms] *Because they do not extol and praise Him, Nor humbly acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them.* 6 And he shall put down the countenance of the strong, And shall fill them with shame. And darkness shall be their dwelling, And **worms** shall be their bed, And they shall have no hope of rising from their beds, Because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits. ****8 And they persecute the houses of His congregations, And the faithful who hang upon the name of the Lord of Spirits. ****48 1 And in that place I saw the fountain of righteousness Which was inexhaustible: And around it were many fountains of wisdom: And all the thirsty drank of them, And were filled with wisdom, And their dwellings were with the righteous and holy and elect. 2 And at that hour that **Son of Man** was named In the presence of the *Lord of Spirits*, And his name before the *Head of Days*. 3 Yea, ***before the sun and the signs were created, Before the stars of the heaven were made, His name was named before the Lord of Spirits.*** 4 He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall, And he shall ***be the light of the Gentiles***, And the hope of those who are troubled of

heart. 5 All who dwell on earth shall fall down and **worship before him**, And will praise and bless and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. 6 And for this reason *hath he been chosen and hidden before Him; Before the creation of the world and for evermore.* 7 And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath revealed him to the holy and righteous; **For he hath preserved the lot of the righteous**, Because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness, And have hated all its works and ways in the name of the Lord of Spirits: **For in his name they are saved**, And according to his good pleasure hath it been in regard to their life. 8 In these days downcast in countenance shall the kings of the earth have become, And the strong who possess the land because of the works of their hands, For on the day of their anguish and affliction they shall not (be able to) save themselves. 9 And I will give them over into the hands of Mine elect: **As straw in the fire so shall they burn before the face of the holy**: As lead in the water shall they sink before the face of the righteous, And no trace of them shall any more be found. 10 And on the day of their affliction there shall be rest on the earth, And before them they shall fall and not rise again: And there shall be no one to take them with his hands and raise them: For they have denied the Lord of Spirits and **His Anointed** [*i.e.*, *Messiah* in Hebrew]. The name of the Lord of Spirits be blessed. *** 4 And he shall judge the secret things, And none shall be able to utter a lying word before him; For he is the **Elect One before the Lord of Spirits according to His good pleasure.** 50:4 At His judgement the unrepentant shall perish before Him. 51:3 3 And the **Elect One shall in those days sit on My throne**, And his mouth shall pour forth all the secrets of wisdom and counsel: For the Lord of Spirits hath given (them) to him and hath glorified him.¹⁴

In my view, God intended that we in the West also add the book of Enoch to Scripture. Our Ethiopic Christian

14. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (R. H. Charles ed.) (Oxford: Oxford Press) Vol. II.

brothers have been correct all along. The Book of Enoch prophesied the *Logos* coming to earth, not finding a home, and returning. What clearer prophecy of Jesus' arrival and ascension can you find? It prophesied the Son of Man would be Messiah and God at the same time, something either not present or *hidden in a puzzle* in prior Scripture. Jesus proved this prophetic claim in the Book of Enoch was true.

No wonder the Jews never added the Book of Enoch to their Scripture. They did not accept the meaning of the events Enoch prophesied about.

Christians should never have allowed Roman Emperors to insist the Book of Enoch be dropped from approved canon. It was originally accepted among Christians and even Jude, a NT writer. Thankfully the Ethiopian Christians preserved it as part of their canon. We today can restore it to its rightful place.