

Should 1
Enoch be in
the Bible?

Why is This a Question?

- Some 2nd Temple Jews considered it sacred
- A handful of important early Christian writers such as Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement either advocated 1 Enoch as worthy of canonical status or considered it authoritative on certain matters of truth and doctrine.
- The book was assigned full canonical recognition only in the Ethiopian Church

Why is This a Controversy?

1. **(those opposed)** Presumption of canon for both Protestants and Catholics
 - Accepted assumptions; settled
2. **(those opposed)** Ignorance of the nature of pseudepigraphy (and hence the Pseudepigrapha)
 - Especially true in evangelicalism

Why is This a Controversy?

- The **reputation** of *1 Enoch* has been sullied by misguided thinking about the nature of the Pseudepigrapha.
- The following is representative:

“The Pseudepigrapha books are those that are distinctly spurious and unauthentic in their overall content” and “no such formula as ‘it is written’ or ‘the Scriptures say’ is connected with these citations.”

Why is This a Controversy?

3. (**those in favor**) Ignorance of *what else* is quoted or alluded to in Scripture and *why*.

- Baal Cycle (several places; Daniel 7)
- Memphite Theology (Gen 1:3)
- Keret Epic (several places; Joshua's conquest)
- Wisdom of Amenemope (Prov 22:17–24:22)
- Greek poets (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Titus 1:12)
- Apocrypha (Heb 1:3)
- Various apocryphal / pseudepigraphical works

1 Enoch at Qumran

Implicit estimation of sacred status is demonstrated via *peshar* texts

- *Pesharim* are texts that interpret (Hebrew verb: *pešer*) other texts.
- *Pesharim* are reserved for the books of the Bible at Qumran with two exceptions: 1 Enoch and the Temple Scroll.

1 Enoch at Qumran

“Readers should recall, though, that such views cannot be considered normative within Judaism. During the Second Temple Period there was no singular Judaism. There were a variety of Judaisms. The situation is very similar to modern Christianity. Dozens of denominations and groups identify themselves as Christian, but their doctrinal perspective on just about every point of theology can vary, sometimes dramatically.”

1 Enoch at Qumran

Situation points at an inconsistency on canon for Protestants.

- The “Hebrew litmus test” = what Jews recognized is what we recognize.
- but ... *pesharim* vs. Aramaic Enoch

1 Enoch at Qumran

“The influence of the Enochic tradition at Qumran is evident also in the community’s possession of (multiple copies of) texts that employ or quote from the Enochic texts. These include the *Book of Jubilees* (eight copies) and a related text (three copies), the *Genesis Apocryphon* (one copy), a fragmentary Hebrew text from Cave 1 that contained a form of the story of the watchers ...

1 Enoch at Qumran

very close to 1 Enoch 6–11 (1Q19), a pesher on the story of the watchers (4Q180-181), a commentary or expansion on the Apocalypse of Weeks (4Q247), and the Damascus Document (eight copies), which knows the story of the rebellion of the watchers and a tradition about the giants (CD 2:16–20; see comm. on 7:2) and also appeals to the authority of the *Book of Jubilees* (CD 16:2–4).”

George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 77.

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

The Epistle of Barnabas

- Perhaps the earliest Christian source that cites material from *1 Enoch* as Scripture.
- **Nickelsburg ...**

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyon

- ca. 130-200 A.D.
- Quite evident that he knew *1 Enoch* in some detail and accepted the accuracy of the Watcher story (1 Enoch 6-16).
- Of interest is what he says in *Against Heresies* (ch. 10, Sec. 1)

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

“The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God and the advents, and the

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead . . .

according to the will of the invisible Father, ‘every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess’ to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send ‘spiritual wickednesses,’ and the angels who transgressed and became apostates”

1 Enoch in the Early Church

Tertullian

- Early Christian writer from Carthage (ca. 155-240 A.D.).
- Famous (or infamous) for being the early church's staunchest defender of *1 Enoch's* inspiration.
- For example, in his *On the Apparel of Women, Book I, Ch. III* he calls *1 Enoch* "Scripture" and defends its status using 2 Tim 3:16:

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

“I am aware that the Scripture of Enoch, which has assigned this order (of action) to angels, is not received by some, because it is not admitted into the Jewish canon either. I suppose they did not think that, having been published before the deluge, it could have safely survived that world-wide calamity, the abolisher of all things. If that is the reason (for rejecting it), let them recall to their memory that Noah, the survivor of the deluge, was the great-grandson of Enoch himself . . .

1 Enoch in the **Early Church**

... But since Enoch in the same Scripture has preached likewise concerning the Lord, nothing at all must be rejected *by us* which pertains to us; and we read that ‘every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired.’ By the *Jews* it may now seem to have been rejected for that (very) reason, just like all the other (portions) nearly which tell of Christ.”



At the End of the Day ...

Should 1 Enoch be in the Bible?

Should we care?

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY SAYS
ABOUT GOD'S HEAVENLY HOST

ANGELS

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