

Introduction to the Book of the Watchers

Title ~ The first of the five scrolls which became the book we now refer to as the *Book of Enoch*, is commonly called the “*Book of the Watchers*.” The title came about because the major role played by a group of angels called ‘Watchers’ in this section.

Authorship ~ The *Book of the Watchers* is written in the first-person as the Biblical Enoch, (see verses 1:1-3 and 12:2). The Hebrew form of Enoch’s name is “Hanoch”, which means “dedicated.” The Bible describes Enoch’s dedication in these words, “*Enoch walked with God.*” (Genesis 5:24) In the *Book of the Watchers*, we are told Enoch’s writings were entrusted to his son Methuselah, and Methuselah’s grandson, Noah. It is possible these descendants of Enoch updated certain portions of the book. However, the book’s internal style and arrangement argues for a single author for most of it.

Date ~ Beginning in chapter 14, the *Book of the Watchers* contains a lengthy description of one of Enoch’s dream-visions which he received soon after being called by God to the role of prophet. Chapters 6-10, record events which occurred both before and after Enoch’s time on earth. In Enoch 106:13, Enoch states the earlier events were revealed for him in a vision. It is possible the later events were similarly revealed to him in a vision, and written down by him before they occurred. This would place the writing of the entire book before Enoch was translated to heaven, which would be more than six centuries before the flood of Noah’s day.

Major Theme ~ “*But ye- ye have not been steadfast, nor done the commandments of the Lord*” (*Enoch 5:4*). The operation of the fixed order of nature, sun, moon, and stars is contrasted with the actions of men and of angels. Unlike the ungodly, the natural world fulfills the purposes for which it was assigned by God. God has determined to put an end to ungodliness and establish in the midst of humanity a godly people, (later referred to as the “plant of righteousness” *Enoch 93:5*), from which godliness will finally flourish and spread throughout the earth.

THE BOOK OF THE WATCHERS

Background ~ The world of Enoch's day found itself in the throes of a deepening crisis brought about by the activities of certain evil angels, their offspring, and a complicit humanity. The subjugation of humanity at that time is portrayed here in the most extreme terms. In response, God declares his decree to punish the ungodly and cleanse the earth by means of a flood. In chapters 10 and 11, using language similar to passages in the Old Testament prophets, the coming of the Messianic Age is foreseen; here God introduces his promise to set up his kingdom on earth which will inaugurate a golden age for humanity, while repudiating all that was out of order in Enoch's day. The Messianic Age will stand as God's answer to the 1,000-year *misrule* of the Watchers and their offspring.

Purpose ~ According to Enoch 1:1-3, the purpose of *The Book of the Watchers* is to become a blessing for those living in the future "day of tribulation." The manner in which this is to be realized begins to crystallize as one combines the message of *The Book of the Watchers* with the four books which follow it. It is the claim of this book to be a kind of time-capsule to the last generation, the relevance of which is said only to be fully realized by the generation living at the end of the age.

The *Book of Enoch*, its writer claims, will have a role to play in the last days. This fact may partly explain the *Book of Enoch's* diminished importance within the Church for the past 2,000 years; its time had not yet come. This may also partly explain why there is an increased interest in the book in these times; it is as if the book is being positioned to play an increasing role in our world as the end of the age draws nearer.

Synopsis ~ In chapter 1, Enoch, a contemporary of the first man, Adam, sends a message across the millennia dedicating his book to the last generation who will be living at the end of the age.

In chapters 2 to 5, Enoch gives a short summary of his burden as prophet for his own generation. "*Ye have not been steadfast*", decries the prophet. The generation of Enoch's day is contrasted with the fixed order of creation. The Watchers and sinful humanity have abandoned the plan of God for their lives and have instead perverted their ways.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH

In chapters 6-11, we are given the broad, sweeping overview from start to finish of the crisis before the flood. We see how the situation began, how it progressed, and how it would be resolved.

In chapters 12-13, we are given the first of two flashbacks. Here Enoch retells in greater detail, part of the story he has just related in chapters 6-11. Enoch describes how he was called to the role of prophet, receiving commission from the Lord to take God's word of reprimand to the angels who sinned. Enoch describes his call, his ministry, and his message.

In chapters 14-36, we have the second of two flashbacks. Here again, Enoch retells the events of the dream-vision he related in the previous section but in greater detail.

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### Outline ~

#### **I. Overture** (1:1-5:9)

- A. Dedication to earth's last generation (1:1-3a)
- B. God's kingdom to come (1:3b-9)
  - 1. The righteous delivered, ungodly removed (1:8)
- C. The prophet's burden (2:1-4:1)
  - 1. The godly blessed, the ungodly cursed (5:1-9)

#### **II. Kingdoms in Contrast** (6:1-11:2)

- A. The Passing Era of Watcher misrule (6:1-10:16a)
  - 1. Watcher Descent (6:1-7)
  - 2. Monstrous Births (7:2)
  - 3. Human Subjugation (7:1-8:4)
  - 4. Angelic Intercession (9:1-11)
  - 5. Judgment (10:1-16a)
- B. The Coming Era of Messianic rule (10:16b-11:2)
  - 1. Divine Descent (1:4)
  - 2. Human Deliverance (10:17)
  - 3. Global Liberation (10:16b)
  - 4. Righteous Births (10:17)
  - 5. Blessings (10:18-11:2)

#### **III. 1st Flashback: Enter Enoch the Prophet** (12:1-13:10)

- A. The call of Enoch (12:1-4a)
- B. The ministry of Enoch (12:4b-13:10)

#### **IV. 2nd Flashback: Message and Vision of Enoch** (14:1-36:4)