

Study Sheet: The Book of Enoch

An Inspired Book of God, or Fallacious Book of Men?



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- **Alternative Name:** 1 Enoch (to distinguish from 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch)
 - **Dating:** 3rd to 1st centuries BCE
 - **Category:** Pseudepigrapha (writings falsely attributed to biblical figures)
 - **Attribution:** Claimed to be written by Enoch, great-grandfather of Noah
 - **Biblical Reference:** Genesis 5:24 - "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him"

Five Main Sections

1. **The Book of the Watchers** - Fallen angels marrying humans, producing Nephilim giants
2. **The Book of Parables** - Visions of the Messiah and judgment of the wicked
3. **The Astronomical Book** - Celestial mechanics and calendars
4. **The Book of Dream Visions** - Allegorical visions of history
5. **The Epistle of Enoch** - Moral teachings and end times warnings

Current Status

- **Canonical Status:** **Not included** in most modern Bibles
- **Exception:** Considered sacred by Ethiopian Orthodox Church

- **Historical Influence:** Influential in some early Jewish and Christian communities
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II. Arguments Against Divine Inspiration

1. Authorship Issues

- **Problem:** Pseudonymous authorship (not actually written by Enoch)
- **Scholarly Consensus:** Written centuries after Enoch's time (300 BCE - 100 CE)
- **Multiple Authors:** Likely composed by different writers
- **Impact:** Undermines claims of divine inspiration due to lack of authentic prophetic/apostolic connection

2. Limited Early Christian Acceptance

- **Church Councils:** Major councils excluded it from New Testament canon
- **Church Fathers:** Augustine and Jerome rejected it
- **Concerns:** Authenticity and theological content questioned
- **Exception:** Writer of Jude quotes Enoch (Jude 1:14-15), but this doesn't endorse entire book

3. Historical and Cultural Context

- **Period:** Second Temple Judaism (diverse Jewish thought)
 - **Influences:** Hellenistic culture impact
 - **Themes:** Angels, cosmology, apocalyptic literature
 - **Conclusion:** Product of its time rather than timeless divine revelation
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III. Arguments For Inspiration (Minority View)

Proponent Claims

1. **Ethiopian Orthodox Preservation:** Divine protection suggested by canonical inclusion
2. **Apostolic Quote:** Jude's quotation implies approval
3. **Biblical Complementarity:** Provides detailed explanations of Genesis events

Counterarguments

- **Jude's Quote:** Doesn't endorse entire book (similar to Paul quoting Greek poets in Acts 17:28)
 - **Ethiopian Exception:** Unique historical factors, not universal acceptance
 - **Insufficient Evidence:** Fails to meet broader criteria for inspiration
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IV. Major Biblical Contradictions

1. Angels and the Nephilim

Enoch's Account:

- Sons of God = fallen angels (Watchers)
- Angels marry human women
- Produce giant offspring (Nephilim)
- Angels teach forbidden knowledge (magic, metallurgy)

Biblical Issues:

- Genesis 6:1-4 doesn't explicitly identify sons of God as angels
- Alternative interpretations: human kings or godly descendants of Seth
- Jesus states angels "neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matthew 22:30)
- Adds speculative elements not supported by Scripture

2. Cosmology and Angelic Roles

Enoch's Description:

- Complex cosmology with multiple heavens
- Elaborate angelic hierarchies
- Detailed celestial being descriptions
- Enoch's heavenly journeys

Biblical Contrast:

- Bible sparse on cosmological details
- Angels described as God's messengers (Psalm 104:4), not celestial bureaucrats
- Enoch's solar calendar contradicts lunar-based festivals (Leviticus 23)
- Speculative mythology vs. biblical revelation

3. Salvation and Judgment

Enoch's Teachings:

- Angels binding demons in specific locations
- Preexistent Messiah figure ("Son of Man")
- Detailed apocalyptic judgment scenarios

Biblical Differences:

- Jesus uniquely revealed as Son of Man through life and ministry (Mark 8:31)
- Ultimate judgment reserved to God (Revelation 20:11-15), not angels
- Could confuse biblical narrative of Christ's incarnation

4. Theological Tone and Focus

Enoch's Emphasis:

- Heavily apocalyptic and speculative
- Focus on secret knowledge and cosmic mysteries
- Elaborate mythological details

Biblical Warning:

- Warns against "myths and endless genealogies" (1 Timothy 1:4)
 - Cautions against seeking hidden knowledge beyond God's revelation (Deuteronomy 29:29)
 - Emphasizes God's covenant, moral obedience, and faith in Christ
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V. Summary of Real Problems

1. Questionable Authenticity

- Pseudonymous authorship undermines divine origin claims
- Late composition (centuries after attributed author)
- Multiple human authors identified

2. Theological Inconsistencies

- Contradictions with Bible on angels, cosmology, judgment
- Creates confusion and conflict with canonical Scripture
- Adds speculative elements without biblical support

3. Speculative Nature

- Focus on secret knowledge and elaborate myths
- Risk of distraction from Bible's clear salvation message
- Emphasizes hidden mysteries over revealed truth

4. Limited Authority

- Rejected by most Jewish and Christian traditions
 - Lacks universal acceptance as God's Word
 - Exception (Ethiopian Orthodox) reflects unique historical factors
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VI. Criteria for Biblical Inspiration

Traditional Requirements

1. **Apostolic Authorship or Endorsement:** Direct connection to apostles or prophets
2. **Widespread Church Acceptance:** Universal recognition by early Christian communities
3. **Consistency with Scripture:** Harmony with established biblical teachings
4. **Divine Authority:** Evidence of God's direct involvement in composition

Book of Enoch Assessment

- **✗ Fails authorship test:** Pseudonymous, not genuine prophetic writing
 - **✗ Fails acceptance test:** Rejected by major church councils and fathers
 - **✗ Fails consistency test:** Multiple contradictions with biblical teaching
 - **✗ Fails authority test:** Human composition rather than divine revelation
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VII. Conclusion and Practical Application

Final Assessment

The Book of Enoch fails to meet established criteria for divine inspiration accepted by most Christian traditions. While it offers valuable insights into ancient Jewish thought and Second Temple period literature, it lacks the authority of canonical Scripture.

Appropriate Use

- **Historical Study:** Valuable window into ancient Jewish thought
- **Cultural Context:** Understanding intertestamental period
- **Literary Analysis:** Example of pseudepigraphic literature
- **Comparative Study:** Contrast with canonical Scripture

Cautions

- Should not be elevated to level of Scripture
- Recognize historical limitations and theological flaws
- Avoid using as primary source for biblical doctrine
- Focus on canonical Scripture for authoritative Christian teaching

Key Takeaway

The Book of Enoch represents human religious literature from its historical period rather than divinely inspired Scripture, making it unsuitable as an authoritative source for Christian faith and practice.

