


4-2016

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Recommended Citation

Horton, Ryan D., "Enochian Literature: A Contextual Exploration and Examination of Its Correlation to Biblical Scripture" (2016).
Theology Undergraduate Work. 1.
http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/theo_undergrad_work/1

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ENOCHIAN LITERATURE: A CONTEXTUAL EXPLORATION AND EXAMINATION OF
ITS CORRELATION TO BIBLICAL SCRIPTURE

A Critical Analysis Essay

Presented to

Dr. Eloy Nolivos, Theology Department

Oral Roberts University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Class

THE 217-Seminar in Theological Research, TR 9:20

Prepared by

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April 2016

THE OUTLINE

- I. Introduction

Thesis: This essay will examine enochian literature that contains biblical quotations, prophetic themes, and messianic themes which could contribute to modern Christianity's understanding of scriptural history.
- II. Direct Biblical Quotations
 - a. Ephesians 6:9/Enoch 63:8- 'God is no respecter of persons'
 - b. Daniel 5:27/Enoch 41:1- 'Sinners will be weighed in the balances' and 'the divided kingdom'.
 - c. Jude 1:14-15/ Enoch 1:9- 'The Lord will come with the holy thousands to convict mankind's ungodliness'.
- III. Prophetic Themes
 - a. Revelation 22:18-19/ Enoch 104:10-13- Corrupted Bibles and Righteous Bibles
 - b. Mark 8:31/Enoch 48:10- Jews will deny Messiah
 - c. Revelation 14:20/ Enoch 100:3- There will be blood up to a horses breast
- IV. Messianic Themes
 - a. 1 John 5:5/Enoch 105:2-Messiah will be Son of God
 - b. Matthew 26:28/Enoch 47: 2,4- Messiah must shed blood for salvation
 - c. Isaiah 42:6/Enoch 48:4 Messiah will be the light for all nations
- V. Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Enochian literature is a group of ancient texts which collectively depict the life and ministry of the biblical patriarch Enoch. The *New Bible Dictionary* states, “Enoch was a man of outstanding sanctity who enjoyed close fellowship with God.”¹ The writings of Enoch tell a fascinating story of theology, prophecy, and eschatology. The subjects of this story include giants, angels, demons, and ancestors of Noah. The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* states, “The Enochic corpus claims to be a series of revelations which Enoch received in antiquity and transmitted to his son Methuselah for the benefit of the righteous who would live in the end times.”² This essay will examine Enochian literature that contains biblical quotations, prophetic themes, and messianic themes which could contribute to modern Christianity’s understanding of scriptural history.

The countless fulfilled prophecies in these writings led many to discredit the texts as merely fiction; however, if one believes in prophecy then these predictions are not out of the realm of possibility. The oldest existing copies Enoch’s writings are found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.³ Some scholars argue that early Christians concocted the story to defend the theological shift of the Judaic-Christian faith brought about by the messiah. Conversely, R. A. Gilbert’s introduction to R. H. Charles’ translation of *The Book of Enoch* states, “In the early Christian centuries *The Book of Enoch* was held in great reverence by many of the Church Fathers, including Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian.”⁴ Therefore, to argue that early Christians created these writings of Enoch is doubtful and problematic, because these early Christian leaders would not have supported this book if they knew it was a recent falsehood. Th. D. Ken Johnson notes

¹ Marshall, I. Howard, “Enoch,” *New Bible Dictionary* 324.

² Freedman, David Noel, “Enoch, First Book of,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2:508

³ Boccaccini, Gabriele, and Collins, John J., eds. *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, Volume 121: Early Enoch Literature* (Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2007) ProQuest ebrary, 283.

⁴ R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet* (York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003), viii.

the reasoning for the late popularity of this book in the western world, “in 1893, R.H. Charles translated the manuscripts from the Ethiopic language into English.”⁵ In other words, this book has only been available in English for barely over a century.

Enoch was the father of Methuselah and the great grandfather of the Noah. Enoch is known in Genesis as, “[a man who] walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.”⁶ *The Book of Enoch* depicts a chaotic world due to the immoral Nephilim giants and the immense level of angelic activity. These giants were children of fallen angels and the daughters of Cain. Genesis 6:4 does reference these giants and the fallen angels; therefore, there is biblical support for a race of giants created by humans and fallen angels. This dangerous, chaotic, and immoral state of the world becomes the reason for Noah’s flood as a final effort to save humanity. In all, the story paints God as a divine defender rather than a wrathful judge.

BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS IN ENOCH

The writings of Enoch include numerous quotations that are also found in the Old and the New Testament. These shared quotations show that the early writers of scripture were aware of the traditions and writings of Enoch. ‘God is no respecter of persons,’ ‘sinners will be weighed in the balances and the divided kingdom,’ and ‘the Lord will come with the holy thousands’ are only three of the numerous biblical quotations found in Enoch.

Enoch and Ephesians both state in slightly different language that there is no partiality with God. For instance, Enoch 63:8 states, “our Lord is true in all His works, judgments, and justice and His judgements have no respect of persons.”⁷ This quote of God being without favoritism can be also found in many of the New Testament texts. For instance, Ephesians

⁵ Ken Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch* (USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 8.

⁶ Gen. 5:24 [NRSV]

⁷ Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 78

likewise states, “there is no respect of persons with Him”⁸ New Testament writers might have utilized the writings and knowledge of Enoch when composing their own religious works. This could account for the diction parallels between the two texts. Ultimately, Enoch and the New Testament share the same theological principle that God is no respecter of persons.

‘The divided kingdom’ and ‘the sinners being weighed in the balances’ are additional common phrases included in Enoch as well as the Old Testament. For instance, Enoch 41:1 states, “After that I saw all the secrets of the heavens, and how the kingdom is divided, and how the actions of men are weighed in the balance.”⁹ This quote describes the divine judgement and reconciliation God will constitute before the end of time. These phrases can also be found in the Old Testament book of Daniel, and Daniel develops an eschatology similar to Enoch’s. For example, the book of Daniel states, “God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end...you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting...your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”¹⁰ Daniel possibly utilized Enochian quotes and drew from Enoch’s eschatology in composing his own works. This apocalyptic emphasis in Enoch may even be the basis behind the early Jewish Zealots’ eschatological orientation; however, the Sadducees may have rejected Enoch due to their disbelief in the spiritual realm. Ultimately, the Old Testament and Enoch share the same theological principle that God will eventually judge and reconcile with humanity.

Enoch and the New Testament declare that God will return with the holy to convict the ungodly. For example, Enoch 1:9 writes, “and Behold! He comes with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgement upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: and to convict all flesh.”¹¹

⁸ Eph. 6:9 [ASV]

⁹ Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 52.

¹⁰ Dan. 5:26-28 [NRSV]

¹¹ Charles, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*, 2.

This apocalyptic passage includes a core theological belief held by many Christians, and this belief is that God will return to resolve all the sins of the universe. Furthermore, Gordon Lindsey states, “Enoch foresaw events that would take place even at the end of this age, including the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints.”¹² Lindsey is noting that Enoch prophesized about events in all of the three major eras of time which will be discussed more later on in the essay. Jude is the second to last book in the New Testament right behind Revelation, and Jude is similar to Revelation with its eschatological focuses. For instance, Jude states, “that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed.”¹³ In this passage of scripture Jude offers credibility to Enoch’s prophecies and story; therefore, this endorsement should entice Christians to study Enoch’s writings and predictions. Moore notes, “Only at this point did Jude’s use of I Enoch become a problem –a canonical text apparently authorizing one considered uncanonical”¹⁴ Jude altered what seemed to be an ironclad box of truth, because it questioned the church leaders ability to identify what is scripture and what is not. Ultimately, Jude’s endorsement is just another piece of evidence contributing reliability to Enoch’s writings.

In all, the quotations shared between the Bible and Enochian literature is astounding; however, these three quotations are not the only phrases shared by the two sources. Additionally, an early Christian would need a complete version of the canonized Bible in order to fake this document; yet, a canonized Bible would not have been easily available to the early Christian. An

¹² Gordon Lindsay, *Enoch and Noah - Patriarchs of the Deluge (Through the Bible Series Vol. 2)* (Dallas, TX: Voice of Healing Publishing Co., 1964), 7.

¹³ Jude 1:14-15 [NRSV]

¹⁴ Moore, Nicholas J. "Is Enoch also among the prophets?: The impact of Jude's citation of I Enoch on the reception of both texts in the early church." *The Journal Of Theological Studies* 64, no. 2 (October 2013): 515.

early church father could have falsified the document, but it is unlikely that a church father could fool his peers about the validity of the document if it was indeed phony. Finally, the shared biblical quotations and endorsements stress the legitimacy of Enoch and his writings.

PROPHETIC THEMES IN ENOCH

Prophecy is another major theme found in the writings of Enoch, and there are many parallels between the prophecies of the Bible and Enoch. Enoch's prophecies outline the pre-flood era, the era of the Jewish covenant, and the messianic age. The Bible and Enoch share prophecies about corrupted and righteous Bibles, Jews denying the Messiah, and blood will be up to a horses breast.

Enoch and the book of Revelation discuss that throughout the eras righteous and corrupted scriptures will be created. For instance, Enoch 104:10 states, "sinners will alter and pervert the words of the righteous."¹⁵ This is similar to the statement in Revelation 22 that condemns anyone who alters the words of the righteous in any manner. The reliability of Enoch then comes into question to see if its words have been perverted. Fragments of Enochic literature have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls that support the Ethiopic version. Furthermore, Perry reassures, "Enochic Literature was highly valued by the Essene community at Qumran."¹⁶ The Qumran Essene's veneration and reverence for Enoch's writings show that this literature was deeply respected long before the early Christians.

Enoch and the gospel of Mark both agree that the messiah must be denied by God's people or Jews. For instance, Enoch 48:10 prophesizes, "For they have denied the Lord of the

¹⁵ Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 162.

¹⁶ Peter S. Perry, "Disputing Enoch36-44 with Enochic Judaism.: Reading Matthew 24"
<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=273ab777-b5ee-4512-a780-a0fcd0cb097f%40sessionmgr4001&vid=3&hid=4102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=ATLA0001820993&db=rh>.

Spirits and His Anointed.”¹⁷ Enoch is prophesizing that the messiah must be rejected by humanity. Additionally, this prophecy may be the source of Jesus’ prediction of his own rejection and death. For example, Mark’s gospel states, “Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”¹⁸ The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John reference this rejection in different fashions. Furthermore, the term ‘Son of Man’ is quite popularly used in all four gospels; moreover, this term is also widely used in Enoch’s writings as well. Additionally, Timothy Keller notes, “Son of Man was Jesus’s favorite way for referring to himself.”¹⁹ Jesus appears to revere Enoch and his writings; therefore, it is likely that Jesus was quoting Enoch, because the Jews of this time were quite familiar with these writings. At the 2005 Enoch Seminar, Stone states, “The first thought that occurs to me is that the dating of the Parables is such a central issue for only one reason: the title Son of Man and its occurrence in the Gospels.”²⁰ In all, the four gospels seem to parallel the Enochian idea that the messiah will be rejected by many and called the ‘Son of Man.’

Enoch’s writings are quite similar to Revelations, because both are highly apocalyptic and eschatological. Enoch appeared to have an exquisite understanding about the horrors of the final days. For instance, Vanderkam notes, “the contents of Enoch do in fact show him teaching about creation (geography, calendar), the middle of history (angelic sin and the flood), and its end (the apocalyptic sections).”²¹ Vanderkam is acknowledging that Enoch was aware of the

¹⁷ Charles, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*, 40.

¹⁸ Mark 8:31

¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God*, Reprint ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 36.

²⁰ Erho, Ted M. "Historical-allusional dating and the similitudes of Enoch." *Journal Of Biblical Literature* no. 3 (2011): 510.

²¹ James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 18.

enormity of time before the final return of the messiah. Moreover, Enoch 100:3 states, “And the horse will walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners, and the chariot will sink to its height.”²² This verse has an uncanny resemblance to an apocalyptic prophecy in Revelation. For example, Revelation 14:19-20 states, “So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and he threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse’s bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.”²³ This grim passage parallels Enoch, because they both allude to blood being up to a horse’s breast or bridle in the end of days. In other words, both authors are declaring a large amount of bloodshed will be spilled in the last days. In all, John of Patmos appears to be drawing his eschatology from Enochian literature.

Enoch’s prophecies have astounding similarities to those found in the New Testament. The opposition often argues that early Christians forged these writings; however, the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls dates these documents at least one hundred and thirty years before Jesus.

Boccaccini states,

“The presence of Enoch texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the literary and ideological connections with the Old and New Testament documents, and the unaccountable ramifications of Enochic ideas and concepts in the many Judaisms of the Second Temple period have made the study of Enoch a central issue for any specialist in ancient Judaism and Christian origins.”²⁴

Gabriele is noting the significance of Enochic literature in many areas from ancient Judaism to modern Christianity; therefore, the prophecies of this first generation prophet deserve recognition.

²² Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 156.

²³ Rev. 14:19-20

²⁴ Gabriele Boccaccini, ed., *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 8.

MESSIANIC THEMES IN ENOCH

A major focus of Enochian literature is the heavy emphasis on messianic themes. Enoch was greatly concerned with the messiah; additionally, his messianic predictions may be the source of Old and New Testament claims about the messiah. For example, Pinero notes, “[Jesus] began to be regarded as the real embodiment of the “one like a son of man” predicted in the book of Daniel.”²⁵ In other words, Jesus brought a revitalized interest in messianic writings; therefore, texts such as these gained popularity. Enoch’s messianic predictions parallel the Bible’s proclamations that the messiah will be the son of God, the messiah will have to shed blood for salvation, and the messiah will be the light of all nations.

Enoch is similar to 1 John in its claims that the Messiah must be the Son of God. For example, Enoch 105:2 states, “For I and My Son will be united with them forever in the paths of uprightness in their lives; and ye shall have peace, ye children of uprightness.”²⁶ This shows that in Enoch’s belief that God will have a Son who will also be active in the lives of the righteous. This is quite similar in belief to 1 John’s belief which states, “Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”²⁷ Enoch and 1 John believe that the Messiah will be the Son of God and that he will be the salvation of the righteous. In all, 1 John and Enoch share some theological principles on the messiah as the Son of God.

Matthew and Enoch share the conviction that the messiah must shed blood for salvation. For instance, Enoch 47:4 states, “The hearts of the holy ones were filled with joy, because the number of righteous was fulfilled, and the prayer of the righteous had been heard, and the blood

²⁵ Piñero, Antonio. "ENOCH AS MEDIATOR, MESSIAH, JUDGE, AND SON OF MAN IN THE BOOK OF PARABLES A Jewish Response to Early Jewish-Christian Theology?" *Enoch* 35, no. 1 (June 2013): 9.

²⁶ Charles, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*, 131.

²⁷ 1 John 5:5

of the Righteous One had been required before the Lord of Spirits.”²⁸ This quote explains Enoch’s declaration that the Messiah must shed blood to resolve a debt to the Lord that humanity owed. Similarly, Matthew states a quote from Jesus, “Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”²⁹ Jesus is demonstrating that He, as the Messiah, must shed blood to resolve the sins of humanity. In all, Enoch and Matthew share the same theological conviction that the Messiah or Jesus must shed blood so that humanity may receive salvation.

The book of Isaiah and Enoch both allude to the idea that the Messiah will be the light of all nations. The major problem of Judaism was the exclusion of the Gentiles or other nations; however, Enoch and Isaiah describe a covenant with God that includes all nations and all people. For example, Enoch 48:4 states, “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.”³⁰ Enoch is proclaiming the Messiah as the light or guide for the Gentiles; therefore, the Messiah marks the time for the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant with God. Moreover, Isaiah states, “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations”³¹ Isaiah seems to predict the Messiah in a similar manner as Enoch. This passage could appear to describe the Jewish people and religion; however, the context surrounding this passage appears to be referring to a singular person. The Messiah is the only figure to fulfill this passage in its entirety. In all, Isaiah and Enoch allude to the same prophecy of a Messiah that is a light to all nations.

²⁸ Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 58-59.

²⁹ Matt. 26:27-28

³⁰ Charles, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*, 39.

³¹ Isa. 42:6

The messianic parallels between Enoch and the Bible are quite astounding, and they hold a common theological approach to spirituality that is Christocentric. These parallels only offer further credibility to interpreting Jesus as the Messianic Son of God. Enoch should be given pride of place in interpreting Jesus as the Word and Wisdom of God.³² In all, the Bible and Enoch share many of the same Christocentric theologies about the messiah.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this essay is not intending to find the exact date of composition for Enochic literature, nor is this essay a call to canonize Enoch into scripture. Whether these writings were an oral tradition passed down or if it was always a written document (even before the Herodian period) is not the point, because the intent should be to determine if there is truth in these writings. Many biblical scholars and prominent theologians have declared truth in these writings. The intent of this essay was to examine Enochian writings in light of scripture in order to determine if there are any theological contradictions. The stories within Enoch may be quite astonishing, yet Enoch does not seem to contradict the Bible on any theological or historical basis. Mature Christians at the least need to be familiar with this material, because it has quite a lot to say about the world of today. Christians should encourage open dialogue over Enoch and the writings associated with him. This essay examined Enochian literature that included biblical quotations, prophetic themes, and messianic themes which contributes to contemporary Christianity's understanding of scriptural history.

³² Daniel J. Harrington, *Interpreting the New Testament: a Practical Guide* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1990), 121.

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