

## STRANGE THING THING IN THE LAND THE RETURN OF THE BOOK OF ENOCH, PART 3

By Hugh Nibley

Professor Emeritus of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University This section of our examination of Enoch will compare Joseph Smith's book of Enoch step-by-step with four main classes of documents, commonly designated as: I Enoch (the Ethiopic texts, beginning with the three brought to England by Bruce in 1773), II Enoch (also called the Secrets of Enoch, in Old Slavonic), III Enoch (Enoch texts in Greek), and scattered Hebrew and Aramaic Enoch fragments. Since these are to serve as checks on the reliability of the Prophet Joseph, the qualifications of each should be briefly considered.

I Enoch. As recently as 1937 Professor C. Bonner could write: "No part of the original writings, Hebrew or Aramaic, which entered into the composite work, has survived in the original language. The Greek version, in which the early Church read Enoch, also disappeared. . . . Modern knowledge of the work has been derived from the Ethiopian version," coming from a time "when all Christendom except Egypt had dropped Enoch from the list of sacred writings."96 I Enoch has long been recognized as "the largest and, after Daniel, the most important of the Jewish apocalyptic works which have so recently [this in 1916] come to be recognized as supplying most important data for the critical study of the N.T. ideas and phraseology."97 The work was translated into Ethiopian about A.D. 500,98 but the twenty-nine Ethiopian Enoch texts used by R.H. Charles in 1912 all date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.99 All agree that the Ethiopian Enoch is a composite work, and the dating of its various elements is still entirely a matter of conjecture. 100

While only guesses are possible regarding the process and steps by which the thing was brought together, Ploeger would assign what he considers the oldest parts to Essene origin of the second century before Christ.101 Bonner finds that compared with the Greek version, the Ethiopian translation "while faithful in intent . . . has many faults, omitting here, expanding there, and in general committing numerous errors. Yet there are not a few places in which it preserves a reading better than that of the Greek papyrus";102 indeed, the text as a whole "may be . . . truer to the [Hebrew] original than the Greek."103 However, "the Ethiopian text is more general and therefore more imaginative and free as a literary work" than the others,104 and such freedom has been bought at a price, for the work of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century natives "has been on the whole disastrous," according to Charles; "By far the best" of the manuscripts "exhibits much strange orthography and bad grammar, and many corruptions."105

Here it is proper to call attention to the lesson drilled into his students by A.E. Housman: There is no such thing as a "beste Handschrift"—the worst manuscript may contain priceless bits of an ancient

text in their purest original form, while a manuscript that is notable for its convincing and demonstrably correct readings may without warning come up with unbelievable howlers. So it happens that the Ethiopian Enoch, "though teeming with every form of error . . . additions, corruptions, and omissions," contains for all that a number of "unique and original readings," which can be ex-

ceedingly valuable. 106

11 Enoch, the Secrets of Enoch. This work "was unknown to the Western World until Robert Henry Charles suspected in 1892 that a Slavonic ms published by A. Popov" in 1880 was no mere rehash of the Ethiopian Enoch, "but a different document. His suspicions proved correct when William Richard Morfill translated the Slavonic ms. into English in 1896."107 Ploeger concludes that the Slavonic Enoch originated in a Jewish sect in Egypt and was translated into Slavonic at the beginning of the early Middle Ages. 108 S. Terrien notes that it "includes many beliefs of popular Judaism of the 1st century A.D."109 Others dispute this; H.F. Weiss maintains that the Slavic Enoch is from a Greek original and does not go back to Palestine. 110 Others have it a reworking of the Ethiopic Enoch based on a Greek text, originally written in Palestine before the fall of the temple (A.D. 70), noting that its Hellenistic odor suggests a Judaeo-Alexandrine author.111 Recently, D. Winston has called attention to strong Iranian influence in II Enoch.112 The standard edition of the Slavonic Enoch is that of A. Vaillant, who brings together "a dozen different Slavonic mss" for his text. 113 According to Vaillant, the Slavonic Enoch was first noticed in 1859.<sup>114</sup> R. H. Charles bases his version on the German translation of Bonwetsch and the English Morfill translation of 1896.<sup>115</sup>

The Slavonic Enoch comes to us in a long and short version, with the experts unable to agree on which has priority.<sup>116</sup> Vaillant finds the longer version "imputable to the fantasy of the 15th and 16th centuries,"117 while they and the five Slavonic manuscripts of the short version (translations from the Greek), 118 once stripped of the late fantasies which so embarrassed Charles, present "a perfectly coherent ensemble, which without the slightest disparity falls into place as a work of primitive Christianity."119 Vaillant calls the Slavic Enoch "this Christian imitation of a Jewish apocrypha" in which "Christian thought is expressed in terms of the Old Testament, into which borrowings from the Gospel seem to be transposed."120 Though the first major revision took place in the thirteenth century, the manuscript in which it reaches us is from the sixteenth century; the language is Bulgaro-Serbian. Its writer borrows from the Chronicle of Harmatole and belonged perhaps to the circle of Vladislav the Grammarian.<sup>121</sup> A second major revision, which corrects the "mediocre Slavonic" of the first, was by an unknown Moldavian scholar. 122

III Enoch, the Greek Enoch. Greek excerpts

from the book of Enoch have always been available in Jude 14b-15 (quote I En. 4:14), the Epistle of Barnabas 4:3; 16:5-6; Clement of Alexandria, Eclog. Prophet. 53:4, Origen, C. Cels. 5:52; Comm. in John VI, 42 (25); and the long ninth fragment in George Syncellus' *Chronicle*. (Dindorff, p. 24:2-11.) R.H. Charles lists no fewer than 128 citations from Enoch in the New Testament! 123 Yet these passages could not be identified until an actual Enoch text of some sort was available; as late as 1912, the Greek Enoch was known only through the tenth century Slavic tradition.<sup>124</sup>

A Greek Enoch fragment matching a section of the Ethiopian (I En. 89:42-49) "was found in the Vatican Library by Angelo Mai in 1832, and deciphered by Johann Gildemeister in 1885. A considerable part of the same Greek translation was discovered in Akhmim in Upper Egypt in 1886-87

and published in 1892."125

Thus, an important, though limited, control of the late Ethiopian and Slavic texts was becoming possible, as the much older Greek stuff emerged. In 1893, Charles made an exhaustive comparison of the Ethiopic and newly discovered Greek texts, which are given in the original in the Appendix of his 1912 translation of I Enoch (pp. 318-70). Charles found that the Ethiopic was translated from the parent manuscript G<sup>g</sup>, a very corrupt Greek text, though each contains original material not found in the other. 126 The important Akhmim text was discovered "during the winter of 1886-1887 by the French Archaeological Mission," and "was thought at the time of its publication [by Bouriant in 1892] to be of the eighth century, but is now assigned to the sixth."127

When in 1930 the University of Michigan got six leaves of papyrus Codex of Enoch in Greek, Professor Bonner discovered that they belonged in a batch of papyri residing in the famous Chester Beatty collection; and sure enough, in 1931 Frederick Kenyon found more leaves of the same text in the Beatty collection, making a total of fourteen pages<sup>128</sup> written by a single scribe in a handwriting of the fourth century—by far the oldest Enoch text discovered up to that time. 129 "Written in a large coarse hand, which is certainly not that of a trained scribe," the Michigan codex is "full of mistakes in spelling . . . "; 130 "almost every page exhibits errors of a more serious sort which show that the scribe was often drowsy or inattentive, and suggest that he understood his text imperfectly . . . the ms. from which he copied was itself corrupt or else almost illegible in some places."131 In form it is not a roll or scroll, but a book, <sup>132</sup> bound with a text of Melito. The Beatty Enoch is to be viewed, Van Andel suggests, as typical of that "edifying literature in the Christian circles from the 3rd to the 6th (?) centuries,"133 showing in what high esteem Enoch was held by the early Christians, having been taken into the church with full honors from earlier times. 134

The Greek Enoch offers another example and warning to those who would rest arguments on silence. As late as 1910, no less eminent a scholar than C. Schmidt had "attempted to show . . . that the strange silence of all Patristic writers as to this remarkable book, whose Christian coloring, at least in its present form would be especially tempting to them, renders it doubtful whether it was ever translated into Greek." Indeed, Schmidt could write in 1922, "No MS of the Greek text has yet been found, and it seems to have left no important traces in Byzantine literature, though it must have been read in Constantinople as well as in Alexandria." 136

But once a book of Enoch came forth, Charles could supply, not only 128 citations from Enoch in the New Testament, but a list of over thirty important apocryphal (Jewish and Christian) and patristic works quoting Enoch. 137 Quite recently M. Philonenko has called attention to a Manichaean Greek text with an important excerpt from Enoch. 138 Mathew Black has brought together all available and reconstructed Greek Enoch texts into a single hypothetical "Apocalypsis Henochi Graeci," 139 but still the big Greek text is missing.

The Hebrew-Aramaic Enoch. It has always been suspected that the oldest version of Enoch would turn out to be Aramaic or Hebrew. "The book of Zohar, in which are various allusions to Enoch, seems to speak of it as an important Hebrew production which had been handed down from generation to generation. The Cabbalists . . . thought that Enoch was really the author." 140

One can follow Jellinek's unfolding of Hebrew Enoch texts in the pages of the *Baith ha-Midrash*. In 1859, Jellinek suggested that "a Hebrew Book of Enoch resembling the Ethiopian" had once circulated among the Jews: "The Karaite Salmon b. Jerucham in the 10th century, Moses of Leon [12th century] and the Zohar toward the end of the 13th century all cite from a Book of Enoch"; <sup>141</sup> but as early as 1853, Jellinek had suggested some "Hebrew Sources for the Book of Enoch," and even posited that Enoch was an *Essene* creation. <sup>142</sup>

Large fragments of the lost book of Enoch are included, moreover, in the Pirke R. Elieser and the Hechalot, which in the Oppenheim Manuscript is actually labelled "Book of Enoch." 143 In volume 2 of the Baith ha-Midrash, Jellinek gives the text of a "Book of Enoch" as preserved in Moses of Leon's "Book of the Dwelling of the Secrets,"144 and in the next volume he noted that the Great Hechalot (meaning the Chambers, i.e., of initiation in the temple) was a type of writing which combined Essenism and Ssufism, and had great influence on poets and mystics. The Great Hechalot, he said, was actually a "secret book of the Essenes dealing with the origin of the universe and the divine throne of Ezekiel. Parts of it appear in the Book of Enoch, that provided the source of Christian-Essene and Jewish-Essene literature."145

In Baith ha-Midrash, volume 4, Jellinek

provides the text to a Life of Enoch from the Sefer ha-Jashar, using older sources, and announced that this provided "a new confirmation that the entire Enoch saga and the Enoch books were known to the Jews, and were only allowed to fall into neglect after the time when a growing Christianity displayed a dogmatic preference to this cycle (Sage)," i.e., it was adoption by the Christians that soured the Jews on Enoch. 146

In volume 5, in 1872, Jellinek joyfully announced the vindication of his long search: "In [Baith ha-Midrash] III, 1855, p. xxiii, I suggested that several versions of the Hechalot themes attributed to the Wisdom of Enoch must be in existence. And so also the primitive . . . Book of Enoch was put together from various smaller works, which had been traced back to Enoch!" The final proof is a text which Jellinek reproduced at this place, taken from Recamatic, Commentary on the Pentateuch, Venice, 1545.147 The study of Jewish apocalyptic literature in general was initiated in 1857 by M. Lilgenfeld, and it soon appeared, thanks to citations by the XII Patriarchs, Jubilees, etc., that Enoch was "the first and most important of all the Palestinian apocalypses."148 "Of all the Palestinian writings," wrote the Catholic scholar J. B. Frey, "the Book of Enoch seems to have surpassed all the others in antiquity and in importance."149

N. Schmidt concluded that "it is possible that Pico's collection (in the 15th century) contained a copy of the Hebrew Enoch . . . which the prejudice of the scholars allowed to pass by unnoticed." Beside the *Helachoth* published by Jellinek in 1873, Schmidt mentions as a Hebrew Enoch source the *Sefer Helakoth* of R. Ishmael (Limberg, 1864), but insists that "the Hebrew Enoch contains material that appears to have been drawn from both Ethiopian and Slavonic Enoch as well as other sources," thus regarding it, as S. Zeitlin does the Dead Sea Scrolls, as a Medieval production. 151

What fixes the Hebrew Enoch as the original is the discovery among the Dead Sea Scrolls of sizeable fragments of the book of Enoch. It will be recalled that Jellinek suggested way back in 1853 that Enoch was an Essene production. <sup>152</sup> In this he was vindicated almost exactly a hundred years after.

In 1956, Father J.T. Milik mentioned eight different fragments in the Dead Sea Scrolls of I Enoch in Aramaic, and an Aramaic book III, which was superior to the Ethiopian section on astronomy. There was also an epistle of Enoch to Shamazya and his friends, a manuscript dating before A.D. 70.153 F.M. Cross reported in 1954 that the Pesher or commentary on Habakkuk, one of the first works to be discovered at Qumran, was "an unknown work related to the Enoch literature." Between 1952 and 1973, however, only two of these Aramaic fragments had been published, and in 1970, M. Black had to send his book to press without the benefit of the larger fragments. 155

All the Enoch fragments found in Cave I, according to Milik, were deposited there in the first century A.D. 156 "Fragments of I En. from QCave 4 found in 1952, are all in Aramaic, and show affinities with the Ethiopian version." "They contain hitherto unknown Enoch material, such as a letter of Enoch to Shamazya." In three of these manuscripts Enoch's journey on the earth is given "in a longer recension." 157 But for all their importance, the old Aramaic Enoch texts are still being withheld from the world after more than twenty years. The important Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran begins with five columns which "deal with the birth of Noah in a manner that has no direct relationship at all to the brief biblical account in Gen. V, 28f, but resembles Enoch cvi in most essential points."158

> "'Of all the Palestinian writings, the Book of Enoch seems to have surpassed all the others in antiquity and in importance."

Appraisals of the Book of Enoch as a whole. It was Laurence himself in his first two editions who suggested that "different parts of this book may have been composed at different times and by different persons."159 Acting on such an assumption, E. Murray went overboard and saw in Enoch nothing but a jumble of separate treatises on disconnected subjects, clustered around an original book of only thirty verses!160 From the midnineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, dismantling ancient writings into many original components was a favorite game of the learned; so J.B. Frey, while hailing the book of Enoch as a work of supreme age and importance, still insists that it is really not a book of Enoch but rather an Enoch literature consisting of very disparate works which have only the name of Enoch in common, as if "Enoch" could not have written on more than one subject.161

Carl Clemen in 1898 found no less than twelve separate traditions in Enoch, and made much of the changes of person "as betraying the composite character of the work."162 Charles suggests that

Enoch is "built up on the debris" of an older Noah saga, and insists that "the Parables are distinct in origin," as are the cosmological sections. 163 Every possible theory has been suggested by the experts to account for the book. As R.H. Charles notes, "Every scholar divides up the Books of Enoch differently and assigns different dates to them."164 As early as 1840, M. Stuart had the perspicacity to note that "the tone and tenor of the book has many resemblances to passages in the Zend Avesta"; 165 while Sieffert sees part of it by a Chasid of the age of Simon Maccabbee and part by an Essene before 64 B.C., Philippi finds it written entirely "in Greek by ONE author, a Christian, about A.D. 100."166

The Hastings Dictionary of the Apostolic Church declared Enoch to be "a work of curious complexity and unevenness. In fact, it is quite a cycle of works in itself," though "in this medley we find certain recurring notes."167 The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (2:103) confesses that "the extent to which the compiler reworked his sources cannot be determined. He certainly made little effort to harmonize them . . . To some extent he interwove his sources. . . . More typically, however, one source is followed by another, with little or no attention to the chronological or logical sequence or to consistency of thought."168 In 1960, J.E.H. Thomson could still report that there is still as much disagreement as ever among the experts on the structure of Enoch and the nature and priority of its various parts. 169 C.P. Van Andel reported in 1955 that no overall study of any aspect of the book of Enoch had ever been undertaken. 170 He gives the Greek Enoch clear priority, since it is intelligible where I Enoch is often incomprehensible.<sup>171</sup> We shall note below important instances in which the Joseph Smith Enoch "follows" the Greek and not the Ethiopian versions.

The Ethiopian Enoch, Van Andel holds, comes from Jewish sources of about the time of Christ; though its "Stitz in Leben" remains to be determined, all the Enoch literature is recognized as being the work of sectaries. R.H. Charles sees a Hasidic origin, i.e., Pharisee; while Leszynski thinks it is Sadducee, and Lagrange, Essene—all of which have been related in one way or another to the Qumran community.172 That part of I Enoch known as the Wisdom of Enoch (91-107) belonged to a separatist group, according to Van Andel, who were without friends in the world and stood in sharp opposition to the ruling classes in Israel.<sup>173</sup> Van Andel concludes that the ultimate source of the Ethiopian Enoch was a book circulated among related Jewish sects of the second and first centuries B.C., who took Enoch as their model in denouncing a degenerate world.174 This "book" in turn came from the same source as Jubilees, but is older, 175 while the "Wisdom of Enoch" part has the same origin as the XII Patriarchs and the Zadokite Fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls, with their emphasis on priesthood and the strict keeping of the Law. 176

All scholars agree that the ultimate beginnings of Enoch or its several parts remain completely unknown, while insisting that the book of Enoch *must* have been derived from earlier writings. Yet the oldest sources we have claim to go back to Enoch and know of none earlier but Adam. Instead of ever seeking for sources to Enoch, which never turn up, why not do the sensible thing and accept Enoch himself as the source, as the writers of Jubilees and the XII Patriarchs do?

Van Andel, who rightly accuses Albert Schweitzer of paying no attention to Jewish Apocalyptic writings in reconstructing his concept of Jesus and his followers, <sup>177</sup> is guilty of the same sort of short-sightedness when he traces everything back to the Jewish writings of the third century B.C. and there comes to a dead halt, as if all were a vacuum before that. But Rudolf Otto asks why we cannot go much farther back than that, since the Seer with his view of the heavenly Zion and the Ancient of Days is a stock figure in very ancient writings indeed. <sup>178</sup>

(To be continued.)

## **FOOTNOTES**

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96. C. Bonner, The Last Chapters of Enoch in Greek (London: Christophers, 1937), p. 3.
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97. A.L. Davies, in J. Hastings Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, (New York, 1916), 1:334.

98. O. Ploeger, in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart :222.

99. R.H. Charles, The Book of Enoch or I Enoch (Oxford, 1912), p. xxiv; one important manuscript dates "possibly as early as the 15th century," p. xxiii, and another from the 18th century, p. xxii.

100. Ploeger, p. 222.

101. Ibid., pp. 223-24.

102. Bonner, p. 22.

103. Ibid., p. 24.

104. C.P. Van Andel, De Struktuur van de Henoch-

Traditie (Utrecht: Kemink & Son, 1955), p. 7.

105. Charles, p. xxv.

106. Ibid., p. xxvi.

107. S. Terrien, in Encyclopedia Americana (1970), 10:395.

108. Ploeger, p. 224.

109. Terrien, l.c.

110. H.F. Weiss, Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des Hellenistischen u. Palästinischen Judentums (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966), p. 126. See also O. Eissfeldt, Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), p. 843.

111. E. da San Marco, Enciclopedia Cattolica (Vatican City, 1951), 6:1467.

112. D. Winston, "The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran," History of Religions, 5:197.

113. Terrien, 10:395.

114. André Vaillant, Le Livre des Secrets d'Henoch, (University of Paris: Institut d'Etudes Slaves, 1952), p. iii.

115. Ibid., p. iv.

116. Ibid, p. i.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid., p. v.

119. Ibid., p. viii.

120. Ibid., p. xi.

121. Ibid., p. xxi.

122. Ibid., p. xxiii.

123. Charles, p. xcvff. 124. Vaillant, p. viii. 125. Terrien, 10:394.

126. Charles, p. xvii.

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128. Ibid., p. 4. 129. Ibid., p. 10.

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131. Bonner, p. 17.

132. Kenvon, p. 6.

' 133. Van Andel, p. 3.

134. Ibid., p. 4.

135. N. Schmidt, "Traces of the Book of Enoch in Europe," Journal of the American Oriental Society 42 (1922): 44f.

136. Ibid.

137. Charles, p. lxx.

138. M. Philonenko, in Rev. Hist. & Phil. Rel., 52 (1972): 337-40.

139. M. Black, ed., Apocalypsis Henochi Graeca (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

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142. A. Jellinek, Bait ha-Midrash (BHM) (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967), 2:16: xxx.

143. Jellinek, Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 7 (1853): 249.

144. BHM 2: xxx-xxxii.

145. BHM 3: viii, 83-108.

146. BHM 4: xi-xii, 129-32.

147. BHM 5: xli; Frg. XXIV, pp. 170-90.

148. F.G. Vigouroux, Dictionnaire de la Bible (Paris, 1895-1912), 1: 757.

149. J.B. Frey, in Pirot, Dictionnaire de la Bible (Paris, 1928), 1:357.

150. N. Schmidt, in JAOS 42:47.

151. Ibid., p. 45.

152. Ibid., n. 45.

153. J.T. Milik, in Revue Biblique 63 (January 1956).

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161. J.B. Frey, in Pirot, Diet. 1:357.

162. C. Clemen, Theologische Studien u. Kritiken, 1898, pp. 211ff, cit. Charles, p. xliii.

163. Charles, p. xlvii-xlviii.

164. Ibid., pp. xxxff.

165. M. Stuart, Biblical Repository and Classical Review (Andover, 1840ff), 3:132. Later, in 1891, T.K. Cheyne pointed out "Essene and Zoroastrian elements" in the Enoch literature; cit. Charles, p. xlii.

166. Ibid., p. xxxv.

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168. M. Rist, in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:103.

169. J.E.H. Thomson, in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1960), 1:164.

170. Van Andel, Structuur, p. 1.

171. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

172. Summarized by Van Andel, p. 9.

173. Ibid., p. 11.

174. Ibid., p. 43.

175. Ibid., p. 47.

176. Ibid., p. 51.

177. Ibid., p. 68. 178. Ibid., p. 70.