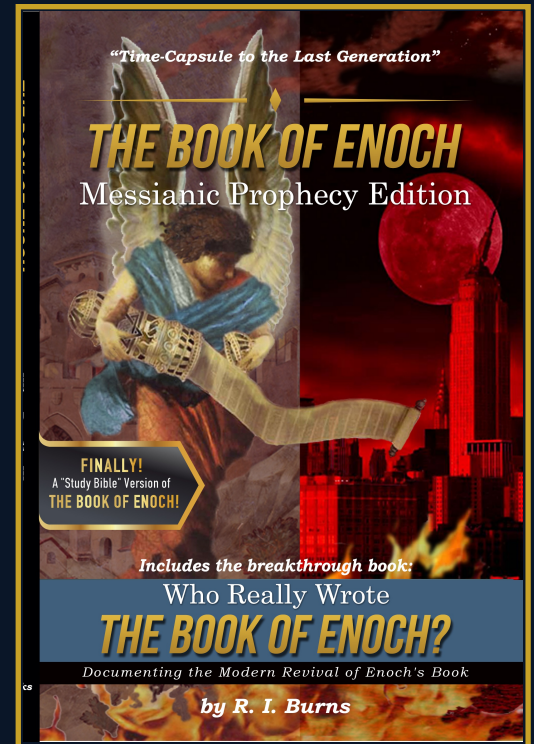


FREE SAMPLE

Decoding the Period of the Seventy Shepherds

From the Appendices (Enoch 89–90)

A clear and careful explanation of one of the most intriguing prophetic sections of Enoch's Animal Apocalypse — and how it lines up with Daniel's four empires and Jesus' own words about the "times of the Gentiles."



THE BOOK OF ENOCH

Messianic Prophecy Edition • by R. I. Burns

5

*Enoch 89 & 90:
Decoding the Period of the
Seventy Shepherds*

In Enoch 85:1-95:8, we have a section known as the ‘*Animal Apocalypse*’. In it, Enoch receives his second of four dream-visions⁸⁰³ in which he sees salvation history from creation and humanity’s fall until the Messianic Age.

The *Animal Apocalypse* receives its title from its use of animal imagery to tell its story. In it, God’s people are portrayed as various domesticated herd animals. The unbelieving Gentile nations are depicted as an assortment of wild, predatory, and scavenging animals.

Decoding the Animal Apocalypse

The majority of the *Animal Apocalypse* is easily decoded since its story mirrors the story of the Bible. There is a subsection, however, which has given people a great deal of confusion. In Enoch 89:59–90:13 is a subsection describing a time we call ‘*the period of the seventy shepherds*’. In this section the people of Israel are seen as sheep being shepherded, but the identities of the shepherds have caused considerable confusion.

Common speculation online says that the story of the seventy shepherds is a retelling of the entire history of Israel until the present time and beyond. In this view, the early shepherds are understood as the judges of Israel followed by Israel’s shepherd kings. The shepherds after that are interpreted as the gentile kingdoms which ruled over the Jews after the Jewish kings ended. Finally, an attempt is made to link the last shepherds to the Prime Ministers of modern Israel since 1948.

There are serious problems with this view.

To begin with, *all* seventy of the shepherds in Enoch’s vision are portrayed as evil. In these shepherds, our normal expectation of the protective nature of good shepherds is turned upside down. These shepherds are destroyers. They do not make the sheep lie down in green pastures. They do not lead them beside still waters. Their rods and staffs do not protect, and comfort but instead deliver the sheep over to their enemies. Their enemies are the Gentile nations, depicted as wild,

⁸⁰³ The ‘*Animal Apocalypse*’ is the second of four dream-visions in Enoch. Enoch helps us understand these chronologically in 83:2, where he says, ‘*two visions I had before I took a wife*’. The four dream-visions can be seen in: ¹ the *vision how the heaven collapsed*, 83:3-10, ² the *Animal Apocalypse*, 85:1-95:8, ³ the *book of the words of righteousness*, 14:1-36:4, and ⁴ the ‘*vision of wisdom*’ 37:1-59:3

APPENDICES: PASSAGES EXAMINED

predatory, and scavenging animals.⁸⁰⁴

In Enoch 89:65 we read,

And I saw till those shepherds pastured in their season,
and they began to slay and to destroy... and they delivered
those sheep into the hand of the lions.

Add to this that *all* seventy of those shepherds will be judged and consigned to a burning abyss forever. In Enoch 90:25 we find,

Those seventy shepherds were judged and found guilty,
and they were cast into that fiery abyss.

I don't think anyone is willing to say all of Israel's biblical judges and kings as well as modern Israel's prime ministers are consigned to a fiery pit. We certainly need to find a better explanation than that.

Following the Biblical Chronology

It's important that we see the time of the seventy shepherds follows *chronologically after* Enoch tells the history of the Jews up to the destruction of Solomon's temple. Enoch does not then begin his entire narrative again from the beginning. Enoch puts the seventy shepherds sequentially *after* the Babylonian conquest of Israel in 586 BC. At that time Solomon's temple was destroyed and the Davidic monarchy was dissolved. The dynasty of David, Israel's original shepherd-king came to an end.⁸⁰⁵

The time of the seventy shepherds begins when the Davidic dynasty ended. The 'lions' in Enoch's vision stand for the Babylonians who attack Israel and destroy 'their house' referring to Solomon's temple.

Enoch's dream-vision continues, and the saga of the seventy shepherds is told. The first order of business of these shepherds is described in Enoch 89:65–66,

I saw till those shepherds pastured in their season, and they
began to slay and to destroy more than they were bidden, and
they delivered those sheep into the hand of the lions. And the
lions⁸⁰⁶ and tigers⁸⁰⁷ eat and devoured the greater part of those

⁸⁰⁴ It is interesting to note that Ezekiel's diatribe against the evil shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel 34 follows hard on the news Ezekiel has just received (Ezekiel 33:21) that Jerusalem has fallen to Babylon. The fall of Jerusalem to Babylon inaugurates Enoch's period of the seventy shepherds. Could Ezekiel's diatribe be addressing the same group of shepherds as Enoch's vision does? If so, it would not be the only passage in Scripture directly addressed to evil entities. See Psalm 82, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

⁸⁰⁵ Since Jesus Christ has a legitimate claim to the throne of David, we believe the Davidic dynasty has not truly ended but will one day resume.

⁸⁰⁶ Babylonians

⁸⁰⁷ Arameans, aka Assyrians, Syrians

DECODING THE PERIOD OF THE SEVENTY SHEPHERDS

sheep, and the wild boars⁸⁰⁸ eat along with them; and they burnt that tower and demolished that house.

At this point, Enoch is greatly distressed and calls out to God pleading for mercy on the sheep. However, God is unmoved by Enoch’s prayer and Enoch learns God will allow those sheep to continue “to be devoured in the hand of all the beasts,” (Enoch 89:58).

A Key to Enoch's “Animal Apocalypse”

Identities of the Animals in Enoch 86-89:9

Elephants	=	Giants	(See footnote to Enoch 7:2 concerning the three types of demonic offspring)
Camels	=	Nephilim	
Asses	=	Elioud	

Identities of the Animals in Enoch 89:10-90:42

White Bulls	=	Patriarchs (from Adam to Abraham)
Cows	=	Wives and daughters of patriarchs
Sheep	=	Jacob’s Descendants
Wild Asses	=	Ishmaelites
Wolves	=	Egyptians
Wild Boars	=	Edomites
Dogs	=	Philistines
Foxes	=	Ammonites & Moabites
Tigers	=	Arameans, aka Assyrians, Syrians
Lions	=	Babylonians ⁸⁰⁹
Hyenas	=	Persians
Eagles	=	The Four Greek kingdoms
Ravens	=	
Vultures	=	
Kites	=	
Squirrels	=	Medes?
Swine	=	Parthians?
Falcons	=	Romans?

The Rise of the Seventy Shepherds

Having left the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of their inheritance in the land of promise, Israel once again is enslaved and in exile. In the history of Israel, the patterns of exile and return, of dispersion and regathering, recur repeatedly. However, we cannot overstate the central importance of the Babylonian phase in this pattern. Both Nebuchadnezzar and

⁸⁰⁸ Edomites

⁸⁰⁹ It’s not just Enoch who compares the Babylonians to lions; Daniel 7, portrays the Babylonian empire with lion-like traits. There’s also Jeremiah 50:17, which states, “Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him, and now at last Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones.”

APPENDICES: PASSAGES EXAMINED

Daniel have dream-visions in which this point in history is seen as a watershed for Israel and its relation to the Gentile nations, (Daniel 2:1–45, 7:1–28). Up until the Babylonian conquest of Israel, the kings of Israel had acted as the *shepherds* of Israel. After centuries of Jewish self-rule, the people will now be under the shepherding authority of the kings of the Gentiles.

But as we shall see, these Gentile kings are themselves under shepherding authorities of their own...

Who Are the Seventy Shepherds?

There are hundreds of nations in our world today. This has not always been the case. The origin of the Gentile nations begins as one of the outcomes of the Tower of Babel incident. When the united descendants of Noah attempted to challenge God at the Tower of Babel, God's punishment was to scatter them by confusing their languages. The confusion of languages was the cause of the origin of the nations and their dispersion throughout the earth (Genesis 11:1–9, Enoch 89:10–11). Before there ever was a diaspora of the Jews, there was a diaspora of the nations. The Tower of Babel event began the origin of seventy Gentile nations who were dispersed in God's judgment. The seventy nations are listed in a passage we call the '*Table of Nations*,' in Genesis 10.

Deuteronomy 32:8–9, alludes to this division into the seventy nations, though at first this may not seem obvious when referring to English translations of the Hebrew for this verse. As an example, the New American Standard Bible reads,

The Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people *according to the number of the children of Israel*. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.⁸¹⁰

However, the oldest pieces of the Book of Deuteronomy in existence are among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The same passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible reads

The Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated humankind, he set the bounds of the peoples *according to the number of the children of God*. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.⁸¹¹

Unlike the New Testament, in the Old Testament the phrase 'children of God' is always a designation for angels. Affirming the Dead Sea Scrolls on these verses is the Greek Septuagint. The oldest *complete* text of the

⁸¹⁰ *New American Standard Bible*. (1960). Lockman Foundation.

⁸¹¹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*. (2012). HarperCollins.

DECODING THE PERIOD OF THE SEVENTY SHEPHERDS

Old Testament is Greek and is called the Septuagint. The Septuagint reads,

When the Most High distributed nations as he scattered the descendants of Adam, he set up boundaries for the nations *according to the number of the angels of God*. And his people Jacob became the portion of the Lord, Israel an allotment of his inheritance.⁸¹²

So, the two oldest texts we have of Deuteronomy 32:8–9, indicate when the Most High divided the Goyim into the seventy nations, he did so “*according to the number of the angels of God*”. This indicates the number of seventy Gentile nations were created equal to the number of a specific group of seventy angels.

In a book written about 150 years before Christ, we find an apparent confirmation of this view of Deuteronomy 32:8–9. In language which mirrors that of Deuteronomy the writer of *Wisdom of Sirach* seems to be offering commentary on this very passage. We read

He appointed a ruler for every nation, but Israel is the Lord's own portion.⁸¹³

In this understanding, the seventy nations are *not only the same number* as, but also under the rulership of those angels. The chosen people, however, were not to be under that authority as they were to be the Lord's portion; all this agrees with the passage above from Deuteronomy.

Diaspora Within Diaspora

It seems apparent in explaining Enoch's time of the seventy shepherds that the shepherds are in fact evil angels who rule the nations. These are the same nations dispersed at Babel. They now are the dispersed nations within which the Jews have become a dispersed people. The Jews are now a diaspora within a diaspora. They are doubly dispersed! In this way, they now come under the authority of the same evil angels who rule the nations.⁸¹⁴ A superficial perusal of the history of the Jews will confirm their real experience of this. These corrupt angels, according to Enoch, do God's bidding, but incur guilt (Enoch 90:22). The wild animals of the *Animal Apocalypse* then, are rightly understood as the seventy Gentile nations, who are ruled over by the seventy angels alluded to in Deuteronomy 32:8–9.

⁸¹² Lexham English Septuagint. (2019). Lexham Press.

⁸¹³ English Standard Version Apocrypha. (2009). Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good New Publishing, (Sirach 17:17).

⁸¹⁴ Jeremiah 5:19, “As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.”

Daniel's Four Mutated Beasts and the Reestablishment of the Rebellion at Babel

In Daniel 7, the prophet receives a dream-vision in which he witnesses four monstrous animals rising from the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean corresponds to the general milieu of Gentile nations that

Emblems of the Nations

It is interesting to note in Enoch each nation has a feral animal as its representation. It should not surprise us then that even now the nations of the world have chosen wild animals as their state emblems representing themselves symbolically. The U.S. has the bald eagle as its national symbol. Russia has the bear. China is sometimes represented as a dragon, etc.

surround that body of water on all sides. The four beasts correspond to the four Gentile empires which will exercise authority over Jerusalem and its people beginning from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the Messianic age. In one way, it is possible to view these four empires of Daniel's vision as Gentile attempts to reestablish the original, united rebellion against God, which was put down at Babel, described in Genesis 11.

Daniel's four beasts represent four Gentile empires. Each empire is shown to be a combination of a variety of animal traits monstrously stitched together. Daniel leaves off describing the fourth beast as nondescript. Centuries after Daniel, the fourth animal will be fully described by John in Revelation 13. In the *Book of Revelation*, the fourth animal has traits from all three of the prior beasts with an additional diabolic element added into the mix.

"The Times of the Gentiles"

When we realize that Enoch's era of the seventy shepherds mirrors the timeframe of the four Gentile empires in the Book of Daniel, a recurring truth about Enoch's book emerges again. The Book of Enoch harmonizes with the rest of the Bible in every way. In Daniel chapters 2 and 7, first Nebuchadnezzar, then Daniel sees visions of four Gentile empires which will rule starting with Babylon. The period of the four Gentile empires and the time of the seventy shepherds will both end when the Jewish Messiah comes to earth. At that time Messiah will restore the kingdom of David which has been lost to Israel since the time of Nebuchadnezzar. We now know this will be accomplished by the return of Jesus Christ who is the rightful heir to the throne of David.

Related to this, Jesus made a prophecy that has puzzled many students of the Bible... In Luke 21:24, we read, "*Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*". This prophecy has still not been fulfilled as Israel does not currently have sovereignty over the Temple Mount in the old city. Regardless, there have

DECODING THE PERIOD OF THE SEVENTY SHEPHERDS

been brief periods of full Jewish autonomy in an Israeli state that have not put a final end to the Gentiles' trampling upon the city.

If we equate Jesus' mention of *the times of the Gentiles* with Enoch's era of the seventy shepherds, as well as Daniel's vision of the four empires, it clears up a lot. The *Times of the Gentiles* is best understood as that period which begins with the destruction of the Jewish monarchy by Babylon and which ends with the restoration of that monarchy by means of the 2nd Coming of King Messiah, Jesus Christ.⁸¹⁵

Isn't this what is inferred by the question asked by Jesus' Apostles on the Mount of Olives? Just before the ascension of Christ to his Father's right hand, they asked, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). Realize this question is still on their lips despite three years of Jesus' teaching, and after forty days of Jesus further clarifying the kingdom since his resurrection, (Acts 1:3). Jesus never told his Apostles to abandon the belief that one day the throne of David will again be restored to Israel.

4 Empires of Daniel 2 & 7 = Times of the Gentiles = Time of the 70 Shepherds

“Thy Kingdom Come...”

As with the period of the seventy shepherds in Enoch, Daniel's vision of the chronicle of the four empires begins with Jerusalem's destruction under Nebuchadnezzar and ends with the Messiah bringing these monstrous Gentile empires to their end— just so ends the *times of the Gentiles*' trampling of Jerusalem under their feet. Jerusalem's trampling comes to an end because her rule has begun under the authority of King Jesus, the good shepherd of Israel. The rulership of King Messiah Jesus puts an end to the eons-long united rebellion of the Gentiles against the Lord and his Anointed, (Psalm 2:2). The Lord Jesus Christ now fills the whole earth with his righteous kingdom! Then the words of David, the sweet Psalmist and shepherd of Israel will be fulfilled when he wrote,

*Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear
he burns the chariots with fire.*

*"Be still and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"*

⁸¹⁵ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events. p. 21.

APPENDICES: PASSAGES EXAMINED

*The Lord of hosts is with us
the God of Jacob is our fortress.* *Psalm 46*