

ENOCK: IS IT SCRIPTURAL?

by: Bill Watson / **Blog #41**

There is a lot of “chatter” on the Internet these days about the Book of Enoch. Many influencers, podcasters, authors, and commentators, as well as some religious authorities, reference the Book of Enoch as a credible source to support an eschatological narrative that discusses certain watchers [a.k.a. angels] God allegedly sent to help, guide, and advise mankind, but instead, corrupted them.

There is a *lingering interest and credibility* associated with this book for several reasons. First, in the book of Jude, we see this apostle referencing the writings of Enoch and claiming it mentions the return of Jesus Christ (Jude :14). We also have evidence from early church history that some of the early “orthodox” church fathers used the book as a reference. However, by the 5th century, its influence was marginalized because it wasn’t canonized.

This pseudepigraphal book, attributed to Enoch, the father of Methuselah, was likely written around 200 B.C.E. —*not before the flood*, when Enoch is said to have lived. If Jude was quoting from the original, pre-dating the Noachian deluge, that copy has long been lost. However, the most recent editions of this book, which actually consist of a series of three, trace their origins to much later times. Keep in mind, they were only *rediscovered* in 1773 and were again found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950s.

Interestingly, the first question all of us should ask when considering the authenticity of this book is which one should we believe? Remember, we currently have three books credited to Enoch. So, which one or ones should we trust as authentic?

Clearly, this presents a real mystery, as Enoch One is believed to have been written around 200 B.C.E. Enoch Two, known as the *Book of The Secrets of Enoch*, is a shorter work that essentially reviews Enoch One. It is believed to have been written between the first and third centuries. Enoch Three was originally written in Hebrew, allegedly by Rabbi Ishmael around the fifth century, and is associated with Merkaban mysticism. Its main narrative focuses on Enoch’s ascension and transformation into the angel Metatron. Unquestionably, Enoch Three clearly conflicts with the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments about our human destiny and life after death.

As you can clearly see, the origins of these writings are highly questionable. Furthermore, when comparing the writings of the New Testament with the historical credibility of the Old Testament side by side, it’s evident that the content is dubious at best! That’s why, after about five centuries of using these writings, the early orthodox church fathers finally concluded that the material was too inconsistent with the texts of those known to be authentic from the Gospels, Acts, and epistles of Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude. So, this was understandable because these books are obviously *not written* by Enoch himself. They are considered to be pseudepigrapha – now, what does that mean?

Pseudepigrapha refers to a book claiming to be autobiographical *but not written* by the person identified as the author. These types and styles of writing were popular between 400 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. People would write a book, paper, or even what was considered an epistle and claim to be the author of the writing when they were not! You really didn't know what or who to believe. It's very similar to what is happening today on the Internet and with the use of A.I.

These authors would attribute their works to well-known biblical or historical figures to improve the credibility of their writing, hoping to increase their influence on the readers. Books like the Testament of Job, The Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Ezra, the Book of Jashar, and the Acts of Solomon, or the Epistle of Barnabas, are all examples of the Pseudepigraphical style that these "unknown authors" used to promote their writings.

However, clearly as many of us know, the intriguing topic from the Book of Enoch is the *question* of who the Nephilim were. Early on, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and Irenaeus, along with a few others, taught and believed that the Nephilim were the descendants of the "*hybrid intercourse*" between the Watchers (a.k.a. angels) and human women. This teaching, while promoted as truth and supported by some credible orthodox church fathers, "*supposedly*" offered a key to understanding this pre-flood biblical issue mentioned in Genesis 6:1-6.

However, later in Augustine of Hippo's book, titled "City of God," the perspective was detailed and clarified that the sons of God referred to the male descendants of Seth (Gen. 4:26), who were now being *called sons of God*. It was these men from Seth's bloodline who took women as wives of their choosing. It had nothing to do with angels impregnating human women. Keep in mind that *angels don't make baby angels* (Luke 20:27-36); they are created beings meant to help those called to salvation (Heb. 1:14).

As the church adopted this new understanding of the Nephilim, the book of Enoch was pushed aside and excluded from the canon. It essentially disappeared until it was rediscovered around 1773. The first English translation of the book of Enoch became available around 1821. Later, it was translated into Aramaic and rediscovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950s, as mentioned earlier.

When considering all the information and disinformation on the Internet, it's essential to employ critical thinking and common sense when determining what we accept as true and authentic. Clearly, the book of Enoch is ***not divinely inspired*** because Enoch did not write the books we have today. They are pseudepigraphical! *We must remember that.* "If" Enoch did write a book, we have no record of it.

All three books are inconsistent with what has been canonized, regardless of how much they were considered acceptable in the early years of the church. Although the Book of Enoch influenced the Christian faith, we must recognize that what we have today is not an original writing, even though it's presented as if Enoch wrote it:

...clearly, Enoch did not write the books !

