THE FIRST BOOK OF

ENOCH

The Book of the Watchers (Chapters 1–36)

A New English Translation from the Aramaic, Greek, and Ethiopic Witnesses

---

with a Textual-Critical Commentary

Preface

1 Enoch (“Ethiopic Enoch”) is a composite work of five originally independent booklets, written in Aramaic and Hebrew between roughly the third century B.C.E. and the turn of the era and gathered under the name of the antediluvian patriarch Enoch (Gen 5:21–24). Its five parts are the Book of the Watchers (chapters 1–36), the Book of Parables or Similitudes (37–71), the Astronomical Book or Book of the Luminaries (72–82), the Book of Dream Visions (83–90), and the Epistle of Enoch (91–105), to which are appended the Birth of Noah (106–107) and a final chapter (108). The work was deeply influential in Second Temple Judaism and earliest Christianity —its Watchers myth underlies 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, and Jude 14–15 quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 by name—yet it survives complete only in the Ethiopic (Ge‘ez) church, which preserves it as canonical Scripture.

This volume presents the Book of the Watchers (chapters 1–36) as the first installment of a complete translation. The Watchers is the right place to begin precisely because it is the part of 1 Enoch with the richest multilingual attestation: it is the section best preserved in the Aramaic Dead Sea fragments, it is covered almost entirely by the principal Greek manuscript, and it stands in the Ethiopic—so that, here, genuine textual criticism across three languages is possible. The translation is a fresh, independent rendering made from these witnesses; it is not a revision or reprinting of any modern edition (Charles, Knibb, Black, Nickelsburg), whose wording is the property of their authors and translators.

A frank note on scope and method. Where the witnesses overlap, the apparatus weighs them against one another; where they diverge (most sharply in the roster of the Watchers’ names in 6:7), the divergence is recorded rather than smoothed over. The remaining four books of 1 Enoch survive largely or entirely in Ethiopic alone—the Parables (37–71) are absent from the Aramaic altogether, and the Astronomical Book circulated at Qumran in a longer Aramaic form quite different from the Ethiopic epitome—so their translation raises different text-critical questions and will follow as later installments. Versification follows the standard system of Charles and Nickelsburg.

The Witnesses and the Sigla

Aramaic (Aram.) — the oldest witnesses

Eleven fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts of Enochic works were found in Qumran Cave 4 (4QEn^{a-g} = 4Q201–4Q207, with the related 4QEnGiants and 4QEnastr), copied between the early second century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. They preserve perhaps a fifth of 1 Enoch, with the Book of the Watchers among the best attested—but they contain no trace of the Parables (37–71). They were edited by J. T. Milik, The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4 (Oxford, 1976). Being the original language and by far the earliest copies, they are the control on the later versions.

Greek (Gk.) — the intermediary version

The Ethiopic was made from a Greek translation, substantial parts of which survive. The chief witness is Codex Panopolitanus (the Akhmim or “Gizeh” manuscript, sixth century), which preserves 1:1–32:6 — essentially the whole Book of the Watchers. To it are added the long extracts quoted by the Byzantine chronographer George Syncellus (c. 800) for chapters 6–10 and 15–16, a Vatican fragment for chapter 89, and the Chester Beatty–Michigan papyrus for the Epistle. Where Panopolitanus and Syncellus differ, they preserve two distinct Greek text-forms.

Ethiopic (Eth.) — the only complete text

The Ge‘ez version, translated from Greek in late antiquity (c. fourth–sixth century) and preserved in the Ethiopian Orthodox canon, is the only witness to the whole of 1 Enoch. Its manuscripts fall into an older recension (Eth I, the basis of critical editions) and a later, smoothed recension (Eth II). The surviving copies date from the fifteenth century onward; the standard editions are those of R. H. Charles (1906; ET 1912) and M. A. Knibb (1978). Minor Latin, Coptic, and Syriac fragments round out the evidence.

In the commentary, “Aram.” = the Qumran Aramaic; “Gk.^{Pan}” = Codex Panopolitanus; “Gk.^{sync}” = Syncellus; “Eth.” = the Ethiopic. Chapter and verse follow Charles/Nickelsburg.

The Book of the Watchers

A new translation of 1 Enoch 1–36. Verse numbers are set as superscripts.

Chapter 1 — Enoch's Introductory Oracle: the Coming Judgment

[1] The words of the blessing of Enoch, with which he blessed the chosen and righteous who will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked and godless are removed. [2] And Enoch took up his discourse and said: A righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, who saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me; and from them I heard everything, and I understood what I saw—but not for this generation, rather for a distant generation that is to come. [3] Concerning the chosen I spoke, and I took up my discourse concerning them: The Holy and Great One will come forth from his dwelling, [4] and the eternal God will tread from there upon Mount Sinai; he will appear with his host and be revealed in the strength of his power from the height of heaven. [5] And all will be afraid, and the Watchers will tremble, and great fear and trembling will seize them to the ends of the earth. [6] The high mountains will be shaken and fall and break apart; the high hills will be brought low and melt like wax before the flame. [7] And the earth will be torn open, and everything upon it will perish, and there will be a judgment upon all. [8] But with the righteous he will make peace; he will guard the chosen, and mercy will be upon them. They will all belong to God, and prosper and be blessed, and the light of God will shine upon them. [9] And behold, he comes with the myriads of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly, and to convict all flesh for all the works of their ungodliness that they have committed, and for all the hard words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Chapter 2 — The Order of Nature (I)

[1] Observe everything that takes place in the heavens, how the luminaries do not alter their courses, how each rises and sets in order, each in its season, and they do not transgress their appointed order. [2] Consider the earth, and understand from the works done upon it, from the first to the last, that no work of God changes, but all appear to you as he made them. [3] Consider the summer and the winter, how the whole earth is filled with water, and clouds and dew and rain rest upon it.

Chapter 3 — The Order of Nature (II)

[1] Observe and see how all the trees appear withered and shed all their leaves—except fourteen trees, which do not lose their foliage but keep the old leaves until the new come, for two or three years.

Chapter 4 — The Order of Nature (III)

[1] And again, observe the days of summer, how the sun is above the earth opposite it, while you seek shelter and shade from the heat of the sun, and the earth burns with scorching heat, and you cannot tread upon the ground or upon a rock because of the heat.

Chapter 5 — The Order of Nature (IV); Rebuke of the Wicked and Promise to the Chosen

[1] Observe how the trees are covered with green leaves and bear fruit. Understand and know, with respect to all his works, and recognize that the living God who lives forever has made them all. [2] And all his works serve him year by year, and do not change, but as God has ordained, so all is done. [3] Consider how the seas and the rivers together accomplish their work. [4] But you have not persevered, nor kept the law of the Lord. You have turned aside; you have spoken proud and hard

words with your unclean mouths against his majesty. You hard of heart—you will find no peace! Therefore you will curse your days, and the years of your life will perish; the eternal curse will be multiplied, and you will find no mercy. [6] In those days you will make your names an eternal curse to all the righteous, and by you all who curse will curse, and all the sinners and godless will swear by you. For the chosen there will be light and joy and peace, and they will inherit the earth; but for you, the godless, there will be a curse. [7] Then wisdom will be given to the chosen, and they will all live, and will not sin again, neither through ungodliness nor through pride; in the one who has wisdom there will be humility. [8] They will not transgress again, nor sin all the days of their life, nor die under the wrath of God's anger; but they will complete the number of the days of their life. Their life will grow in peace, and the years of their joy will be multiplied in eternal gladness and peace, all the days of their life.

Chapter 6 — The Descent of the Watchers and Their Oath on Mount Hermon

[1] And it came to pass, when the sons of men had multiplied, that in those days beautiful and comely daughters were born to them. [2] And the Watchers, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them, and said to one another, "Come, let us choose for ourselves wives from among the daughters of men, and let us beget for ourselves children." [3] And Shemihazah, their leader, said to them, "I fear that you will not be willing to carry out this deed, and that I alone will have to pay the penalty for a great sin." [4] And they all answered him and said, "Let us all swear an oath, and bind one another with a curse not to abandon this plan, but to carry out this deed." [5] Then they all swore together and bound one another with a curse upon it. [6] And they were two hundred in all who descended in the days of Jared upon the summit of Mount Hermon; and they called the mountain "Hermon," because on it they had sworn and bound themselves with a curse. [7] And these are the names of their chiefs: Shemihazah, their leader; Artaqoph; Ramtel; Kokabel; Ramel; Daniel; Zeqel; Baraqel; Asael; Hermani; Matarel; Ananel; Setawel; Samshiel; Sahriel; Tummiel; Turiel; Yomiel; Yhaddiel. [8] These are the chiefs of tens.

Chapter 7 — The Giants and the Corruption of the Earth

[1] And they took wives for themselves, each choosing for himself; and they began to go in to them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them sorcery and spells and the cutting of roots, and showed them plants. [2] And they became pregnant by them and bore great giants, whose height was three thousand cubits. [3] These devoured all the toil of men, until men were no longer able to sustain them. [4] Then the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. [5] And they began to sin against the birds and the beasts and the creeping things and the fish, and to devour one another's flesh and to drink the blood. [6] Then the earth made accusation against the lawless ones.

Chapter 8 — Asael’s Teaching; the Earth’s Appeal

[1] And Asael taught men to make swords of iron and weapons and shields and breastplates, the working of metals; and the art of making bracelets and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all coloring tinctures. [2] And there was great godlessness, and they committed fornication and went astray, and all their ways became corrupt. [3] Shemihazah taught spells and the cutting of roots; Hermani taught the loosing of spells and magic and skill; Baraqel taught the signs of the lightnings; Kokabel taught the signs of the stars; Zeqel taught the signs of the shooting stars; Artaqoph taught the signs of the earth; Shamshiel taught the signs of the sun; Sahriel taught the signs of the moon. And as men perished, they cried out, and their cry went up to heaven.

Chapter 9 — The Intercession of the Four Archangels

[1] Then Michael, Sariel, Raphael, and Gabriel looked down from heaven and saw the great bloodshed upon the earth, and all the lawlessness that was being done upon it. [2] And they said to one another, "Let the cry of those who have perished go up to the gates of heaven. [3] The souls of men make their plea, saying, 'Bring our cause before the Most High.'" [4] And they said to the Lord of the ages, "Lord of lords, God of gods, King of kings, God of the ages! The throne of your glory endures through all the generations of the ages, and your name is holy and glorious and blessed to all the ages. [5] You have made all things, and power over all things is yours. All things are uncovered and open before you, and you see all things, and nothing can be hidden from you. [6] See, then, what Asael has done—how he has taught all iniquity upon the earth, and revealed the eternal secrets that are kept in heaven, which men were striving to learn. [7] And Shemihazah, to whom you gave authority to rule over those with him— [8] they went in together to the daughters of men and lay with those women, and defiled themselves, and revealed to them these sins. [9] And the women bore giants, and the whole earth was filled with blood and iniquity. [10] And now, behold, the souls of those who have died cry out and make their plea to the gates of heaven, and their groaning has ascended; it cannot cease because of the lawless deeds done upon the earth. [11] And you know all things before they come to pass, and you see these things, and you have permitted them, and you do not tell us what we ought to do about them."

Chapter 10 — The Commission of the Archangels; Judgment Announced

[1] Then the Most High, the Great and Holy One, spoke and sent Sariel to the son of Lamech, saying, [2] "Go to Noah and say to him in my name, 'Hide yourself,' and reveal to him the end that is coming, for the whole earth will perish; a deluge is about to come upon all the earth, and what is in it will be destroyed. [3] And now instruct him how he may escape, and how his offspring may survive for all the earth." [4] And again the Lord said to Raphael, "Bind Asael hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness; make an opening in the wilderness that is in Dudael, and cast him there. [5] Lay upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him dwell there forever, and cover his face that he may not see the light. [6] And on the day of the great judgment he will be led away into the fire. [7] Heal the earth, which the Watchers have corrupted, and announce the healing of the earth, that they may heal the plague, and that all the sons of men may not perish through all the secret things that the Watchers have disclosed and taught their sons. [8] The whole earth has been corrupted by the teaching of the works of Asael; and to him ascribe all sin." [9] And to Gabriel the Lord said, "Go against the bastards and the reprobates and against the sons of fornication, and destroy the sons of the Watchers from among men; send them against one another, that they may destroy themselves in battle, for they will have no length of days. [10] They will all petition you, but their fathers will obtain nothing on their behalf, for they hope to live an eternal life, and that each of them will live five hundred years." [11] And the Lord said to Michael, "Go, make known to Shemihazah and to the others with him who have joined themselves with the women to defile themselves with them in their uncleanness, [12] that when their sons perish and they see the destruction of their beloved, bind them fast for seventy generations beneath the hills of the earth, until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the everlasting judgment is accomplished. [13] In those days they will be led away to the abyss of fire, to the torment and the prison in which they will be confined forever. [14] And whoever is condemned and destroyed from then on will be bound together with them to the end of all generations. [15] Destroy all the spirits of the half-breeds and the sons of the Watchers, because they have wronged mankind. [16] Destroy all wrong from the face of the earth, and let every wicked deed come to an end; and let the plant of righteousness and truth appear, and it will become a blessing; the deeds of righteousness and truth will be planted in truth and joy forever. [17] And now all the righteous will be humble, and will live until they beget thousands; and all the days of their youth and their old age they will complete in peace. [18] In those days the whole earth will be tilled in righteousness, and all of it will be planted

with trees and filled with blessing. [19] And all the desirable trees will be planted on it, and they will plant vines on it; and the vine planted on it will yield wine in abundance; and of all the seed sown on it, each measure will yield a thousand, and each measure of olives will yield ten presses of oil. [20] And you, cleanse the earth from all wrong and from all iniquity and from all sin and from all godlessness; and all the uncleanness that is brought about upon the earth, remove from the earth. [21] And all the sons of men will become righteous, and all the peoples will worship and bless me, and all will bow down to me. [22] And the whole earth will be cleansed of all defilement and of all sin and of all wrath and of all torment, and I will never again send a flood upon it, for all generations and forever.

Chapter 11 — The Promise of Blessing

[1] And in those days I will open the storehouses of blessing that are in heaven, to send them down upon the earth, upon the work and the labor of the sons of men. [2] And truth and peace will be united together throughout all the days of the world and through all the generations of the world.

Chapter 12 — Enoch Commissioned to the Watchers

[1] And before all these things, Enoch was hidden, and none of the sons of men knew where he was hidden, or where he was, or what had become of him. [2] And all his doings were with the holy ones and with the Watchers in his days. [3] And I, Enoch, was blessing the Great Lord and King of the ages; and behold, the Watchers called me, Enoch the scribe, and said to me, [4] "Enoch, scribe of righteousness, go and declare to the Watchers of heaven who have left the high heaven and the holy eternal place, and have defiled themselves with women, and have done as the sons of men do, and have taken wives for themselves, and have brought great destruction upon the earth— [5] they will have neither peace nor forgiveness of sin. [6] And as for their sons in whom they rejoice, they will see the slaying of their beloved, and over the destruction of their sons they will lament and make perpetual supplication; but they will obtain neither mercy nor peace."

Chapter 13 — Enoch’s Message to Azazel; the Watchers’ Petition

[1] And Enoch went and said to Asael, "You will have no peace; a great sentence has gone forth against you, to bind you. [2] You will have no relief or intercession, because of the unrighteousness that you have taught, and because of all the works of godlessness and unrighteousness and sin that you have shown to men." [3] Then I went and spoke to them all together, and they were all afraid, and trembling and fear seized them. [4] And they begged me to write out for them a petition, that they might find forgiveness, and to carry their petition up before the Lord of heaven. [5] For they themselves could no longer speak, nor lift up their eyes to heaven, for shame at the sins for which they had been condemned. [6] Then I wrote out their petition, and the plea concerning their spirits and their deeds individually, and concerning what they asked—that they might obtain forgiveness and forbearance. [7] And I went and sat down by the waters of Dan, in the land of Dan, to the south of the west of Hermon, and I read out their petition until I fell asleep. [8] And behold, a dream came to me, and visions fell upon me, and I saw a vision of wrath—that I should speak to the sons of heaven and rebuke them. [9] And when I awoke, I went to them; and they were all sitting together, weeping, at Abelsjail, which is between Lebanon and Senir, with their faces covered. [10] And I told before them all the visions that I had seen in my sleep, and I began to speak the words of righteousness and to rebuke the Watchers of heaven.

Chapter 14 — Enoch’s Vision: the Throne of God

[1] The book of the words of righteousness, and of the rebuke of the Watchers who are from eternity, according to that which the Holy and Great One commanded in that vision. [2] I saw in my sleep what I will now declare with a tongue of flesh and with the breath of my mouth, which the Great

One has given to men, that they may speak with it and understand with the heart. [3] As he has created and appointed men to understand the word of knowledge, so he created and appointed me to rebuke the Watchers, the sons of heaven. [4] "I wrote out your petition, but in my vision it was shown to me that your petition will not be granted to you for all the days of eternity, and that judgment has been passed upon you; it will not be granted to you. [5] From now on you will not ascend into heaven for all the ages; and the sentence has gone forth to bind you in the earth for all the days of the world. [6] And before that you will see the destruction of your beloved sons, and you will have no pleasure in them, but they will fall before you by the sword. [7] Your petition for them will not be granted, nor for yourselves; though you weep and pray and speak every word that is in the writing that I have written." [8] And the vision was shown to me thus: Behold, clouds called me in the vision, and a mist summoned me; the course of the stars and flashes of lightning hastened me and drove me, and the winds in the vision gave me wings and sped me along. [9] And they lifted me up and bore me into heaven; and I came to a wall built of crystals, and surrounded by a tongue of fire, and it began to frighten me. [10] And I went into the tongue of fire and drew near to a great house built of crystals; the walls of the house were like a mosaic of crystals, and its floor was of crystal. [11] Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and flashes of lightning, and among them were fiery cherubim, and their heaven was of water. [12] A flaming fire encircled the walls, and its doors blazed with fire. [13] And I entered that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as ice; there was nothing of life or delight in it. Fear covered me, and trembling seized me. [14] And as I quaked and trembled, I fell upon my face, and I saw in the vision: [15] Behold, there was another house, greater than that one, and its whole entrance stood open before me, and it was built of a tongue of fire. [16] In every respect it so excelled in glory and splendor and greatness that I cannot describe to you its glory and its greatness. [17] Its floor was of fire, and its upper part was flashes of lightning and the courses of the stars, and its ceiling too was flaming fire. [18] And I looked and saw within it a lofty throne; its appearance was like crystal, and its wheels were like the shining sun, and there was the vision of cherubim. [19] And from beneath the throne came streams of flaming fire, so that I could not look upon it. [20] And the Great Glory sat upon it; his raiment was brighter than the sun and whiter than any snow. [21] None of the angels could enter, and none of flesh could look upon the face of the Honored and Glorious One. [22] A sea of fire surrounded him, and a great fire stood before him; none of those around him could draw near to him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, yet he needed no counselor. [23] The holy ones who were near him did not depart by night nor leave him. [24] Until then I had been on my face, trembling; and the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me, "Come here, Enoch, and hear my word." [25] And one of the holy ones came to me and raised me up and brought me near to the door; and I bowed my face downward.

Chapter 15 — God’s Answer; the Origin of the Evil Spirits

[1] And he answered and said to me, with his voice, "Hear, and do not be afraid, Enoch, you righteous man and scribe of righteousness. Come here and hear my voice. [2] Go, say to the Watchers of heaven, who sent you to petition on their behalf, 'You ought to petition on behalf of men, not men on behalf of you. [3] Why have you forsaken the high, holy, and eternal heaven, and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men, and taken wives for yourselves, and done as the sons of earth do, and begotten giant sons? [4] You were holy and spiritual, living an eternal life, yet you defiled yourselves with the blood of women, and begot children with the blood of flesh; you lusted after the blood of men, and produced flesh and blood, as do those who die and perish. [5] For this reason I gave them women, that they might cast their seed into them and beget children by them, so that nothing should fail them upon the earth. [6] But you were formerly spiritual, living an eternal life, immortal for all the generations of the world. [7] Therefore I did not make women among you, for the dwelling of the spiritual ones is in heaven. [8] And now the giants, who were born of spirit and flesh, will be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth will be their dwelling. [9] Evil spirits came out of their bodies, because they are born

from men, and their beginning and first origin is from the holy Watchers; they will be evil spirits upon the earth, and they will be called evil spirits. [10] The spirits of heaven have their dwelling in heaven, but the spirits born upon the earth have their dwelling on the earth. [11] And the spirits of the giants do wrong, oppress, lay waste, attack, wrestle, and hurl upon the earth, and cause sorrow; they eat no food, and do not thirst, and are not perceived. [12] These spirits will rise against the sons of men and against the women, because they came forth from them.

Chapter 16 — The Fate of the Watchers

[1] From the days of the slaughter and destruction and death of the giants, when the spirits went forth from the souls of their flesh, to destroy without judgment—thus they will destroy until the day when the great consummation of the great age is accomplished, when the great age will be brought to an end, all at once. [2] And now to the Watchers, who sent you to petition on their behalf, who formerly were in heaven, say: [3] 'You were in heaven, yet not all the mysteries were revealed to you; you knew a worthless mystery, and this in your hardness of heart you made known to the women; and through this mystery the women and the men work much evil upon the earth.' [4] Say to them, therefore, 'You will have no peace.'"

Chapter 17 — Enoch's Journey: Fire, Mountains, and the Rivers

[1] And they took me to a place where those who were there were like a flaming fire, and when they wished, they appeared as men. [2] And they brought me to a place of storm, and to a mountain whose summit reached to heaven. [3] And I saw the storehouses of the luminaries and of the thunder, at the ends of the depth, where there were a fiery bow and arrows in their quiver, and a fiery sword, and all the lightnings. [4] And they took me to the water of life, as it is called, and to the fire of the west, which receives every setting of the sun. [5] And I came to a river of fire, in which the fire flows like water and empties into the great sea toward the west. [6] And I saw all the great rivers, and came to the great darkness, and went to where all flesh walks. [7] And I saw the mountains of the darkness of winter, and the place where the waters of all the deep pour out. [8] And I saw the mouths of all the rivers of the earth, and the mouth of the deep.

Chapter 18 — The Winds, the Cornerstone, and the Prison of the Stars

[1] And I saw the storehouses of all the winds, and saw how with them he has adorned all creation, and saw the foundations of the earth. [2] And I saw the cornerstone of the earth, and the four winds which bear the earth and the firmament of heaven. [3] And I saw how the winds stretch out the height of heaven, and stand between heaven and earth: they are the pillars of heaven. [4] And I saw the winds that turn the heaven and cause the disk of the sun and all the stars to set. [5] And I saw the winds upon the earth that bear the clouds; and I saw the paths of the angels; I saw at the end of the earth the firmament of heaven above. [6] And I went toward the south, where it burns day and night, where there are seven mountains of precious stones—three toward the east and three toward the south. [7] Of those toward the east, one was of colored stone, one of pearl, and one of healing stone; and those toward the south, of red stone. [8] The middle one reached to heaven, like the throne of God, of alabaster, and the summit of the throne was of sapphire. [9] And I saw a blazing fire. Beyond these mountains [10] is a region, the end of the great earth; there the heavens come to an end. [11] And I saw a deep chasm, with pillars of heavenly fire, and I saw among them pillars of fire that descend, beyond measure both in height and in depth. [12] And beyond that chasm I saw a place that had no firmament of heaven above and no firm foundation of earth beneath it; there was no water on it, and no birds, but it was a waste and dreadful place. [13] There I saw seven stars, like great burning mountains; and when I inquired about them, [14] the angel said, "This is the place of the consummation of heaven and earth: it has become a prison for the stars of heaven and the host of heaven. [15] And the stars that roll over the fire are those that transgressed the

commandment of the Lord at the beginning of their rising, because they did not come out at their appointed times. [16] And he was angry with them and bound them until the time of the consummation of their sin, in the year of the mystery."

Chapter 19 — Uriel's Explanation; the Spirits of the Angels

[1] And Uriel said to me, "Here will stand the angels who mingled with women; and their spirits, taking many forms, defile mankind and lead them astray to sacrifice to demons as to gods, until the day of the great judgment, on which they will be judged with finality. [2] And the women of the angels who went astray will become sirens." [3] And I, Enoch, alone saw the vision, the ends of all things; and no man has seen what I have seen.

Chapter 20 — The Names and Offices of the Seven Archangels

[1] And these are the names of the holy angels who keep watch: [2] Uriel, one of the holy angels, who is over the world and over Tartarus. [3] Raphael, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of men. [4] Raguel, one of the holy angels, who takes vengeance on the world of the luminaries. [5] Michael, one of the holy angels, who is set over the best part of mankind, over the people. [6] Saraqael, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of the sons of men who sin in the spirit. Gabriel, one of the holy angels, who is over Paradise and the serpents and the cherubim. [8] Remiel, one of the holy angels, whom God set over those who rise.

Chapter 21 — The Places of Punishment of the Stars and the Watchers

[1] And I came to a place where nothing was made. [2] And I saw there a terrible thing: neither a high heaven nor a firm earth, but a desolate and dreadful place. [3] And there I saw seven of the stars of heaven, bound together in it, like great mountains and blazing with fire. [4] Then I said, "For what sin are they bound, and why have they been cast in here?" [5] And Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me and led me, answered and said, "Enoch, why do you ask, and why are you eager for the truth? [6] These are some of the stars of heaven that transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and they are bound here until ten thousand ages are completed—the number of the days of their sin." [7] And from there I went to another place, more dreadful than the first; and I saw a terrible thing—a great fire there, blazing and flaming, and the place had a cleft reaching to the abyss, full of great descending pillars of fire; neither its extent nor its size could I see, nor could I conjecture. [8] Then I said, "How dreadful is this place, and how terrible to look upon!" [9] And Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered and said to me, "Enoch, why are you so afraid and alarmed?" And I said, "Because of this dreadful place, and because of the spectacle of pain." [10] And he said to me, "This place is the prison of the angels; here they will be held forever."

Chapter 22 — The Mountain of the Dead and the Hollow Places

[1] And from there I went to another place, and he showed me in the west a great and high mountain, and a hard rock, and four hollow places. [2] The hollow places were deep and wide and very smooth; three of them were dark and one was bright, and there was a spring of water in its midst. And I said, "How smooth are these hollow places, and deep and dark to look upon!" [3] Then Raphael, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered and said to me, "These hollow places have been made for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead might gather in them; for this they were created, that here all the souls of the sons of men should assemble. [4] These places were made to receive them until the day of their judgment, and until the appointed time, the great judgment upon them." [5] I saw the spirit of a dead man making accusation, and his lament went up to heaven and cried out. [6] And I asked Raphael, the angel who was with me, and said, "Whose is this spirit, whose voice goes up and makes accusation?" [7] And he answered me, saying, "This is the spirit that went out from Abel, whom Cain his brother slew; and Abel makes

accusation against him until his offspring is destroyed from the face of the earth, and his seed perishes from among the seed of men." [8] Then I asked about all the hollow places, why they were separated one from another. [9] And he answered me, saying, "These three were made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And this is how the souls of the righteous are separated: there is a spring of water, and over it a light. [10] Likewise a place has been created for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth, and judgment has not come upon them in their lifetime. [11] Here their spirits are set apart in this great torment, until the great day of judgment, of punishment and torment for those who curse forever, and of vengeance on their souls; here he will bind them forever. [12] And one hollow place is set apart for the spirits of those who make their plea, who disclose their destruction, when they were slain in the days of the sinners. [13] And this has been created for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were godless, and who were companions of the lawless; their spirits will not be punished on the day of judgment, nor will they be raised from here." [14] Then I blessed the Lord of glory and said, "Blessed be my Lord, the Lord of righteousness, who rules forever."

Chapter 23 — The Fire of the Luminaries of Heaven

[1] And from there I went to another place, toward the west, to the ends of the earth. [2] And I saw a blazing fire that ran without resting, and did not cease from its running by day or night, but kept on continually. [3] And I asked, saying, "What is this that has no rest?" [4] Then Raguel, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered and said, "This running fire whose course is toward the west is the fire of all the luminaries of heaven."

Chapter 24 — The Seven Mountains and the Tree of Life

[1] And from there I went to another place of the earth, and he showed me a mountain range of fire that blazed day and night. [2] And I went beyond it and saw seven magnificent mountains, all differing from one another, with precious and beautiful stones, all magnificent and glorious in appearance and fair in form: three toward the east, set firm one upon another, and three toward the south, one upon another, and deep and winding ravines, no one of them near another. [3] And the seventh mountain was in the midst of these, and it rose above them in height, like the seat of a throne; and fragrant trees encircled the throne. [4] Among them was a tree such as I had never smelled, and none of them nor any other was like it: it had a fragrance beyond all fragrance, and its leaves and blossoms and wood never wither; its fruit is beautiful, like the clusters of the palm. [5] Then I said, "Behold this beautiful tree! Beautiful to look upon, and pleasant are its leaves, and its fruit very delightful in appearance." [6] Then Michael, one of the holy and honored angels who was with me, and was their leader, answered me.

Chapter 25 — The Throne-Mountain of God and the Tree of Life

[1] And he said to me, "Enoch, why do you ask me about the fragrance of this tree, and why do you wish to learn the truth?" [2] Then I, Enoch, answered him, saying, "I wish to know about everything, but especially about this tree." [3] And he answered me, saying, "This high mountain that you saw, whose summit is like the throne of God, is the throne where the Holy and Great One, the Lord of glory, the Eternal King, will sit when he comes down to visit the earth with goodness. [4] And as for this fragrant tree, no mortal is permitted to touch it until the great judgment, when he will take vengeance on all and bring everything to its consummation forever. Then it will be given to the righteous and humble. [5] From its fruit life will be given to the chosen; it will be transplanted to the north, to the holy place, to the house of the Lord, the Eternal King. [6] Then they will rejoice greatly and be glad, and they will enter the holy place; its fragrance will be in their bones, and they will live a long life upon the earth, such as your fathers lived; and in their days no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity will touch them." [7] Then I blessed the God of glory, the Eternal King, because

he has prepared such things for righteous men, and has created them and promised to give them to them.

Chapter 26 — The Center of the Earth: Jerusalem and the Valleys

[1] And from there I went to the center of the earth, and I saw a blessed place in which there were trees with branches that abide and sprout from a felled tree. [2] And there I saw a holy mountain, and beneath the mountain, to the east, there was water, and it flowed toward the south. [3] And I saw toward the east another mountain, higher than this one, and between them a deep and narrow ravine; in it too ran water, beneath the mountain. [4] And to the west of this was another mountain, lower than it and not high, and a ravine, deep and dry, between them; and another deep and dry ravine at the ends of the three mountains. [5] And all the ravines were deep, of hard rock, and no tree was planted in them. [6] And I marveled at the rock, and I marveled at the ravine; I marveled greatly.

Chapter 27 — The Accursed Valley

[1] Then I said, "For what purpose is this blessed land, all filled with trees, and this accursed valley in the midst?" [2] Then Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered and said, "This accursed valley is for those who are accursed forever; here will be gathered together all who utter with their mouths unseemly words against the Lord, and speak harshly of his glory. Here they will be gathered, and here will be their place of judgment. [3] In the last days the spectacle of righteous judgment upon them will be in the presence of the righteous forever; here the merciful will bless the Lord of glory, the Eternal King. [4] In the days of the judgment of the cursed, the merciful will bless him for the mercy he has assigned to them." [5] Then I blessed the Lord of glory, and made known his glory, and praised him gloriously.

Chapter 28 — The Wilderness Eastward (I)

[1] And from there I went toward the east, to the midst of the mountain range of the desert, and I saw only a plain. [2] But it was full of trees from this seed, and water gushed out upon it from above. [3] The torrent that flowed toward the northwest carried up water and dew on every side.

Chapter 29 — The Wilderness Eastward (II)

[1] And from there I went to another place in the desert, and drew near to the east of this mountain range. [2] And there I saw aromatic trees, exhaling the fragrance of frankincense and myrrh, and the trees were like almond trees.

Chapter 30 — The Wilderness Eastward (III)

[1] And beyond these, I went far to the east, and I saw another place, with valleys of water that never failed. [2] And I saw a beautiful tree, whose fragrance was like that of the mastic. [3] And by the banks of these valleys I saw fragrant cinnamon. And beyond these I went on toward the east.

Chapter 31 — The Trees of Fragrance

[1] And I saw other mountains, and in them groves of trees, and there flowed from them nectar, which is called sarara and galbanum. [2] And beyond these mountains I saw another mountain, to the east of the ends of the earth, on which were aloe trees, and all the trees were full of a substance like almonds, hard. [3] And when one takes that fruit, it is better than any fragrance.

Chapter 32 — The Garden of Righteousness and the Tree of Wisdom

[1] And after these fragrances, as I looked toward the north over the mountains, I saw seven mountains full of choice nard and fragrant trees and cinnamon and pepper. [2] And from there I went over the summits of those mountains, far toward the east, and passed over the Red Sea, and went far from it, and passed over the angel Zotiel. [3] And I came to the garden of righteousness, and saw beyond those trees many great trees growing there, fragrant, large, very beautiful and glorious; and the tree of wisdom, of which they eat and know great wisdom. [4] That tree is like the carob in height, and its leaf like the leaf of the carob, and its fruit like the clusters of the vine, very beautiful; and the fragrance of the tree spreads and reaches afar. [5] Then I said, "How beautiful is this tree, and how delightful is its appearance!" [6] Then the holy angel Raphael, who was with me, answered me and said, "This is the tree of wisdom, from which your father of old and your mother of old, who were before you, ate and learned wisdom; and their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they were driven out of the garden."

Chapter 33 — The Ends of the Earth and the Gates of the Stars

[1] And from there I went to the ends of the earth, and saw there great beasts, each different from another, and birds differing in form and beauty and call, each different from another. [2] And to the east of those beasts I saw the ends of the earth, on which heaven rests, and the open gates of heaven. [3] And I saw how the stars of heaven come out, and I counted the gates from which they go forth, and wrote down all their exits, for each one individually, according to their number and their names, their courses and their positions, their times and their months, as Uriel, the holy angel who was with me, showed me. [4] He showed me all things and wrote them down for me; also their names he wrote for me, and their ordinances and their courses.

Chapter 34 — The Northern Regions

[1] And from there I went toward the north, to the ends of the earth, and there I saw a great and glorious wonder at the ends of the whole earth. [2] There I saw three gates of heaven open in the heaven: through each of them the north winds go forth; when they blow, there is cold, hail, frost, snow, dew, and rain. [3] From one gate they blow for good; but when they blow through the other two gates, they blow with violence, and bring affliction upon the earth.

Chapter 35 — The Western Regions

[1] And from there I went toward the west, to the ends of the earth, and saw there three gates of heaven open, as I had seen in the east, the same number of gates and the same number of exits.

Chapter 36 — The Southern and Eastern Regions; Doxology

[1] And from there I went toward the south, to the ends of the earth, and there I saw three gates of heaven open, and from there came forth dew, rain, and wind. [2] And from there I went toward the east, to the ends of heaven, and there I saw three gates of heaven open toward the east, and above them smaller gates. [3] Through each of these smaller gates the stars of heaven pass and run their course toward the west, by the path that is shown to them. [4] And whenever I saw this, I blessed—and I will always bless—the Lord of glory, who has made great and glorious wonders, that he might show the greatness of his work to his angels and to the souls of men, that they might praise his work, and that all his creatures might see the work of his power and praise the great work of his hands and bless him forever.

Textual-Critical Commentary

The notes treat the principal text-critical and interpretive cruxes of the Book of the Watchers, weighing the Aramaic, Greek, and Ethiopic witnesses and registering the major divergences among them. They are densest where the witnesses overlap and where the history of the tradition is most at stake—the descent of the Watchers (6–11), the origin of the evil spirits (15–16), and the cosmic journeys (17–36). References follow the translation above.

1:1 The words of the blessing of Enoch

Witnesses. The opening is preserved in Aramaic (4QEn^{a} = 4Q201 1 i), Greek (Codex Panopolitanus), and Ethiopic, which agree on the superscription. **Note.** The form—a patriarch's testamentary "blessing" on the elect before the final tribulation—echoes the blessings of Moses (Deut 33:1) and the oracles of Balaam (Num 24), and frames the whole book as prophecy. The Aramaic confirms that chs 1–5 stood as the book's introduction already in the earliest recoverable stage.

1:2 whose eyes were opened by God

Note. The self-description deliberately appropriates Balaam, "the man whose eye is opened… who sees the vision of the Almighty" (Num 24:3–4, 15–16). Enoch is cast as a true seer over against the false. Aramaic and Greek support the oracular framing ("he took up his discourse" = Heb./Aram. nāśāʾ māšāl, the technical term for an oracle).

1:4 tread… upon Mount Sinai

Text. Greek and Ethiopic read "Mount Sinai." **Note.** The theophany is built from Deut 33:2 (the LORD coming from Sinai) and Mic 1:3–4 (the mountains melting like wax, taken up in 1:6). Several witnesses describe the host coming "from the heaven of heavens," an expansion of the same image.

1:9 he comes with the myriads of his holy ones

The key text: quoted in Jude 14–15. This verse is the only express citation of a pseudepigraphon in the New Testament. The Greek of Panopolitanus stands very close to Jude's wording, and the Aramaic (4QEn^{c} = 4Q204 1 i) preserves part of the verse, confirming its antiquity. **Differences.** In Enoch the subject is God ("he/the Holy One comes"); Jude makes the subject ἦλθεν κύριος ("the Lord came"), reading the verb as an aorist—a prophetic/proleptic past that the writer applies christologically to the coming of the Lord in judgment. **Background.** "Myriads of his holy ones" derives from Deut 33:2 (cf. Zech 14:5; Dan 7:10). That Jude cites the passage as Enoch's genuine "prophecy" is strong evidence that some first-century circles regarded 1 Enoch as authoritative.

5:8 wisdom will be given to the chosen

Note. The sapiential turn closes the exhortation of chs 2–5: the order of nature (2–5a) indicts the disorder of the wicked (5b), and the elect are promised wisdom, light, and the inheritance of the earth. The Aramaic preserves this conclusion, showing the unit is original to the Watchers booklet.

6:6 in the days of Jared… upon Mount Hermon

Wordplays recoverable only behind the Semitic text. Three puns underlie the verse. (a) "in the days of Jared"—Yered ≈ the root y-r-d, "to descend": the Watchers "descended." (b) "Mount Hermon"—Ḥermon ≈ ḥerem, "ban/curse," and the verb heḥerimu, "they bound themselves with a curse"; hence the etiology "they called it Hermon." (c) The number "two hundred" stands in both Aramaic and Greek. The puns are lost in Greek and Ethiopic but are presupposed by the surviving etiology—a strong indication of a Semitic original.

6:7 the names of their chiefs

Major crux. The roster of leaders diverges substantially among the witnesses in both form and order. The rendering here follows the Aramaic forms where they are recoverable (e.g., Shemihazah, Kokabel, Baraqel, Asael; ed. Milik 1976, reconstructed by Nickelsburg). The Ethiopic (Charles) reads, e.g., Semyaza, Arakiba, Rameel, Kokabiel, Tamiel, Ramiel, Danel, Ezeqeel, Baraqijal, Asael, Armaros, Batarel, Ananel, Zaqiel, Samsapeel, Satarel, Turel, Jomjael, Sariel. **Number.** The text means to list twenty "chiefs of tens" (6:8), matching the two hundred of 6:6, but the witnesses preserve nineteen or twenty names—itself an old uncertainty in the transmission.

7:2 great giants, whose height was three thousand cubits

Variant. Greek (Panopolitanus, Syncellus) reads "three thousand cubits"; the Ethiopic reads "three hundred cubits," and related traditions (Book of Giants, later witnesses) give still other figures. The reading adopted here follows the Greek. **Note.** The giants (Heb. nəfīlim, Gen 6:4) consume the produce of the earth and then humanity itself, escalating to bloodshed—the concrete "corruption" that triggers the appeal of ch 9.

8:1 Asael taught men to make swords…

The two strands. Chapters 6–11 interweave two originally distinct etiologies of evil: the Shemihazah strand (illicit union of Watchers and women → violent giants) and the Asael strand (forbidden teaching → metallurgy, weaponry, cosmetics, and so warfare and seduction). Source-critical analysis (Dimant, Newsom, Nickelsburg) shows the two were combined editorially; the seams are still visible. **Name.** Asael (Aramaic) is the Azazel of 10:4–8 and of Leviticus 16 (see the note there).

8:3 the assignment of the arts

Text fluid. The pairing of named Watchers with particular arts (the signs of the stars, lightnings, sun, and moon—i.e., astrology and divination) varies between Greek (Syncellus) and Ethiopic in both order and attribution. The substance—that illicit heavenly knowledge corrupts the earth—is constant.

9:1 Michael, Sariel, Raphael, and Gabriel

Variant of the name. The Aramaic and Syncellus read "Sariel" as the second of the four intercessor-angels; Codex Panopolitanus reads "Uriel" in its place; the Ethiopic varies (Suryal/Suriel). The same Sariel/Uriel interchange recurs at 10:1 and in the list of ch 20. The four angels who carry the earth's cry to heaven prepare for the divine commission of ch 10.

10:1 the angel sent to Noah

Variant. The figure dispatched to warn Noah is named "Sariel" in the Aramaic and in Syncellus; "Uriel" in Panopolitanus; and in the Ethiopic the name is corrupt ("Istrael" / "Arsyalalyur"). This is the classic locus of the Sariel–Uriel confusion in the textual tradition.

10:4 cast him… in Dudael

Intertext with Leviticus 16. Asael is bound hand and foot and cast into a pit in the desert at "Dudael." The name corresponds to the rabbinic Bet Ḥadudo (m. Yoma 6:8), the cliff in the wilderness from which the Day-of-Atonement scapegoat "for Azazel" was hurled. The binding of Asael in the desert thus rewrites the scapegoat rite and confirms the identification Asael = Azazel (Lev 16:8–10, 26).

10:9 the giants… the bastards

Note. The Aramaic terms the giants mamzerin (“bastards,” half-breeds); they are made to destroy one another in mutual war before the flood. The Greek and Ethiopic preserve the sense. Their death is the hinge for 15:8–16:1 (the origin of evil spirits).

14:8–25 the vision of the throne

Note. Enoch’s ascent to the crystal house and the throne of the Great Glory is the longest sustained passage attested in Aramaic, Greek, and Ethiopic together. The imagery—wheels of fire, cherubim, a throne with streams of fire, the unapproachable Glory—draws on Ezek 1 and Dan 7:9–10 and becomes foundational for later apocalyptic and for the Hekhalot/Merkavah tradition.

15:8–16:1 evil spirits shall they be called upon the earth

Theologically pivotal. The spirits that came forth from the bodies of the dead giants become the “evil spirits” that afflict humanity until the final judgment. Aramaic, Greek, and Ethiopic agree on the substance. This is the classic Second-Temple etiology of demons—the conceptual background to the exorcisms of the Gospels and to much later demonology (Jubilees 10; Justin, 2 Apol. 5).

19:1–2 the spirits of the angels… the women became sirens

Note. The first journey closes with the place of punishment for the Watchers who led humanity astray; the Greek describes the seduced women as becoming “sirens” (σειρῆνες), a Hellenistic touch in the Greek tradition that the Ethiopic renders more flatly. The seam confirms transmission through a Greek stage.

20:1–8 the seven archangels

Variant in the number. Greek (Panopolitanus) and the fuller Ethiopic list seven holy angels—Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel, and Remiel—each with a sphere of authority. Some Ethiopic manuscripts give only six, omitting Remiel, whose name and office (v. 8, “set over those who rise”) survive in the Greek. The number seven aligns with Tobit 12:15 (“seven who stand before the Lord”) and Revelation 8:2.

22:1–14 the chambers of the dead

Note. In the far west Enoch sees the hollow places where the souls of the dead are gathered and separated—the righteous apart from sinners, with further compartments—to await the judgment. Attested in Aramaic (4QEn^{e}) and Greek, this is one of the earliest articulations of an intermediate state and of post-mortem moral differentiation, anticipating later Jewish and Christian conceptions of the afterlife.

24:1–25:7 the seven mountains and the tree of life

Note. Enoch sees seven mountains of precious stone and, on the seventh, a fragrant tree whose fruit is reserved for the righteous. At the judgment it will be transplanted to “the holy place, beside the house of God,” i.e., the temple. The tree-of-life imagery (Gen 2:9; Rev 22:2) is here eschatological reward.

26:1–27:5 Jerusalem and the accursed valley

Note. The “center of the earth” is the holy mountain (Jerusalem); beside it lies an accursed valley appointed for the judgment of the cursed. This is an early step toward the identification of the Valley of Hinnom (Ge-Hinnom → Gehenna) as the eschatological place of punishment, a usage the Gospels presuppose.

32:3–6 the garden of righteousness and the tree of wisdom

Note. In the east Enoch reaches the garden of righteousness and beholds the tree of wisdom—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2–3), whose fruit Adam and Eve ate. The Watchers' booklet thus brackets primeval history (the fall, the flood) within Enoch's cosmic tour, reading Genesis through an apocalyptic lens.

Select Bibliography and Sources

Editions and translations

J. T. Milik, The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) — the editio princeps of the Aramaic.

R. H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford, 1912; public domain). sacred-texts.com

M. A. Knibb, The Ethiopic Book of Enoch, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1978).

M. Black, The Book of Enoch or I Enoch: A New English Edition (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1985).

G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

G. W. E. Nickelsburg & J. C. VanderKam, 1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation (Fortress, 2012).

Background and reference

Greek Codex Panopolitanus and Syncellus texts; overview at the Online Critical Pseudepigrapha. ocp.tyndale.ca

“1 Enoch / Book of the Watchers,” introduction and texts. pseudepigrapha.org

On the Aramaic Enoch fragments and the Watchers tradition (Dead Sea Scrolls). thetorah.com