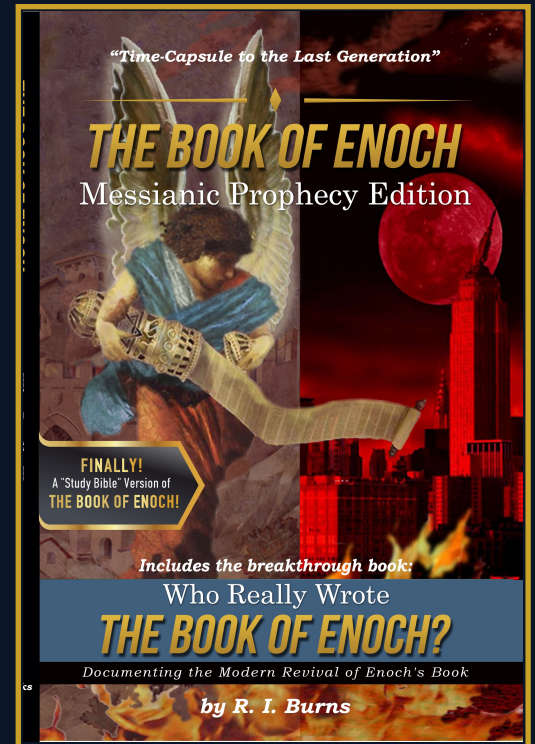


FREE SAMPLE

The Modern Revival of the Book of Enoch

From "Who Really Wrote the Book of Enoch?"

The remarkable story of how this ancient book was lost for nearly a thousand years, preserved in Africa, and has now reemerged exactly as the book itself predicted — a true time-capsule to the last generation.



THE BOOK OF ENOCH

Messianic Prophecy Edition • by R. I. Burns

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The Modern Revival of the Book of Enoch

The message of the *Book of Enoch* reads a lot like the Hebrew prophets of the Bible. Enoch's message is a mixture of rebuke for sin and exhortation to repentance. His message includes descriptions of God's coming judgment upon the wicked and the future glory and blessings upon his people. Also, like some, but not all of the Hebrew prophets, we are told Enoch wrote his message down. Enoch was one of the writing prophets.

Enoch's Story Parallels His Book

As we read about the life of Enoch in his book, there is an interesting parallel we find between his life and his book. Enoch was hidden for a time:

Before these things Enoch was hidden, and no one of the children of men knew where he was hidden, and where he abode, and what had become of him, (Enoch 12:1).

Then, when Enoch received his call to be a prophet, he came out of seclusion and reappeared to the world. In the same way, Enoch's book was hidden for a time but has now reappeared.

For nearly a thousand years, the *Book of Enoch* was in seclusion. In most of the world people thought this book had been lost. However, it has now reemerged on the world stage with an important message that has not diminished with time.

Amazingly, the course of the history of this book has nicely lined up with a prediction in the book's first two verses. In those verses it is stated Enoch's book was not being written for the people living in Enoch's day. It was not even being written for those who would immediately follow. From the start, the *Book of Enoch* was intended for a future generation living during the *day of tribulation*.⁵⁸⁰ Like a time-capsule set aside for the last generation, the *Book of Enoch* has again come to light in our day and is available for any who wish to discover its treasures.

To understand how all this happened we need to take a closer look at the amazing history of the *Book of Enoch*. We need to see how it has passed through phases of widespread popularity, then scorn, then concealment, and now reemergence.

⁵⁸⁰ **Enoch 1:1-9.**

Universally Accepted in the Time of Christ

For many Jews in Israel at the time of Christ the *Book of Enoch* was held in high regard. This fact has been confirmed by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late 1940s and early 1950s. At that time 800 to 900 books and/or parts of books were discovered in caves near the Dead Sea in Israel. The top six most represented books among the Dead Sea Scrolls rank in this order: the books of *Psalms*, *Deuteronomy*, *Genesis*, *Isaiah*, the *Book of Jubilees*, and the *Book of Enoch*. More copies of the *Book of Enoch* were found in those caves than the rest of the books of the Old Testament! Scrolls of the *Book of Enoch* were stored with the books of the Hebrew Bible and treated with equal care and concern for their preservation.⁵⁸¹ The recovery of these ancient copies of the *Book of Enoch* in the land of promise coincided with the rebirth of the nation of Israel at that time.⁵⁸²

Before the destruction of the Jewish Temple by the Romans in AD 70, the *Book of Enoch* is referred to in a positive way in all the Jewish literature; there are no objectors. The *Book of Enoch* is even quoted in the New Testament in the *Letter of Jude*, the half-brother of Jesus, where we read,⁵⁸³

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him, (Jude 1:14-15).

Though other books that are not considered Scripture are quoted in the New Testament, this quote from Enoch is different. Jude refers to Enoch's book no less than seven times in his one-chapter letter. Also, though Jude obviously quotes Enoch 1:9, he never mentions Enoch had a book. Instead, Jude says he is quoting Enoch the man, who was the seventh generation from Adam. In effect Jude is saying, "*I know I am quoting Enoch himself when I quote from his book*".

During the past 300 years there has been increasing communication by Westerners with the Falasha Jews and Orthodox Christians of Ethiopia. Throughout most of history, these two groups have been very isolated from the rest of world. These groups' acceptance of the *Book of Enoch* are an indication of the importance the book has had. The Old Testament of the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia retained Enoch's book. When Jews in great

⁵⁸¹ If the reader thinks the Dead Sea Scrolls were authored by some other splinter group within Judaism, they might reconsider this after reading how the "Essene Hypothesis" has been debunked. See the appendix "*How the Israel Museum Buried Enoch's Book*".

⁵⁸² This subject will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 10.

⁵⁸³ The reader is advised not to think Jude refers to Enoch's book only one time. In Chapter 8, we will show how the *Epistle of Jude* references, alludes to, and quotes from the *Book of Enoch*, no less than seven times.

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numbers embraced Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia, the book was brought into the Bible of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, where it continues to this day.

Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the writings of the Apostles point to the high opinion of the book that was commonly held in their day. It would not be until the 2nd century AD that this situation started shifting.

Cast Out by Jewish Religious Leaders

Despite the popularity of the *Book of Enoch* in the first century, during the 2nd century this situation began to reverse. The first phase in the book's rejection crystallized about a generation after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. External pressures caused by both the destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD 70 as well as the growing Christian movement, motivated the religious leaders of Judaism to reorganize. A strict canon of Scripture was then standardized. This canon eliminated Enoch and other well-used books.⁵⁸⁴ This canon was especially aimed at excluding the writings of Christ's Apostles which later became the New Testament.

Banned by Churchmen and Clerics

After the 1st century AD, the *Book of Enoch* continued to be popular for some centuries among churches and early Christian writers. Many quotes, references, and allusions to Enoch's book have survived in the writings of Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Athenagoras, Tatian, Lactantius, Methodius, Minucius Felix, Commodianus and Ambrose.⁵⁸⁵ At times the book was specifically called *Scripture*, at other times its authority for teaching was affirmed. Gradually, however, the book's popularity dimmed within Greek and Latin Christianity. Enoch's book fell into disfavor.

This happened within Greek and Latin Christianity, as ideas about the Bible and God were being influenced by "Greek" philosophy. In society and in the church people began to believe angels were pure spirit, which meant they could not exhibit carnal sins or sexuality. Greek speculation about the purely spiritual nature of angels began to saturate Christian

⁵⁸⁴ Evidence of the removal of well-used books can be seen in the story of the origin of Hanukah. Hanukah's origin has not been preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures. Instead, this story was preserved throughout the world by the various communions of Orthodoxy. The origin of Hanukah can be found in two Jewish books, *1 and 2 Maccabees*, which can be found in Orthodox Bibles everywhere. Hanukah cannot be found in Jewish Bibles though the holiday is observed by Jews throughout the world.

⁵⁸⁵ Another book could be produced of the many quotes, allusions and references to the *Book of Enoch* which can be found in early Christian writers. That would be outside the scope of this book which is to present the great age of Enoch's book. For a thorough examination of the early Christian writers, see William Whiston's *Extracts Out of the Book of Enoch*, and John Baty's *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*.

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thought. The *Book of Enoch* came to be viewed with suspicion and antagonism. Existing copies of Enoch either wore out, were eliminated or destroyed.

Concealed & Preserved in Africa

Meanwhile, Ethiopic Christianity, maintaining a distinctly Jewish character, kept right on using Enoch down to modern times.

Back then, the world outside of Ethiopia was mostly oblivious to the fact the *Book of Enoch* was being preserved by Jews and Orthodox Christians in Africa. It is fortunate for us today, that Ethiopian Christians and Jews were themselves in relative isolation from the people of the Mediterranean world. This isolation no doubt resulted in the preservation of the Enoch's book!⁵⁸⁶ This should be no wonder to the student of the Bible. In both Old and New Testaments, Africa appears again and again as a place of refuge, concealment, and protection. One will recall how Joseph, son of Jacob, was concealed in Egypt. It was there he was being prepared to be revealed as the savior of the world of his day. Moses was also hidden and protected from genocide in Africa within Pharaoh's own household. There is also the example of the Jesus family's flight to Egypt where they were hidden and protected from King Herod. Africa's role in Scripture as a place of protection and concealment is on display a number of times in the Bible.

By the 5th century the exclusion of the *Book of Enoch* was fully underway for most of the world. Like the life of Enoch, it was as if the book was being hidden for a time from the attention of the world at large. However, just as was anticipated within the book's pages, it is currently on a trajectory from obscurity to prominence.

Reintroduced to the World

Since it was rediscovered in the eighteenth century, the *Book of Enoch* has passed through several phases in its gradual reemergence. The following is a broad outline of the initial stages of the *Book of Enoch's* continuing reemergence on the world scene.

- 1773 Rediscovery by explorer James Bruce.
- 1821 50 years later, 1st translation by R. Laurence (rev.1883).
- 1839 2nd English translation by John Baty.
- 1882 3rd English translation by George H. Schodde.
- 1893 4th English translation by Robert H. Charles (rev. 1913).
- 1947 Corroborated by the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery.

The first step in this process occurred in the late 1700's. While searching

⁵⁸⁶ Another book which was thought lost but was saved and preserved in Ethiopia was *The Book of Jubilees*. In New Testament times Jubilees was also held in high regard.

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for the source of the Nile River, explorer James Bruce acquired three complete copies of the *Book of Enoch* in the Ethiopic language Ge'ez (pronounced "gi-is"). These three copies were brought with Bruce to Europe. It would be nearly 50 years before the first translation of the book into the English language would become publicly available in 1821. It was translated by Archbishop Richard Laurence, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford.⁵⁸⁷ His translation has had wide distribution and influence since then. This despite many apparent flaws. In 1839, John Baty released his translation of Enoch, correcting many of Laurence's mistakes. The John Baty translation went largely ignored. Nearly 50 years after this, Laurence put forward a full revision in a failed attempt to address serious deficiencies in his work. (The Laurence translation is surprisingly widely circulated even today). Robert Henry Charles, Professor of biblical Greek at Trinity College, Dublin, later issued what would become the definitive English translation for the next 100 years. Charles standardized the text resolving problems with chapter and verse numbering introduced by Laurence. The version of Charles' translation included in this volume is his 1913 revision of his work. Finally, suspicion of the authenticity of Bruce's original discovery was shattered by the Dead Sea Scroll discovery.

Authenticated by the Dead Sea Scrolls

For 200 years from the time the *Book of Enoch* was first rediscovered in the West, many challenged its authenticity believing it to be a total forgery. Truth is, without some sort of external corroboration, a legitimate cloud of doubt *could* have remained hanging over the book.

In the late 1940's, a discovery was made which removed all doubt that the version of Enoch preserved in Ethiopia is the same book which is quoted in the New Testament...

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in caves in the desert of Judea revealed a number of truly ancient copies of the *Book of Enoch*. Fragments from seven Aramaic copies had survived. These copies have been positively dated to the three centuries before Christ, making them more than 2,000 years old. An additional three fragments of Enoch in Greek were also found in those caves.

These Dead Sea Scroll fragments of Enoch have been used to verify the reliability of the Ethiopian copies we possess. Modern readers can be certain the complete copies of Enoch found in Ethiopia preserve the book that was quoted by Jude and is referred to by others in the New Testament.

⁵⁸⁷ The year after the publication of Laurence's translation of Enoch, in 1822 John Overton wrote about the phenomenal nature of that book's recovery. He said, the *Book of Enoch* "appears to have risen from the dead after a sleep of about a thousand years!" page 7.

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.”

Available on the World-Wide Web

For the first time in this phenomenal history of the book, the full text of the *Book of Enoch* can be freely read by anyone in the world with access to the Internet. This development has come about since the 1990's. As we have seen in this chapter, this has been just one more development in an on-going process by which the *Book of Enoch* has been gradually, but steadily, emerging as a known entity to the people of the world.

The Book of Enoch Today

Though there are those who say the *Book of Enoch* is '*pseudepigraphal*' (a writing attributed to the wrong author), and though there are others who say it is '*apocryphal*' (a writing of dubious origins), there are yet others who do and always have called it '*Scripture*'. As far back as we know, Christians in Ethiopia have accepted it as the authentic writings of the Biblical Enoch. It is a canonical part of their Bible.

They believe this in part because there is the ancient testimony of St. Jude in the New Testament. Indeed, one should ask themselves the reasonable question — *would a New Testament writer under inspiration of the Holy Spirit quote the Book of Enoch if he discerned it was a false writing?* Would a New Testament writer who discerned the book to be a false writing, then say it contained legitimate sayings from the Biblical Enoch? Jude would have known the members of his flock could easily get their hands on the book. Besides, Jude does not only quote the *Book of Enoch*. He alludes and refers to it numerous times in his short epistle. No. Jude's manner of usage of *Enoch* indicates he himself believed its authorship was authentic indeed!

The *Book of Enoch* comes down to us today after two millennia of faithful copying and preserving by Jews and Christians. For the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the *Book of Enoch* has been and is Scripture and therefore was treated with special care throughout the centuries. Modern scholarship has used the Dead Sea Scroll fragments of the *Book of Enoch* to spot-check the reliability of the Ethiopian text. The judgment has been that the *Book of Enoch* in the Ethiopic language is an essentially faithful literal translation of the original.

The question is often asked, '*why was the Book of Enoch left out of the Bible?*' The real question should be whose Bible are we referring to? If we say it was left out of *our own* Bible, well and good, but we should realize it was *not* left out of everyone's Bible. Enoch's book was originally universally accepted by Christians. The *Book of Enoch* has also always been on some groups' list of sacred books since before the time of Christ. It was never really lost. It has apparently always been in use down to our own day. There are even some Protestant Bibles for Ethiopians which include the *Book of Enoch*.

At the outset of this chapter, it was noted how Enoch had gone through

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a period of isolation away from mankind until his call to the office of prophet. Like Enoch, Enoch's book was hidden away for a time, and has been reentering the spotlight, and seems poised to soon fulfill the stated reason for its having been written and preserved. Enoch's book was "*not for [Enoch's] generation, but for a remote one which is for to come*" and for the "*righteous, who will be living in the day of tribulation*" (Enoch 1:1-2).

It's not only the book's internal claim which it makes for itself that merits our attention, but also that the history of the book has been so singularly remarkable. From what we can determine of the book's discoverable history we know it was accepted by certain New Testament writers. Later it became a forbidden book which people sought to eliminate. Unbeknownst to most of the world, it was being preserved and copied in a remote region of Africa. Now it is back and widely available! The book's external history is now lining up with the book's internal claims. Does this dramatic story attest to God's hand in its preservation? Does this

also point to the book's authenticity, that it is what it says it is, a book written by the Biblical Enoch the prophet?

Enoch Update: **Protestants in Ethiopia Today...**

In 2007, I befriended an Ethiopian named 'Sirach'. He was a Pentecostal who managed a shop on Market Street in San Francisco. I asked if he would bring his Bible to the shop one day. There he showed me his Bible in Amharic, one of languages of Ethiopia. It was printed by the United Bible Societies. At the back of his Bible there was a section of books titled *Deuterocanon*. The list of books in his Deuterocanon were not the same list as is found in the "Deuterocanon" of Catholic Bibles. His Bible had the same list of books as are contained in the "Apocrypha" of the King James Bible. However, unlike the Apocrypha of the King James Bible, right there conspicuously placed at the end of these books was the *Book of Enoch*. How interesting that a Bible printed by Protestants, contained a section titled Deuterocanon, a term coined by Catholics, which contained a book lineup that was what Protestants call Apocrypha, but with the addition of Enoch which comes to us from Orthodoxy! So, we see today Enoch is loved not only by Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia. This Ethiopian practice used to be a universal reality among Christians. Will we live to see the day this again becomes reality?

The preservation of the *Book of Enoch* over millennia is testimony to the value which has been perceived in its pages. For generations the book had been a blessing to many. And no wonder, as we look at its message it bears vivid, pre-Christian testimony to Jesus, the coming Messiah of Israel, as we shall see in the next chapter.