

Exegetical Reflection on Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14-15

A Paper

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Translations:

Enoch 1:9 (LSV)¹ – And, behold, He comes with tens of thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Jude 14-15 (ESV)² – It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

1. Introduction

By briefly examining the context of both Enoch 1 and Jude, we can identify very clearly that the quotation in question is given as a prophecy and received as a prophecy of eschatological judgment against the *ungodly*. There are some differences between the two quotations; however, they are highly technical, and mostly are spoken of to determine the source and dating of the original tradition and so are insignificant to this study.³ As such, I will not discuss those differences. Approaching both texts contextually, however, can show that Jude used Enoch is a premier way normally used by other New Testament writers of Old Testament prophecy. The Book of Enoch’s influence on Jude is shown in his word choice and typological expertise that culminates in the direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Enoch 1:9 in an ongoing manner. The

¹ All Enoch quotations are from *The Complete Apocrypha: Literal Standard Version (LSV)*, Covenant Press, 2020.

² All Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*, Crossway, 2001.

³ Peter Gentry and Andrew Fountain, “Reassessing Jude’s Use of Enochic Traditions (With Notes on their Later Reception History)” *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 68, 2017.

ungodly who Jude writes to the *saints* about, who have crept into the Christian communities, are destined to eternal judgment in fiery-darkness just as the unbelieving-disputers of old were. As such, the *saints* should learn from the poor example of the unbelieving-disputers of old to persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master.

2. Context of Enoch 1:9

The Book of Enoch is an account supposedly written by the character Enoch from the Book of Genesis—the grandfather of Noah—about the Watchers. The Watchers are the Giant offspring referred to as the Nephilim in Genesis 6:1-4, the product of the sons of God reproducing with the daughters of man. One of the most significant theological claims Enoch attempts to make is by shifting the origin of evil away from the original man Adam and placing it instead at the fault of an angelic rebellion that infiltrated and polluted the earth. Along with Enoch’s apocalyptic experiences and depictions of the other side—the angelic side of existence, the writer also couples together two prophecies. First, there is a prophecy of judgment against the ungodly in a far-off generation, not in reference to the flood (1:2). Second, there is a prophecy of the gift of eternal peace to the elect, described as the forgiveness of sins and living eternally in the appearance of light at the doing of the Son of Man who has the role of judge in the Day of Judgment (5:6-9; 70:14-16).⁴ Throughout the Book of Enoch, these two prophecies of judgment against the ungodly and salvation for the righteous are conjoined.

Chapter one of the Book of Enoch sets up the important factors to understand the remainder of the Book.⁵ First, the purpose of the Book of Enoch is to bless the righteous who are alive on “the day of tribulation, when all the godless are to be removed” (1:1). Second, Enoch

⁴ Simon J. Joseph, “Seventh from Adam.” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 64, 2013; page 474-475.

⁵ J. VanderKam, “The Theophany of Enoch I 3b-7, 9.” *Vetus testamentum*, Vol. 23, 1973; page 130.

was transported by the angels into a different realm where he could see and understand everything that he would go on to write. What he saw, understood, and subsequently wrote was “not for this generation, but for a remote one which is to come” (1:2). Third, “the Holy Great One” will leave his heavenly dwelling place to dwell on Mount Sinai (1:3-4).⁶ Fourth, when the “Holy Great One” resides again on earth, the mountains will quake, be leveled, and melt (1:6).⁷ Fifth, the righteous will be identified as belonging to God *when* the light appears to them (1:8).

Sixth, it is at this point that Enoch prophesies that “He [the Holy Great One] comes with tens of thousands of His holy ones [angels] to execute judgment upon all [flesh], and to destroy all the *ungodly*; and to convict all flesh of all the works of their *ungodliness* which they have *ungodly* committed, and of all the hard things which *ungodly* sinners have spoken against Him [the Holy Great One]” (1:9), emphases mine. This prophecy, which is quoted by Jude, essentially summarizes the judgment sequences throughout the rest of the book.

Interestingly, it has been proposed by Margaret Barker that this introductory section of Enoch 1:3-9 is a *midrash* on the introductory comments to Moses’ final sermon in Deuteronomy.⁸ Moses said, “The LORD came [to] Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. Yes, he loved his people, all his holy ones were in his hand; so they followed in your steps, receiving direction from you...” (Deut. 33:2-3). There are some obvious similarities and differences. First, God comes to Sinai from another location. Second, God’s coming to the earth is marked by the appearance of a bright light, described as flaming fire corresponding to the Cherubim in other related passages. Third, God comes to his place with ten thousands of holy

⁶ VanderKam, 133.

⁷ These depictions correspond to Hebrew Bible (HB) concepts of New Creation, particularly in Psalms and Isaiah.

⁸ Margaret Barker. *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and its Influence on Christianity*. London: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005.

ones, however they are described here not as angels but rather as God's people who followed God's commandments.⁹ In Enoch, these beings are the angelic beings to remained faithful to God, not the fallen angels who brought evil upon the earth.

While the Enochic tradition claims to have been derived from the man seven genealogical steps away from Adam, the Book of Enoch was not written until the intertestamental period. Scholars differ, with some such as Josef Milik dating the tradition of Enoch to approx. 150-200 BC,¹⁰ and others such as Barker dating the tradition of Enoch to the *first temple*.¹¹ However, the two most prominent voices in Enochic studies have dated Enoch to the fourth or third centuries BC.¹² There is only one complete manuscript of the Book of Enoch still in existence, in the Ethiopian tongue of Ge'ez, that has been dated to the final third of the first century BC.¹³ Interestingly, in a separate piece of Jewish literature, dated to the middle of the first century AD, tinged with the influence of early-Christian thought, *Life of Adam and Eve* also quotes these words (*Life* 53:1). In doing so, the writer of *Life* affirms the belief that the Enoch tradition has its origins in the actual figure several genealogical steps from the first human Adam.

While the dating of Enoch is unclear, scholars appear to be somewhat unanimous that the tradition of Enoch dates much later than the Sinai event but was also a well-established piece of Jewish literature *prior* to the events recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees culminating in the origin

⁹ Interestingly, in Jude's quotation of this, the word "holy ones" in Jude 14 is the same word used in Jude 3 to refer to the saints. In the NT, *hagios* is used primarily to describe the *Holy* Spirit. In the Gospels it is secondarily used to identify Jesus as the *Holy* One of Israel. And in the epistles it is secondarily used to describe the *Saints*. There is only one use I could find of *hagios* in reference to angels, and it is in Acts 10:22 when a *holy* angel gives direction to Cornelius.

¹⁰ Josef Milik. *The Book s of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976. I have not personally reviewed this work, but Milik is cited frequently by the scholars I did consult.

¹¹ Barker, 19.

¹² George W.E. Nickelsburg, "First Book of Enoch" in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Vol. 2 New York: Doubleday, 1992. Loren Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91-108* in *Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.

¹³ Edward Mazich, "'The Lord Will Come with His Holy Myriads': An Investigation of the Linguistic Source of the Citation of Enoch 1,9 in Jude 14b-15. *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, Vol. 94, 2003; page 276.

story of Hanukah, absolutely *prior* to the advent of Jesus Christ; centuries old by the writing of Jude.¹⁴ Therefore, even though written after the Sinai event, by writing from the perspective of prior to the Sinai event in the form of a midrash on Deut. 33:1-5, the writer of Enoch has shown that the event in reference was beyond Sinai. This is unsurprising, for it would fail to be prophetic if written after the fact about a prior event. Nevertheless, despite the false-pretence of writing much later in history from the perspective of Enoch, but prior to the advent of Christ, the writer of Enoch has in fact prophesied about the coming Day of Judgment by using biblical terms and concepts in a unique way, warranting Jude's affirmation of its authenticity.

3. Context of Jude 14-15

Jude compacts so much into the one and only chapter to his epistle through word repetition and a highly sophisticated form. He also uses ambiguous language throughout on the presumption that his readers know who he is talking about. Rather than reflect upon the unity he shares with them in the Gospel, he feels it necessary to contend for the faith against false teachers, prophets, etc. These disputers have snuck their way into the Christian community to shift the Gospel toward sensualities that are actually in opposition to the Gospel. In this introduction, Jude has contrasted the *saints* as those who share in unity of salvation against the *ungodly* who deny Jesus as Lord and Christ. Both of these categories and precise terminology appear later in his letter in his quote of Enoch 1:9.

Jude then retells this contrast between the saints and the ungodly in two lists of examples that mirror one another in that they both include three negative references from the HB and finish with a positive reference to a non-canonical, but well-established piece of Jewish literature.

¹⁴ Joseph, 480. Similarly, Spitaler.

The first list of examples includes the first generation after the exodus, the angels who disobeyed their position of authority, and Sodom and Gomorrah (5-7). This is followed up with a reference to the *Assumption of Moses*, regarding the devil who was disputing with Michael about the body of Moses.¹⁵ In this reference, Michael is portrayed as remaining in his proper authority expressly by *not* pronouncing the judgment of blasphemy on the devil but instead allowing the Lord to pronounce such judgment (8-9). The second list of examples includes Cain's murder, Balaam's profiteering, and Korah's greediness (10-13). This is followed up with a loose quotation from the Book of Enoch, designated by the phrase "the seventh from Adam," a frequent characteristic in the Book of Enoch.¹⁶ The positive trait from the reference to Enoch is that God is who issues judgment, as opposed to Cain, Balaam, or Korah (14-15). The first list describes the *ungodly* as those who do not submit to authority and the second list describes the *ungodly* as those who rebuke what they do not properly understand, thus violating the authority that belongs only to God and the destiny of the *ungodly* is fiery-darkness forever. The recurring theme of these two sets of contrasts is the conclusion in Jude 16, that they all followed their own sinful desires.¹⁷

In Jude's final paragraph, he again contrasts the *ungodly* and the *saints*. Jude calls on the *saints* to remember the predictions of the apostles that these *ungodly* people would be among them at the end of days (17-20). Therefore, they must persevere in the true faith that leads to eternal life, hating sin along the way, all the while having mercy on those who *dispute*, which

¹⁵ Beth Langstaff, "The Book of Enoch and the *Ascension of Moses* in Reformation Europe: Early Sixteenth-Century Interpretations of Jude 9 and Jude 14-15." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 23, 2013. Ryan Stokes, "Not Over Moses' Dead Body: Jude 9, 22-24 and the *Assumption of Moses* in their Early Jewish Context." *JSNT*, Vol. 40, 2017.

¹⁶ By "loose," I am drawing upon Osburn who writes, "Jude's citation is not literally word for word, nor on the other hand is it merely a reminiscence or allusion. He has rather *adapted* the I Enoch text to the new historical situation in view of his eschatological purposes and his Christological understandings." Carroll Osburn, "The Christological Use of I Enoch I. 9 in Jude 14, 15." *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 23. Similarly, Vander Kam, 147.

¹⁷ Peter Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22-23): Rereading a Special New Testament Meaning through the Lense of Internal Evidence." *Biblica*, Vol. 87, 2006; page 209.

can save them from the fire, that the *ungodly* are destined for, per the two lists of negative examples (21-23).

4. Consideration of Jude's Use of Enoch

Jude uses two different word choices for what at face-value appears to be similar ideas: “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, *prophesied*” (Jude 14) and “remember, beloved, the *predictions* of the apostles” (Jude 17). While both words are used a couple dozen times each, there is an elevated state to that of prophecy than there is of prediction. Prediction carries connotations of a matter-of-fact whereas prophecy carries divine authority/backing. While Jude uses the six examples from the HB in a typological manner by drawing from them correspondence to the unbelieving disputers of his own age, the same is not true for his use of Enoch. Jude introduces the content from Enoch in by way of a formal introduction: “It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying...” While numerically Enoch is listed in the genealogies of Gen. 5 and Luke 5 as the seventh from the line of Adam, Enoch is never called “seventh from Adam” in the Bible outside of Jude. This designation is found, however, in the Book of Enoch. This designation was important because Cain's first son was also named Enoch and went the way of his father and through whom was born Lamech (Gen. 4:17-22). Jude is being very clear that he is speaking not just the character listed numerically seventh in the genealogies of Genesis, but more specifically to the writer of the Book of Enoch.

Jude introduces his quote of the writer of the Book of Enoch by designating it as prophecy. That Jude felt no need to downplay the inclusion of this piece of Jewish literature is significant in that Jude apparently saw this prophecy from the Book of Enoch on par with other

HB examples and prophecy.¹⁸ Rather than downplay, he elevated it by making Enoch the culmination of his series of contrasts between the *ungodly* and the *saints*. Moreover, Jude concludes his quotation with “*These are* grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; *they are* loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage” (Jude 16). Jude introduces his quotation by elevating its status to that of prophecy and concludes his quotation by declaring it fulfilled through the unbelieving disputers who have “crept in unnoticed” (Jude 4).

To borrow from two of G.K. Beale’s categories of primary ways the New Testament uses the Old Testament, Jude’s use of Enoch is to indicate direct fulfillment,¹⁹ *and* to affirm that what is prophesied will assuredly be fulfilled in the future.²⁰ While a typological fulfillment may seem like the go-to choice, since the unbelieving disputers correspond to the unbelieving disputers of the former days that Jude typological reference, he does not speak about the prophecy of Enoch in the same way. As with the six references to the HB, Jude summarizes them or identifies the primary individual involved, suggesting a presumption his readers know the events of which he speaks. The same is true of Jude’s use of the *Assumption of Moses*. However, only his reference to Enoch is introduced with the “Enoch...*prophesied*, saying...” formula that is seen throughout the NT for other direct quotations of prophecy. Moreover, in all other seven examples (including the *Assumption of Moses*), Jude’s use is to demonstrate patterns of behavior; however, with his quotation of Enoch, Jude is establishing what will happen to those who follow those negative examples. Additionally, the passage quoted functions in Enoch 1 as a prophecy of a future event rather than events that Jude typologically projects into his future. Thus, at its source and at its citation, the words of Enoch 1:9 and Jude 14-15 are treated as prophecy. Lastly, Jude’s concluding statement by which the unbelieving disputers of his day were typological reiterations

¹⁸ Barker, 61.

¹⁹ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012; page 56.

²⁰ Beale, 66.

of the unbelieving disputers of every age pinpoints Enoch's prophecy of judgment for such individuals as something that is set for *all* who unbelievably-dispute. It is ultimately for *these* that Jude instructs the *saints* to have mercy on, in order to snatch them out of the fire destined for those who persist in such ungodly behavior.

Jude's use of Enoch does not appear to be ironic or negative in the remotest. Jude appears to have been heavily influenced by the Book of Enoch, particularly the section of Enoch 1-10, in which the Watchers are of frequent discussion as well as the sin of Cain and Sodom and Gomorrah being discussed in terms of sexual perversion, a description lacking from nearly all biblical citations of Sodom and Gomorrah's sin. Moreover, the word "ungodly" appears four times in the short prophecy of Enoch 1:9, and yet throughout his entire epistle, Jude uses the term six times.

5. Conclusion

By briefly examining the context of both Enoch 1 and Jude, we can identify very clearly that the quotation in question is given as a prophecy and received as a prophecy of eschatological judgment against the *ungodly*. There are some differences between the two quotations; however, they are highly technical, and mostly are spoken of to determine the source and dating of the original tradition and so are insignificant to this study. As such, I did not discuss those differences. Approaching both texts contextually, however, can show that Jude used Enoch is a premier way normally used by other New Testament writers of Old Testament prophecy. The Book of Enoch's influence on Jude is shown in his word choice and typological expertise that culminates in the direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Enoch 1:9 in an ongoing manner. The *ungodly* who Jude writes to the *saints* about, who have crept into the Christian communities, are

destined to eternal judgment in fiery-darkness just as the unbelieving-disputers of old were. As such, the *saints* should learn from the poor example of the unbelieving-disputers of old to persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master.