THE BOOK OF ENOCH

The Ethiopian Bible, the Sons of God, and the Authority of Apostolic Scripture



"What saith the scripture?"
— Romans 4:3

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Dedication

To the saints meeting at The Bugle Hotel, and sometimes at The Monks Rest, Titchfield,

among whom I have had the privilege of fellowship and the opportunity to study the Scriptures.

This book is dedicated to them with the sincere desire that we may all continue to examine everything by the Word of God and

"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
— Jude 3



Why I Have Written This Book

"...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

— Jude 3

The reason for writing this book arises from more than fifty years of Christian experience. Since becoming a Christian at the age of twenty-one, in 1970, I have repeatedly found myself having to examine differing teachings and practices among those professing Christianity, and to ask one fundamental question: What does the Scripture actually teach?

When I first became a Christian, I knew very little of the Christian religion. I was first associated with an Assemblies of God Pentecostal church in Aylesbury. Through the encouragement of other believers, the reading of the Bible, and later the study of older Christian literature, I began to learn the doctrines of the Gospel for myself.

It soon became evident that professing Christians differed considerably concerning the way of salvation, the sovereignty of God, the freedom of the human will, election, redemption, and many other matters. As I sought to understand these things, I became convinced of those truths commonly called the doctrines of grace.

In 1976, I joined the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, a Calvinistic Baptist church, and remained there for approximately eight years. However, difficulties later arose which convinced me that longstanding traditions can themselves obscure the very doctrines a church professes to maintain. In particular, I became concerned when teaching consistent with general redemption was permitted within a church which professed Particular Baptist principles.

Sadly, during the difficulties which followed, I turned from the Lord in unbelief and fell into open sin. After approximately three years, I was recovered by the grace of God and brought again to repentance and faith. That experience left a lasting impression upon me. I learned personally that turning aside from the truth of God is not a light matter.

After my recovery, I sought Christian fellowship with a church known as Jesus Is Lord, in Warsash. At that time the church was considering the appointment of women as elders. Having become convinced from Scripture that the eldership of the church is a male office, I raised my concerns. I was eventually told to remain silent upon the matter.

This led me later to write Eldership Is Male. My concern was not merely with one question concerning church government. The deeper question was once again the authority of Scripture. If Scripture teaches something, are Christians at liberty to set it aside because contemporary opinion has changed?

Following further severe personal difficulties, which I have related elsewhere in The Fall, Desperation and Recovery, the providence of God led me into mission work in the Philippines. There I had the privilege of meeting and working with former criminals in New Bilibid Prison who had become Christians.

During that period I again encountered disputes between Arminian and Calvinistic teaching. This strengthened my conviction that Christians must be encouraged to examine doctrine directly from Scripture, rather than merely inherit the theological assumptions of those around them.

I returned to the United Kingdom in 2003. Later I sought fellowship with a Strict Baptist church but was rejected because of my understanding of Hebrews chapter 4. I had become convinced that the rest spoken of there is the spiritual rest which believers possess in Christ, rather than the continuing observance of the Mosaic seventh-day Sabbath.

There followed a lengthy period without settled church fellowship, during which I increasingly gave myself to reading, study, and writing.

Eventually, I began attending Hill Park Baptist Church and also became involved with Christians in Titchfield whose background included charismatic and dispensational views of prophecy. For approximately three years, we studied the book of Revelation together. These experiences raised further questions concerning the interpretation of prophecy, whether modern political events should govern the meaning of biblical prophecy, and what authority should be given to claimed revelations, traditions, or teachings which cannot be demonstrated from Scripture.

During my years at Hill Park Baptist Church, I hoped that some of the doctrinal concerns which troubled me might in time be corrected. I remained there for approximately five years, seeking fellowship and hoping for greater agreement upon the authority and teaching of Scripture. During that period, I became increasingly concerned about the rejection of the sovereignty of God and the acceptance of general redemption.

One matter eventually became especially serious to me. I had written and published The West and the Qur'an, in which I openly rejected the Qur'an as divine revelation and maintained that the teaching of Muhammad cannot be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by His Apostles. In particular, the Qur'an's teaching concerning Christ stands in direct opposition to the apostolic testimony concerning His Person and work.

I did not regard this as a secondary theological difference. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, crucified and risen from the dead, then a religious system which denies fundamental apostolic truths concerning Him cannot be treated as simply another acceptable expression of faith in God.

What deeply troubled me was that the position set out in The West and the Qur'an was not received at Hill Park with the seriousness which I believed Scripture required. I had already remained for several years despite other doctrinal disagreements, hoping that matters might change. But when the views expressed in that book were rejected, I concluded that I could no longer remain in good conscience.

My decision to leave was not the result of one isolated disagreement. It came after a prolonged period in which I had become increasingly concerned about the rejection of the sovereignty of God, the acceptance of general redemption, and, finally, what I regarded as an unwillingness to make a clear distinction between the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of the Qur'an.

This experience strengthened a conviction which runs throughout the present book. Christians must not allow social pressure, religious pluralism, longstanding tradition, or contemporary opinion to weaken what Scripture plainly teaches. Christ and His Apostles must remain our final authority.

These various experiences may at first appear to concern very different subjects. Yet they have repeatedly brought me back to the same question: What is our final authority?

Is it church tradition? Is it the theological system in which we were raised? Is it the opinion of a pastor or teacher? Is it a claimed personal revelation? Is it an ancient religious writing? Is it a modern political event which is then read back into biblical prophecy? Or is our authority the Word of God given through Christ and His Apostles?

That question is the reason for the present book.

In recent years, I have become aware of increasing interest among Christians in the Book of Enoch and in the interpretation that the "sons of God" in Genesis chapter 6 were fallen angels who took human women and produced hybrid offspring known as the Nephilim. The fact that 1 Enoch is preserved within the Ethiopian Orthodox biblical tradition is sometimes presented as evidence that it should be regarded as inspired Scripture. Jude and 2 Peter are also used in support of the Watchers interpretation of Genesis chapter 6.

I therefore wished to examine these claims directly from Scripture.

This led naturally to a wider enquiry. If the Book of Enoch is to be received as Scripture, by what authority is such a claim established? How was the New Testament canon recognised? What was the unique authority of the Apostles? Was the canon fundamentally apostolic, or was its authority determined by later church councils?

The study therefore considers apostolic canonization and examines the arguments of Ed Stevens concerning the completion of the New Testament within the apostolic age. It also considers John A. T. Robinson's arguments for the early dating of the New Testament and the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

From there, the same principle is applied to prophecy. The book considers the interpretation of Matthew chapter 24, the statement, "this generation," the fig tree, the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948, and prophecies in Ezekiel and Isaiah which are frequently interpreted by reference to modern events.

Throughout all these subjects, I am seeking to maintain one governing principle: Scripture must interpret Scripture. Ancient writings may be studied. Church history may be studied. Christian traditions may be examined. Historical events may be considered. Theological systems may be useful. But none of these things possesses authority to add to, alter, or redefine that which God has revealed through His inspired Word.

After more than fifty years of Christian experience, I am more persuaded than ever of the necessity of returning continually to the Scriptures and asking the simple question:

"What saith the scripture?"

— Romans 4:3

That is the question I invite the reader to ask throughout this book.

Introduction

This book examines certain claims made concerning the Book of Enoch. In particular, it considers the teaching that the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 were fallen angels who took human women and produced hybrid offspring. This view is often linked with the Book of Enoch, where the account is greatly enlarged by the story of the Watchers.

The book also considers the fact that 1 Enoch is included in the Ethiopian Orthodox biblical tradition. Some have therefore concluded that it ought to be received as inspired Scripture. The difficulty is not merely whether the Book of Enoch is ancient, interesting, or religious. The real question is by what authority Christians are to determine what is Scripture, and how difficult passages of Scripture are to be interpreted.

It is the view of this author that the Christian must begin with Christ, His Apostles, and the inspired Scriptures themselves. Ancient writings, church traditions, theological systems, and historical events may properly be examined; but they must not be allowed to take the place of the Word of God, nor be used to add to that which God has revealed.

For this reason, attention will be given to Genesis 6, the meaning of the term Nephilim, the references in Jude and 2 Peter, the nature of angels, the Ethiopian transmission of 1 Enoch, and the question of apostolic canonization. The study will also consider the significance of AD 70 and certain modern interpretations of prophecy, including the attempt to identify the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 with biblical prediction.

The governing principle throughout is straightforward. Where Scripture has spoken, we are bound to believe it. Where Scripture has not spoken, we should be careful not to fill the silence with human speculation and then present that speculation as revelation. The reader is invited to consider the evidence and to ask, as the Apostle Paul does:

"What saith the scripture?"
— Romans 4:3

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PART ONE—THE BOOK OF ENOCH GENESIS 6 AND THE WATCHERS

Chapter 1 Ancient Tradition and the Word of God

Christ and the Apostolic Foundation

When considering the Book of Enoch, or any other religious writing, the first question should be: by what authority is it to be received? It is not enough to say that a book is ancient, that it has been read by many people, or that it has been preserved within the tradition of a particular church. The Christian Church belongs to Christ, and Christ Himself said:

> *"I will build my church."*
> *— Matthew 16:18*

The Church did not begin with a council, a bishop, a pope, an emperor, or a national church. It began with Christ and with those whom He appointed to be His witnesses. When Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord declared that this truth had been revealed to him by the Father. The Church is founded upon Christ Himself, the Rock whom Peter confessed.

The Apostle Paul describes the Church as being:

> *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."*
> *— Ephesians 2:20*

This passage is important because it shows the place which the Apostles occupied in the founding of the Christian Church. They were not merely later religious teachers setting out their own opinions. They were personally appointed by Christ, were witnesses of His resurrection, and received the Holy Ghost. They were also promised divine help in remembering and teaching the things which Christ had spoken.

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*
> *— John 14:26*

And again, Christ said:

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you*

into all truth."
— John 16:13

The Apostles therefore held a unique and foundational office. Later generations could preserve their writings, translate them, and defend them; but they could not recreate the office of an Apostle, nor add fresh revelation to that which Christ gave through them. This is central to the question of the canon.

The Church Did Not Create Scripture

It is important to distinguish between recognising Scripture and making Scripture. A church may receive a book, copy it, translate it, publish it, or include it in a list of books used among its people. None of these actions can make an uninspired book inspired. Inspiration comes from God, not from the decision of a later ecclesiastical body.

This does not mean that the witness of the Church is of no value. The Church has been used to preserve the Scriptures, and Christians should be thankful for those who copied, translated, and defended the sacred writings. But if a church in the fourth, fifth, or sixth century received a particular book, this proves only that the church received it at that time. It does not of itself prove that the Apostles received it, or that it belonged to the apostolic canon.

For this reason, the inclusion of 1 Enoch within the Ethiopian biblical tradition cannot, by itself, establish that the book is inspired Scripture. The question that must be answered is this: what authority did the Book of Enoch possess in relation to Christ and His Apostles?

The Ethiopian Church and the Book of Enoch

Christianity became established in the kingdom of Aksum in Ethiopia during the fourth century. The classical language of the Ethiopian biblical tradition is Ge'ez, and the translation of the Scriptures into Ge'ez belongs broadly to the formative centuries of Ethiopian Christianity. This establishes an important chronological distinction.

The New Testament Church described in Acts already existed in the first century. The Apostles were preaching the gospel, establishing churches, writing epistles, and exercising their unique authority centuries before Ethiopian Christianity emerged as an organised national Christian tradition. Therefore the question cannot be settled by simply saying, "The Ethiopian Bible contains Enoch." The earlier

question must be answered: was the book received as Scripture by Christ and His Apostles?

Chapter 2 The Historic Enoch and the Book Bearing His Name

The Language and Transmission of the Ethiopian Bible

The ancient Ethiopian Old Testament was translated substantially from the Greek Septuagint, rather than directly from the later Hebrew Masoretic textual tradition. In broad terms, the transmission of much of the Old Testament into Ethiopia was from Hebrew Scripture into the Greek Septuagint, and from the Greek Septuagint into the Ge'ez Ethiopian Bible. This becomes important when considering Genesis 6 and the word sometimes translated "giants."

The complete form of the Book of Enoch likewise survives in Ge'ez; yet 1 Enoch was not originally composed in Ge'ez. Aramaic fragments of substantial portions of Enoch have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This shows that Enochic literature existed many centuries before Christianity reached Ethiopia. The Ethiopic version belongs to a later history of transmission in which Greek appears to have formed an important intermediary before the book was translated into Ge'ez.

It would therefore be mistaken to suppose that the Ethiopian Church possessed an independent Ge'ez manuscript written by the patriarch Enoch himself. The Ge'ez Book of Enoch belongs to a much later transmission history. Its preservation is of historical importance, but historical preservation is not the same as proof of authorship or divine inspiration.

The Historical Enoch and the Book Bearing His Name

Scripture unquestionably speaks of the historical Enoch. Genesis says:

> *"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."*
> *— Genesis 5:24*

Hebrews also refers to his translation:

> *"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death."*
> *— Hebrews 11:5*

Jude further tells us:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these."
— Jude 14

These statements ought to be received without hesitation. The Enoch of Scripture was a real man of God, and Jude identifies him as a prophet. But it does not follow that the whole book now called 1 Enoch was written by him, or that every section of that book is inspired Scripture. Jude does not say that the whole Book of Enoch is Scripture, nor does he state that the seventh man from Adam wrote every part of the work which later bore his name.

It is entirely possible that a true saying of the historical Enoch was preserved in a later work, without the whole work thereby being made inspired. This is a distinction which must be carefully maintained. Scripture authenticates Enoch the prophet. It does not, by that fact alone, authenticate the entire later Book of Enoch.

Ancient Does Not Mean Inspired

The discovery of Aramaic fragments of Enoch among the Dead Sea Scrolls proves something of real importance. It shows that Enochic literature is ancient and that substantial portions of it circulated among Jews before the coming of Christ. But antiquity does not prove inspiration.

The community at Qumran possessed and copied a number of religious writings. The fact that a manuscript was found in an ancient Jewish library does not make that manuscript canonical Scripture. Nor is it enough to say that a book was widely read, or that a later writer made use of words or ideas found in it. A religious book may be ancient without being inspired, and it may be quoted without being wholly endorsed.

These distinctions are especially necessary when the Book of Enoch is used to determine the meaning of Genesis 6. Genesis must first be allowed to speak for itself. A later writing, however interesting, must not be allowed to provide details which Moses himself did not give and then be used to govern the interpretation of the passage.

Chapter 3 The Sons of God Angelic Descent or Human Apostasy

The Watchers and the Daughters of Men

The Book of Enoch contains an elaborate account of heavenly beings called Watchers. According to that narrative, these beings descended from heaven, desired human women, took them sexually, and produced gigantic offspring. The account goes far beyond the brief statement found in Genesis. The supposed angels are named, their agreement is described, their forbidden teachings are listed, their offspring are described in extraordinary terms, and their punishment is explained. The origin of further evil spirits is also developed within the narrative.

The difficulty is that Genesis does not say these things. Genesis says:

> *"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."*
>
> *— Genesis 6:1–2*

The passage does not say that angels descended from heaven and impregnated human women. That conclusion has to be supplied by interpretation. The question is therefore whether the context of Genesis gives a more natural explanation.

Adam Abel and Seth

The preceding chapters of Genesis provide an explanation which remains entirely within human history. Adam is expressly called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38. The expression "son of God" is therefore not confined in Scripture to angels.

Adam's son Abel was a righteous worshipper of God, but Cain rose up against him and killed him. After Abel's death Eve bore Seth, and said:

> *"God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."*
>
> *— Genesis 4:25*

Then Genesis records:

> *"then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."*
>
> *— Genesis 4:26*

The sequence is entirely human: Adam, called the son of God; Abel, a righteous worshipper who was slain by Cain; Seth, appointed in Abel's place; and a line of men associated with calling upon the name of the Lord. When Genesis 6 then speaks of the sons of God taking wives of the daughters of men, it is reasonable to understand the passage as describing the corruption of a line which had professed the name of the Lord through marriage with those who did not fear Him. Nothing in this sequence requires angel-human reproduction.

The Sin of the Sons of God

Genesis tells us what attracted these men: "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." They looked upon outward beauty, and then "they took them wives of all which they chose." The language is the language of marriage. It does not describe supernatural beings producing human bodies, nor does it require the idea of angels taking women by force. It describes men seeing, desiring, choosing, and taking wives.

The emphasis upon outward beauty is significant. The Apostle John warns of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). John was not directly expounding Genesis 6, and we should not say that he was. Yet the moral principle is plainly comparable. The sons of God allowed outward attraction to govern their choice, rather than faithfulness to God. The spiritual character of those whom they married ceased to be the controlling consideration.

Marriage With the Ungodly

This same danger appears elsewhere in Scripture. Israel was commanded:

> *"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son."*
>
> *— Deuteronomy 7:3*

The reason is immediately given:

> *"For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods."*
>
> *— Deuteronomy 7:4*

The issue was spiritual corruption. Those who professed the Lord

were not to unite themselves in marriage with those who would draw them away from Him. The same principle appears in the New Testament:

> *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."*
> *— 2 Corinthians 6:14*

And, concerning Christian marriage, the Apostle says:

> *"she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."*
> *— 1 Corinthians 7:39*

This gives an intelligible explanation of the corruption described in Genesis 6. The sons of God chose wives according to outward attraction rather than according to faithfulness to God. Such marriages contributed to the growing corruption of the generations which followed. There is no need to imagine supernatural hybrid children in order to understand how ungodliness increased. Genesis itself tells us the result:

> *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth."*
> *— Genesis 6:5*

The emphasis of the passage is upon the corruption of man.

Balaam and the Corruption of God's People

The history of Balaam provides an important biblical parallel. Balaam was unable to bring the curse upon Israel which Balak desired. Yet another means of corruption was used. Moses says:

> *"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor."*
> *— Numbers 31:16*

Numbers 25 records that Israel began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, who called them unto the sacrifices of their gods. The people ate and bowed down to their gods. The Lord Jesus Himself confirms the nature of Balaam's counsel:

> *"Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."*
> *— Revelation 2:14*

The lesson is plain. When direct opposition could not overthrow God's people, seduction and ungodly association became instruments of corruption. Physical attraction led to unlawful union; unlawful union led to spiritual compromise; and spiritual compromise led to idolatry and judgment. This provides a more scripturally grounded parallel with Genesis 6 than the theory that angels produced hybrid children with women.

Chapter 4 The Nephilim Giants and Men of Renown

What Does Nephilim Mean?

Genesis 6:4 reads in the Authorised Version:

> *"There were giants in the earth in those days."*
> *— Genesis 6:4*

The Hebrew word translated "giants" is Nephilim. The precise meaning of this word is uncertain. It has often been connected with the Hebrew root naphal, meaning "to fall." From this connection, some have suggested that Nephilim means "fallen ones," while others have understood it to mean those who cause others to fall.

However, the precise origin and meaning of the word is not sufficiently certain for us to insist that "fallen ones" is its unquestionable meaning. The safer course is to retain the Hebrew word Nephilim and examine the way in which Scripture itself uses it.

This is important because the English word "giants" immediately creates a particular picture in the mind of the reader. Yet the Hebrew word itself does not mean, "children produced by fallen angels and women." Scripture nowhere gives such a definition.

From Nephilim to Giants

The ancient Greek Septuagint translated Nephilim by the Greek word gigantes. It is through this Greek word that the later English word "giant" ultimately comes.

The broad course of translation is therefore: Nephilim in the Hebrew Scripture, gigantes in the Greek Septuagint, and "giants" in the English translation.

This does not mean that the Septuagint was wrong to use the word gigantes. But it does mean that we must be careful not to read every modern idea associated with the English word "giant" back into the Hebrew text. The word itself proves neither supernatural parentage nor angelic ancestry.

Mighty Men and Men of Renown

Genesis 6:4 continues:

> *"the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."*

— Genesis 6:4

The Hebrew word translated "mighty men" is gibborim. It is an ordinary Hebrew word used of powerful men, warriors, champions, or men of valour.

Genesis therefore describes these men as "mighty men" and "men of renown." Whatever the precise meaning of Nephilim, the inspired text describes those spoken of in human terms. It does not call them demigods. It does not call them half-angels. It does not say that they possessed two different biological natures.

The elaborate supernatural interpretation must therefore be introduced from elsewhere. It is not stated in Genesis itself.

The Nephilim in Numbers 13

The word Nephilim occurs only one other time in the Hebrew Old Testament. The unbelieving spies reported:

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."
— Numbers 13:33

Again, the Hebrew word translated "giants" is Nephilim.

This creates an important difficulty for those who maintain that the pre-Flood Nephilim were a special biological race produced by angel-human intercourse. The Flood had already taken place. Genesis says:

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth."
— Genesis 7:21

And again:

"Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."
— Genesis 7:23

If the Nephilim before the Flood were a special race produced through angel-human intercourse, how did Nephilim appear again after the Flood?

Various explanations have been put forward. Some suggest that there was a second descent of angels. Others suggest that Nephilim ancestry

passed through the wives of Noah's sons. Others have proposed different forms of supernatural survival.

The difficulty is that Scripture states none of these things. Such explanations are additional theories made necessary by the original theory. The simpler explanation is that the word Nephilim does not itself mean angel-human hybrid.

The Spies Were Speaking in Fear

The context of Numbers chapter 13 must also be remembered. The spies were seeking to discourage Israel from entering the land. They said:

> *"The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof."*
> *— Numbers 13:32*

They then said:

> *"we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."*
> *— Numbers 13:33*

This is plainly the language of fear and exaggeration. The inspired record faithfully tells us what the spies said. But this does not mean that their frightened description is to be treated as a technical statement defining the biological nature of the inhabitants of Canaan.

They were magnifying the danger before Israel and seeking to discourage the people from entering the land which God had promised them. We should therefore be very careful about building an elaborate supernatural doctrine upon the language of unbelieving spies.

The Anakim Were Men

The Anakim later appear in ordinary human warfare. Joshua records:

> *"And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains."*
> *— Joshua 11:21*

And again:

> *"There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained."*

— Joshua 11:22

The Anakim occupied identifiable places. They could be fought, defeated, and driven from their territory. Nothing in these passages describes them as supernatural hybrids. They belong to ordinary human history.

This strongly suggests that the word Nephilim should not automatically be made into the name of a distinct angel-human species.

And Also After That

Genesis 6:4 says:

"There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that..."

— Genesis 6:4

Some understand the words "after that" to mean after the Flood. But the text does not say, "after the Flood." The phrase may simply refer to the continuing period before the Flood, during which the marriages and corruption already described were taking place.

John Gill understood the passage in this way. There is therefore no necessity to invent a second post-Flood descent of angels in order to explain the words.

The words of Genesis should be allowed to speak for themselves. We should not add a detailed supernatural history where Scripture has not given one.

Chapter 5 Can Angels Mate With Women?

John Gill on Genesis 6

John Gill expressly rejected the interpretation which says that the sons of God in Genesis chapter 6 were angels. He stated that they were:

> *"not angels either good or bad"*
> *— John Gill on Genesis 6*

Gill's reason was that angels are spiritual beings. They do not marry, nor do they "generate and be generated."

He understood the sons of God to be the posterity of Seth and the professing people of God. He likewise rejected the idea that the Nephilim were angel-human hybrids.

Gill considered explanations connected with violence, oppression, fear, apostasy, and falling away from the true worship of God. Whatever precise meaning is attached to the word Nephilim, Gill's interpretation remains within human history.

This is consistent with the immediate description given in Genesis. The persons spoken of are called "mighty men" and "men of renown."

Angels Are Not a Reproductive Race

Scripture describes angels as:

> *"ministering spirits."*
> *— Hebrews 1:14*

Mankind, by contrast, was expressly created:

> *"male and female."*
> *— Genesis 1:27*

Human beings were commanded:

> *"Be fruitful, and multiply."*
> *— Genesis 1:28*

Reproduction belongs to the created order which God gave to mankind. No corresponding command concerning marriage or reproduction is ever given to angels.

The Lord Jesus Christ said:

"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."
— Matthew 22:30

There is no biblical teaching that angels form a reproductive race parallel with mankind. There is no biblical teaching that fallen angels suddenly acquired powers of sexual generation which obedient angels do not possess. Nor is there biblical teaching that spiritual beings biologically fathered human children.

If anyone maintains such a doctrine, the burden rests upon him to demonstrate it from Scripture. The Book of Enoch cannot first be used to establish the doctrine, and then that doctrine used to authenticate the Book of Enoch. That is circular reasoning.

Jude Does Not Teach Angel-Human Intercourse

Jude says:

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."
— Jude 6

This passage proves that angels sinned. It proves that they departed from their first estate. It proves that they were judged.

But Jude does not say that they married women, nor does he say that they produced children by women.

Jude then speaks of Sodom and Gomorrha. Some have attempted to connect the sexual sins of Sodom with the preceding angelic rebellion. But the passage does not require us to conclude that the angels committed the identical sin of Sodom.

Jude gives successive examples of rebellion followed by judgment. Unbelieving Israelites were judged. Fallen angels were judged. Sodom and Gomorrha were judged. The common subject is the certainty of divine judgment upon apostasy and wickedness.

Peter Does Not Teach It Either

Peter writes:

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be

reserved unto judgment;

And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person..."
— 2 Peter 2:4–5

The fact that Peter mentions angels and then the old world is sometimes treated as proof that he is describing the supposed Watchers of Genesis chapter 6. But Peter continues:

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes..."
— 2 Peter 2:6

Peter is giving successive examples of divine judgment: angels that sinned; the old world; and Sodom and Gomorrha.

His conclusion is given in verse 9:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
— 2 Peter 2:9

Peter never states that the angels of verse 4 were the sons of God in Genesis chapter 6. He never states that their sin consisted of sexual intercourse with women.

Once again, these connections have to be supplied by an interpretation brought to the passage from elsewhere. They are not stated in the passage itself.

Chapter 6 When Speculation Becomes Religious Fable

Filling the Gaps With Fabulous Stories

Human curiosity does not easily accept silence. When Scripture gives only a little information, men often desire more. A short biblical statement is surrounded with speculation. Speculation becomes tradition. Tradition is repeated, and repetition gives it the appearance of fact. In this way, Christians can lose sight of where Scripture ends and human imagination begins.

This danger can be seen throughout religious history. Stories grew up concerning the Apostle John which Scripture never records. One tradition says that he was plunged into boiling oil. Another says that he fled from a bath-house because a heretic had entered it and he feared the building would fall under divine judgment. Whatever historical value such stories may possess, they are not apostolic Scripture. They show how easily religious narratives develop around biblical persons.

The same caution is needed when the Book of Enoch supplies pages of supernatural detail where Genesis gives only a few verses.

The Clay Birds of the Child Jesus

A further example is found in later stories about the childhood of the Lord Jesus. One tradition says that the child Jesus formed birds from clay and caused them to live. That account is not found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. It belongs to later infancy traditions and appears again centuries later in the Qur'an.

The presence of such a story in a religious writing does not oblige the Christian to receive it. It possesses no apostolic authority. Christ's Apostles did not deliver it as part of the Gospel.

This gives a useful principle. If we reject later stories about Jesus because they possess no apostolic warrant, consistency requires the same caution concerning later stories about angels. A later writing does not become authoritative merely because it fills a silence left by Scripture.

The Watchers Story

It is the view of this author that the Watchers story is a later attempt to explain Genesis 6 by imagination rather than revelation. Someone, or perhaps a developing Jewish tradition, looked back at the brief

account of the sons of God, the daughters of men, and the Nephilim, and supplied details which Genesis itself does not give.

Fallen angels were introduced; their descent was described; sexual relations with women were asserted; and hybrid offspring were imagined. In this sense, the story may reasonably be regarded as a Jewish fable, an interpretive expansion made to fill what Scripture had left unexplained.

The weakness of the idea is apparent when it is considered carefully. If fallen male angels could take human women and produce hybrid children, why should someone not invent the reverse account, of fallen female angels descending and taking human husbands? Scripture teaches neither story. The unsupported character of one helps expose the unsupported character of the other.

When Scripture is obscure, we must not fill its silence with imagination and then allow that imagination to become doctrine. It is better to say that God has not revealed a matter than to construct a fabulous explanation and later treat it as though it came from God.

The Danger of Claiming Divine Direction

This reminds me of an incident early in my Christian life. A pastor announced that the Lord had told him to purchase a bungalow, and he took the immediate acceptance of a reduced offer as confirmation. Some weeks later, after learning of restrictive covenants connected with the property, he announced that the Lord had told him not to purchase it.

It appeared to me that the Lord had no more directly told him to buy the property than He had later told him not to buy it. He had interpreted changing circumstances and personal judgment as divine revelation. A Christian may make a prudent decision, change his mind when further information appears, and recognise God's providence throughout. But he should be very cautious before saying, "The Lord told me," where Scripture has not spoken. Otherwise human reasoning is given an authority which belongs to the Word of God alone.

We Must Not Go Beyond What Is Written

The Christian should not regard all such speculation as harmless. There comes a point at which it dishonours Scripture, because it implies that God's revelation is insufficient and needs enlargement by human

tradition. Paul writes:

> *"that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written."*
>
> *— 1 Corinthians 4:6*

The honourable treatment of Scripture is not to fill every silence with speculation, but to respect the silence. Where God has spoken, we believe. Where God has not spoken, we must be careful not to speak with divine certainty.

The Ethiopian Canon Does Not Settle the Question

Several things may be freely acknowledged. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church includes 1 Enoch within its canon. Ethiopian Christianity is ancient. The Ethiopian Church preserved the complete text of Enoch. Enochic writings existed before Christ. These things are true.

But none of them proves that the Apostles received the whole Book of Enoch as inspired Scripture. No apostolic text says that they did. Jude's preservation of a genuine prophecy of Enoch does not authenticate the whole later composite work bearing his name. Ethiopian tradition proves Ethiopian reception; it does not rewrite first-century apostolic history.

The Error of Making Tradition Equal to Revelation

Without an objective apostolic boundary, Christianity becomes vulnerable to an endless succession of claimed revelations. One church may add Enoch; another movement may add new prophets; another religion may add stories about Jesus; another may claim fresh visions; and another may interpret Scripture through contemporary political events. The principle is the same whenever human material is added to divine revelation and both are treated as possessing equal authority.

Later writings may be historically valuable. They may illuminate ancient beliefs, preserve traditions, and even contain truths. But the Christian must always ask: What authority has God given us for receiving this as His Word?

A Call Back to Scripture

It is not sound interpretation to take a few difficult verses and surround them with spectacular stories which God has not revealed.

Nor is it sound to take an apocryphal narrative and read it backwards into Moses, Jude, and Peter. It is not honouring Scripture to treat speculation as revelation.

The proper method is the opposite. Let Genesis speak for Genesis. Let Numbers speak for Numbers. Let Jude speak for Jude. Let Peter speak for Peter. Let Christ and His Apostles define the faith delivered to the Church. Let later writings, however ancient or fascinating, remain subordinate to the Word of God.

Conclusion

The Book of Enoch deserves study as an important ancient Jewish religious work. Its survival is historically significant, and its preservation within Ethiopia is of considerable value. It helps us to understand ideas circulating in some parts of Judaism before and around the beginning of the Christian era.

But historical importance is not the same as divine inspiration. The historical Enoch was a genuine prophet; Jude establishes that fact. What Jude does not establish is that every part of the later composite work called 1 Enoch was written by that patriarch or received by the Apostles as Scripture.

The work known as 1 Enoch is not one book which can historically be traced to Enoch, the seventh from Adam. It is a composite collection of Jewish apocalyptic writings composed and edited over a considerable period before Christ. Its authors are unknown. The Old Testament records the historical Enoch, but nowhere identifies or predicts a canonical book written by him.

The Watchers narrative is a later interpretation and expansion of Genesis 6:1–4. It supplies names, events, and supernatural details which Genesis does not contain. Therefore, the statement, "Enoch explains Genesis 6," assumes what first has to be proved. It is more accurate to say that later Jewish writers interpreted Genesis 6 through an Enochic story. The Christian must test that interpretation by the inspired Scriptures, rather than allow the later narrative to determine what Genesis means.

The doctrine that Watchers mated with women likewise goes beyond anything plainly stated in Genesis, Jude, or Peter. Genesis presents a coherent human history: Adam is called the son of God; Abel was righteous and was murdered by Cain; Seth was appointed in Abel's place; men began to call upon the name of the Lord; and the sons of

God later took wives according to outward beauty and their own choice.

The biblical pattern repeatedly warns against such unions with those who do not follow the Lord. The history of Balaam shows how sensual attraction and ungodly association can become instruments of spiritual corruption. Human wickedness then became great upon the earth.

The Nephilim need not be understood as supernatural hybrids. The Hebrew word is Nephilim, the Septuagint rendered it gigantes, and English translators subsequently used "giants." The same Hebrew word appears again in Numbers 13 concerning the sons of Anak, who belong to ordinary human history and could later be fought and defeated. Scripture never defines Nephilim as angel-human offspring. The theory requires information supplied from outside Scripture.

The Christian should therefore resist the temptation to elevate ancient speculation into divine revelation. The Church is founded upon Christ and the apostolic witness which He authorised. Later churches may preserve ancient writings, but they cannot confer apostolic inspiration upon them. We honour Scripture not by adding to it, but by submitting to it. Where Scripture has not spoken, reverence requires us to say: God has not revealed this, and we have no authority to invent it.

PART TWO—APOSTOLIC CANONIZATION AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Capter 7 The Canon Came From God

The question of how the New Testament canon was formed is of fundamental importance. Christians generally agree that the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are inspired and authoritative in matters of doctrine and practice. But a further question properly follows: by what authority were these writings recognised as Scripture?

Was the canon determined centuries later by councils and bishops, or was its authority already established in the apostolic age? The position considered in this study is that the authority to give, recognise, and certify inspired Scripture belonged uniquely to Christ and to those Apostles and prophets whom He appointed. This may be described as apostolic canonization.

The canon did not receive its authority from a later Church. The writings possessed divine authority because they arose from the inspired apostolic ministry established by Christ. Later churches could recognise those writings, preserve them, copy them, translate them, and defend them. They could not make them inspired.

That distinction lies at the heart of the question. The Church did not create Scripture. The Holy Ghost inspired it. Paul writes:

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."*
> *— 2 Timothy 3:16*

The source of Scripture is therefore God. Its authority does not arise because a later ecclesiastical body voted to accept it. The Church receives Scripture because God has given it. The governing question is not, Which later council gave these books authority? It is, Which writings did God give through His authorised prophets and Apostles?

If the Church could make a writing inspired simply by recognising it, inspiration would finally depend upon ecclesiastical authority. But if inspiration comes from God, the Church has a different and humbler office: recognition and preservation, not creation.

The Unique Office of the Apostles

The Apostles occupied an office which later Christian leaders did

not possess. They were witnesses of the risen Christ. They had been directly appointed by Him, commissioned to speak in His name, and given the Holy Ghost in a unique, foundational capacity.

Jesus said to them:

> *"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."*
>
> *— Matthew 10:19–20*

He also said:

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*
>
> *— John 14:26*

And again:

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."*
>
> *— John 16:13*

These promises were not given without distinction to every Christian teacher in every later age. They belonged particularly to those whom Christ commissioned as His foundational witnesses. This is why Paul describes the Church as:

> *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."*
>
> *— Ephesians 2:20*

A foundation is laid once. It is not continually relaid in every generation. This strongly supports the conclusion that the revelatory authority of the Apostles belonged to the foundation period of the Church.

Christ, the Prophet Like Moses

The Old Testament had already prepared the way for the unique authority of Christ. Moses declared:

> *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak*

unto them all that I shall command him."
— Deuteronomy 18:18

Peter expressly applied this prophecy to Christ:

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."
— Acts 3:22

At the Transfiguration, the Father Himself testified:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
— Matthew 17:5

Christ is therefore the supreme Prophet. Moses delivered the Word of God orally and in writing. Christ did not leave a written Gospel in His own hand. Instead, He appointed Apostles and prophets, and promised them the Holy Ghost, so that His teaching might be faithfully preserved and communicated. The written New Testament belongs to the authorised witness of Christ's appointed representatives.

Christ Prepared His Apostles for an Authoritative Witness

The Apostles were not left to depend upon fallible memory alone. Christ promised that the Holy Ghost would bring to their remembrance all that He had said to them. This is of great importance. The Gospel record was not intended to rest merely upon the uncertain recollection of elderly men writing many decades later. Christ promised divine assistance.

He also promised that the Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. The apostolic witness was therefore both historical and revelatory. They had seen and heard Christ; the Holy Ghost enabled them to understand, remember, proclaim, and preserve the truth concerning Him. Here is the theological ground for an authoritative written apostolic testimony.

The Great Commission and Apostolic Authority

Immediately before His ascension, Christ said:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
— Matthew 28:18

He then commanded:

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations… Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."*
> *— Matthew 28:19–20*

The Apostles did not teach upon their own authority. Their authority was derived from Christ. He possessed all authority, and they were His commissioned representatives. Their task was not to create a new religion of their own invention, but to teach what Christ had commanded. This commission naturally included both oral preaching and the preservation of apostolic teaching in writing. The authority of the New Testament rests ultimately upon Christ Himself.

Peter and the Keys of the Kingdom

Christ gave Peter a particularly important commission:

> *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*
> *— Matthew 16:19*

This establishes Peter as possessing extraordinary authority within the foundational Church. Yet we must be careful not to claim more than the passage itself states. Matthew 16 does not explicitly say that Peter was appointed to compile and certify the twenty-seven-book New Testament canon. That would be an inference.

What the passage clearly establishes is that Peter possessed a unique authority under Christ in the government and establishment of the Kingdom. The case for apostolic canonization should therefore not rest upon Matthew 16 alone. It rests upon the wider apostolic commission, the promise of inspiration, prophetic authority, and the evidence that apostolic writings were already being recognised as Scripture in the apostolic age. This careful distinction strengthens, rather than weakens, the case.

Chapter 9 Scripture Recognised Within the Apostolic Age

The New Testament itself gives evidence that inspired writings were recognised as Scripture during the apostolic age. This point is important, for it shows that canonical recognition did not begin in the fourth century. It had already begun whilst Apostles were still living and exercising their God-given authority within the churches.

Apostolic Writings Were Already Being Recognised as Scripture

Peter writes concerning Paul:

> *"Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."*
>
> *— 2 Peter 3:15–16*

This is of great significance. Peter refers to Paul's epistles and compares the twisting of them with the twisting of "the other scriptures." Paul's writings are thus placed within the category of Scripture whilst Apostles were still alive. The recognition of apostolic writings as Scripture was therefore not merely a later ecclesiastical development.

Paul Also Recognises Written Gospel Material

Another important passage appears in Paul's first epistle to Timothy:

> *"For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."*
>
> *— 1 Timothy 5:18*

The first statement comes from Deuteronomy 25:4. The second closely corresponds with the words recorded in Luke:

> *"the labourer is worthy of his hire."*
>
> *— Luke 10:7*

If Paul is here placing this Gospel saying under the designation, "the scripture saith," we have another indication that Christian written material was being treated as Scripture during the apostolic period. The recognition of new covenant Scripture was not simply a later ecclesiastical process. It was already taking place whilst Apostles were alive.

Paul Expected His Letters to Be Read Publicly

Paul also expected his writings to circulate amongst the churches. He commanded the Thessalonians:

> *"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."*
> *— 1 Thessalonians 5:27*

To the Colossians he wrote:

> *"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."*
> *— Colossians 4:16*

The apostolic letters were not merely private correspondence. They were written for churches, publicly read, exchanged, and circulated. This provides an obvious means by which collections of apostolic writings could begin to form during the lifetime of the Apostles themselves.

Revelation Also Expected Immediate Circulation

The book of Revelation likewise begins:

> *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."*
> *— Revelation 1:3*

It is addressed to:

> *"the seven churches which are in Asia."*
> *— Revelation 1:4*

The book therefore assumed public reading and circulation from the beginning. This again demonstrates that New Testament writings were not hidden documents, rediscovered centuries later. They were produced for churches and circulated within the Christian community.

Apostolic and Prophetic Writers

Not every book of the New Testament was written by one of the original Twelve. Paul was directly commissioned by the risen Christ. James and Jude belonged to the earliest Jerusalem Church and were closely connected with the Lord and His Apostles. Mark and Luke were associated with the apostolic circle: Luke particularly with Paul, and

Mark with Peter and other Apostles.

The authority of the New Testament cannot therefore be reduced to the question, Was the author one of the Twelve? The wider biblical category is apostolic and prophetic authority within the foundational Church. Paul writes of the mystery of Christ:

> *"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."*
>
> *— Ephesians 3:5*

The foundational revelation was given through "apostles and prophets." This provides a broader biblical framework for understanding writings produced within the apostolic circle.

Writing Circulation and Recognition

The case for apostolic canonization may therefore be considered under three related headings.

Writing. Inspired writings were produced by Apostles and prophets, or within the authorised apostolic circle.

Circulation. Those writings were publicly read, copied, exchanged, and transmitted amongst the churches.

Recognition. Their divine authority was recognised whilst apostolic authority was still functioning.

The New Testament supplies evidence for all three processes. What requires further historical examination is the stronger claim that all twenty-seven books had been assembled into one formally completed and certified collection before AD 70. That is a more specific historical thesis. It should not be confused with the broader and more readily demonstrated truth that New Testament writings were being written, circulated, and recognised as Scripture within the apostolic age.

Chapter 10—Ed Stevens and the Case for Apostolic Canonization

The question of apostolic canonization needs to be approached with some care. There is a strong theological claim, and there is a stronger historical claim. The two should not be confused.

The Strong and the Stronger Claim

The first claim is that the authority of New Testament Scripture derives from Christ and His inspired Apostles and prophets, not from later church councils. This has strong biblical support.

The second claim is that all twenty-seven books of the New Testament were written, collected into a completed corpus, and formally certified before AD 70. This is the stronger historical claim associated particularly with writers such as Ed Stevens. It may be argued, but it requires historical demonstration.

The first claim does not depend upon proving every detail of the second. This enables us to consider Stevens' argument sympathetically without making the authority of Scripture rest upon every chronological reconstruction which he proposes.

Apostolic Canonization and Ed Stevens

Ed Stevens has argued that the whole New Testament canon was completed under apostolic oversight before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His position is more specific than the general Protestant doctrine that the canon belongs to the apostolic age. He maintains that three processes were completed before the Apostles passed from the scene: the writings were produced, they were collected, and they were certified.

His concern is understandable. If the Church had to wait for centuries after the death of every Apostle before it could know which books belonged to Scripture, the final determination of the canon might appear to depend upon uninspired men. Stevens therefore argues that the same inspired generation which produced the writings also possessed the authority to recognise and certify them.

The theological logic has considerable force. The historical question is whether the surviving evidence enables us to demonstrate the whole process as precisely as Stevens maintains. That question must be examined separately.

The Significance of AD 70

Stevens attaches particular importance to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. From a preterist perspective, that event marked the conclusion of the Old Covenant age and the fulfilment of Christ's judgment prophecies concerning Jerusalem. Christ said:

> *"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
> *— Matthew 24:2*

He also said:

> *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*
> *— Matthew 24:34*

If the destruction of Jerusalem marked the decisive close of that covenantal age, Stevens reasons that the apostolic work of revelation should likewise have been completed within that period. This gives a theological framework for his pre-AD 70 canon thesis.

Yet theological fittingness is not, by itself, historical proof. We must still ask whether all the New Testament books had been written by then, whether they were all circulating, whether they had all been gathered into a recognised corpus, and whether there is evidence that the Apostles themselves certified that complete corpus. These questions form the next stage of the enquiry.

The End of the Age

Christ said:

> *"and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*
> *— Matthew 28:20*

The Greek expression translated "world" can carry the sense of "age." From a preterist perspective, the phrase may be understood as referring to the conclusion of the Jewish covenantal age, culminating in AD 70. Matthew 24:3 contains similar language when the disciples ask concerning "the end of the world."

If that interpretation is correct, Christ's promise to remain with His commissioned messengers until the end of the age may naturally be associated with their first-century mission. Nevertheless, the whole

case for apostolic canonization should not be made to depend upon this interpretation alone. Matthew 28:20 does not explicitly speak of the closing of the biblical canon. Its relevance is theological and contextual; it belongs within a cumulative argument.

The Gospel Preached Throughout Their World

The New Testament contains remarkable statements concerning the extent of the apostolic mission. Paul writes:

> *"Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."*
> *— Romans 10:18*

He speaks of the Gospel:

> *"which was preached to every creature which is under heaven."*
> *— Colossians 1:23*

And again:

> *"which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit."*
> *— Colossians 1:6*

Romans likewise speaks of the Gospel as:

> *"made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."*
> *— Romans 16:26*

These statements should be understood according to biblical usage and the historical world of the writers, rather than necessarily as geographical claims concerning every individual inhabitant of the modern globe. Nevertheless, they show that the New Testament writers regarded the apostolic Gospel mission as reaching its appointed extent during their lifetime. This accords naturally with the idea of a first-century completion of the foundational mission.

The Canon Closed With the Apostolic Age

Whatever precise date is assigned to each New Testament book, the theological boundary remains the apostolic age. When the Apostles and inspired prophets passed from the earthly scene, the foundational revelatory office ceased. No succeeding bishop possessed authority to produce another Gospel. No council could add another apostolic epistle.

No pope could produce a new book of Scripture. No later prophet could reopen revelation. No later church could transform an ancient religious writing into apostolic Scripture.

The foundation had been laid. The faith had been delivered. The Church's responsibility thereafter was to preserve and contend for that revelation. This is the central significance of apostolic canonization.

What This Means for the Book of Enoch

The relevance to the Book of Enoch is direct. Even if 1 Enoch is ancient, the decisive question remains: was it received as part of the authoritative prophetic and apostolic revelation of the Church? Jude's quotation establishes that the historical Enoch genuinely prophesied. It does not establish that the whole composite work now called 1 Enoch was received as Scripture by the Apostles.

Later Ethiopian reception cannot retrospectively supply apostolic authority. Neither can antiquity, the discovery of ancient manuscripts, or the fact that some early Christians valued the work. The authority of Scripture rests upon God's revelation, given through those whom He appointed. That is the standard by which later claims must be judged.

Conclusion

The doctrine of apostolic canonization rests upon several connected truths. Christ possesses all authority. He is the Prophet like Moses. He appointed the Apostles as His foundational witnesses and promised them the Holy Ghost. The Spirit would bring Christ's words to their remembrance and guide them into truth. The Apostles preached, taught, wrote, and circulated authoritative instruction among the churches. Their writings were recognised as Scripture during their lifetime. Paul's letters circulated amongst congregations, and Peter referred to Paul's writings alongside "the other scriptures." The faith was spoken of as having been once delivered to the saints.

These facts give strong biblical support for the conclusion that the authority of the New Testament canon belongs fundamentally to the apostolic age, rather than to later ecclesiastical councils.

Ed Stevens makes the stronger historical claim that all twenty-seven books were not only written, but also collected and certified before AD 70. That claim deserves careful examination. It should neither be dismissed without enquiry nor accepted merely because it accords

with a preterist understanding of the close of the Jewish age. The next question is historical and chronological: were all twenty-seven books of the New Testament written before AD 70? Only after that question has been considered can we address the still more demanding question of whether the complete corpus was collected and certified within the lifetime of the Apostles.

PART THREE—WERE ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WRITTEN BEFORE AD 70

The Chronological Question Behind Apostolic Canonization

If the New Testament canon was completed under living apostolic authority, one major chronological question must first be addressed: were all twenty-seven books of the New Testament written before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70?

This question is fundamental to the particular form of apostolic canonization argued by Ed Stevens. The broader doctrine of apostolic authority does not require every New Testament book to be dated before AD 70. It requires the writings to belong to the apostolic and prophetic foundation established by Christ.

Stevens, however, advances a more specific claim. He argues that the books of the New Testament were not only written during the apostolic age, but were also collected and certified before the destruction of Jerusalem.

If that argument is to succeed, the first requirement is chronological: every New Testament book must be capable of being placed within the pre-AD 70 period. The evidence should therefore be considered book by book.

Chapter 11 The Gospels Acts and the Apostolic Epistles

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts

A pre-AD 70 date for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts is entirely possible. Acts is particularly important because its ending appears remarkably unfinished if it was written long after the events which it records.

Acts concludes with Paul alive in Rome:

> *"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him."*
>
> *— Acts 28:30*

The narrative says nothing concerning the conclusion of Paul's legal case, his possible release, any later ministry, the Neronic persecution, the deaths of Paul or Peter, or the destruction of Jerusalem. This silence

has often been considered significant. If Acts had been written after such events, and especially after the death of its principal missionary figure, one might expect some indication of what had happened to him.

The absence of this information does not prove an early date beyond question. It does, however, provide a reasonable basis for placing Acts during Paul's lifetime, commonly in the early AD 60s. If Acts was written then, Luke's Gospel must be earlier, for Acts begins by referring to Luke's previous work:

> *"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."*
>
> *— Acts 1:1*

Luke therefore precedes Acts. If Acts belongs to the early AD 60s, Luke must belong before that time.

Luke Was Not the First Gospel Tradition

Luke himself says:

> *"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us…"*
>
> *— Luke 1:1*

This is significant. Luke was not writing in a literary vacuum. He knew that other accounts of Christ's life and ministry were already in circulation. It shows that Gospel material had already been committed to writing before Luke composed his own account.

Luke continues:

> *"Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word."*
>
> *— Luke 1:2*

His work belongs, therefore, within a living chain of eyewitness testimony and written Gospel tradition. The precise literary relationship between Matthew, Mark, and Luke remains debated, but nothing in Luke's introduction requires a late first-century setting. It fits naturally within the living apostolic period.

Matthew and Mark

If Luke and Acts belong before AD 70, Matthew and Mark may also reasonably be placed within the same broad period. The three Synoptic Gospels contain substantial overlapping material. Whatever view is taken of their literary relationship, the existence of shared Gospel tradition before Luke shows that written accounts concerning Christ were already available during the apostolic age.

The important point in this study is not to establish an exact year for each Gospel. It is that there is no necessity within the texts themselves to place Matthew or Mark after AD 70. The prediction of Jerusalem's destruction does not require a post-AD 70 date unless one first assumes that genuine prophecy is impossible. Christ's prediction:

> *"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
>
> *— Matthew 24:2*

cannot properly be treated as proof of late composition merely because the event subsequently occurred. If Christ genuinely prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, the prediction is entirely compatible with a pre-AD 70 Gospel.

The Pauline Epistles

The Pauline writings present considerably less chronological difficulty. Paul was unquestionably active during the middle decades of the first century. His letters belong within his lifetime. Writings genuinely authored by Paul must therefore predate his death and consequently belong before AD 70.

This includes Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles, if traditional Pauline authorship is accepted. The precise date of each letter may be debated, but their general placement within the apostolic age is secure within the argument presented here.

Hebrews

Hebrews is more complicated because its authorship has long been disputed. The present argument does not require us to settle whether Paul personally wrote Hebrews. The more important question is whether the epistle itself fits naturally before AD 70.

Its discussion of priesthood, sacrifice, covenant, and sanctuary

repeatedly speaks in a manner which appears to presuppose the continuing operation of the Levitical system. The writer says:

> *"For there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."*
> *— Hebrews 8:4*

And again:

> *"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices…"*
> *— Hebrews 10:11*

This language is notable. The writer argues that the old covenant order is passing away and that Christ's priesthood is superior. If the Jerusalem temple had already been destroyed and the sacrificial system had already ceased, that remarkable event might have supplied a powerful historical confirmation of the argument. Yet Hebrews does not say that the temple has been destroyed or that the sacrifices have ceased. Instead, the old order is described as:

> *"ready to vanish away."*
> *— Hebrews 8:13*

That expression is naturally compatible with a date before AD 70. It does not prove such a date with mathematical certainty, but it gives serious support to it.

James

The Epistle of James likewise fits comfortably within the pre-AD 70 period if its author is James, the brother of the Lord. James was an important figure in the Jerusalem church. Acts records his leadership, and Paul refers to him. This study follows the traditional identification of the author with James, the Lord's brother, and therefore places the epistle before his death. This presents no difficulty for a pre-AD 70 chronology.

Peter

The two epistles of Peter likewise belong naturally within the apostolic period if traditional Petrine authorship is accepted. Peter writes as:

> *"an apostle of Jesus Christ."*
> *— 1 Peter 1:1*

In the second epistle he identifies himself as:

> *"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ."*
> *— 2 Peter 1:1*

He also refers to his coming death:

> *"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."*
> *— 2 Peter 1:14*

If Peter died during the Neronic period, his writings necessarily precede AD 70. Again, this presents no serious difficulty for the early-date position.

Jude

Jude also fits naturally within the same broad period. Its literary relationship with 2 Peter is sufficiently clear to show that the two documents belong to closely related theological and historical circumstances. Both warn against corrupt teachers, appeal to examples of divine judgment, and use similar language and themes.

This does not establish an exact date, or literary dependence in one direction rather than another. But nothing in Jude requires a post-AD 70 setting. It can readily be placed within the apostolic period.

Chapter 12 The Main Difficulty The Johannine Writings

At this point, the chronological case appears comparatively straightforward. The Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Paul's letters, James, Peter, Jude, and probably Hebrews may all reasonably be placed before AD 70. The major difficulty concerns the writings attributed to John: the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.

The traditional chronology places John well beyond AD 70 and frequently dates Revelation near the end of the first century. If that chronology is correct, the strongest form of Stevens' theory becomes difficult to maintain. This is why the Johannine question has such importance in his argument.

The Traditional View of John

A widely received Christian tradition holds that the Apostle John survived the destruction of Jerusalem and lived into the later first

century. On this chronology, his Gospel and epistles may have been written well after AD 70. Revelation is commonly dated either during the reign of Nero or during the reign of Domitian, the latter date often being placed in the mid-AD 90s.

Stevens challenges this traditional reconstruction. His theory requires the Johannine writings to belong to the earlier apostolic period. He therefore considers whether John may have died considerably earlier than later tradition suggests. This is one of the most controversial parts of his reconstruction, and it must be treated as such.

James and John Drinking Christ's Cup

Stevens begins with Christ's words to James and John. Their mother asked that her sons might occupy positions of honour in Christ's kingdom. Jesus replied:

> *"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of…?"*
> *— Matthew 20:22*

They answered that they were able. Christ then said:

> *"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup."*
> *— Matthew 20:23*

James unquestionably suffered martyrdom. Acts records:

> *"And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."*
> *— Acts 12:2*

Stevens reasons that, because Christ addressed both brothers and said, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup," the words may indicate that John also suffered martyrdom. If so, the later tradition that John survived to extreme old age would require reconsideration.

The argument is possible, but it should not be presented as conclusive. Christ's language clearly promises suffering to both brothers. Whether it necessarily requires both to die as martyrs is a further inference. That distinction must remain explicit.

Was John Among the Companions of James

The present argument also records Stevens' proposal that John may have been amongst those associated with James, the Lord's brother, when James was arrested and executed. This reconstruction is considerably

more speculative. The evidence does not expressly identify John in that event.

Stevens attempts to connect several pieces of first-century evidence, but the identification remains conjectural. It should therefore be presented as a proposed reconstruction, not as an established historical fact. The overall argument is stronger when uncertain details are plainly labelled as uncertain.

John and the High Priest

The Gospel of John records an unnamed disciple who:

> *"was known unto the high priest."*
> *— John 18:15*

Stevens connects this disciple with John and suggests that such a relationship may help to explain particular events in John's later history. Again, this is possible, but it is not demonstrable from the text alone. The Gospel does not explicitly name that disciple as John in this verse, nor does it connect the relationship with a later arrest or exile. Such connections may form part of a historical hypothesis, but they should not be stated as though Scripture itself teaches them.

The Exile to Patmos

Revelation states:

> *"I John… was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."*
> *— Revelation 1:9*

The text names neither an emperor nor an explicit calendar date. Revelation itself does not tell us whether John's exile occurred under Nero or Domitian. Stevens favours an early date and places the exile in the Neronic period. If this is accepted, Revelation may readily be placed before AD 70.

This dating fits well with a preterist interpretation, since Revelation then concerns events approaching within the first-century world rather than events beginning thousands of years later. But the question of date must still be argued from evidence. Its usefulness to a preterist reading is not, by itself, proof of an early date.

Chapter 13 Revelation and the Nearness of Its Fulfilment

Revelation and the Nearness of Its Events

The internal language of Revelation deserves considerable attention. The book begins:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass."*
> *— Revelation 1:1*

It also says:

> *"for the time is at hand."*
> *— Revelation 1:3*

Near the end of the book the language is repeated:

> *"These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."*
> *— Revelation 22:6*

And again:

> *"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."*
> *— Revelation 22:10*

These statements sit naturally within an early-date and preterist framework. If the principal events were still thousands of years distant, the repeated language of nearness requires explanation. This does not settle every chronological question, but it forms an important part of the cumulative case for an early date for Revelation.

Revelation 22 and the Closing Warning

Revelation concludes:

> *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."*
> *— Revelation 22:18*

And:

> *"if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this*

prophecy…"
— Revelation 22:19

This warning is sometimes treated as proof that Revelation was the final book of the entire biblical canon. That conclusion goes beyond what the passage expressly says. The immediate reference is "the words of the book of this prophecy." The warning unquestionably protects Revelation itself from addition or subtraction. It does not explicitly say that no New Testament writing could be composed after this point.

Revelation 22 may accord with the idea of a completed canon, but it should not be used by itself to prove that Revelation was chronologically the final biblical book.

Stevens' Proposed Chronology

The following is an approximate summary of the chronology associated with Ed Stevens:

1 Thessalonians — AD 52
2 Thessalonians — AD 52
Galatians — AD 55
1 Corinthians — AD 57
2 Corinthians — AD 57
Romans — AD 58
Matthew — before AD 58
Mark — before AD 58
Luke — AD 58–61
Acts — AD 58–61
John — AD 60–62
1 John, 2 John, and 3 John — AD 61–62
James — AD 62
Revelation — AD 62–63
Ephesians — AD 63
Colossians — AD 63
Philemon — AD 63
Philippians — AD 63
Hebrews — AD 63
1 Timothy — AD 63
Titus — AD 63
1 Peter — AD 63

2 Timothy — AD 64
Jude — AD 64–65
2 Peter — AD 64–65

The value of such a chronology is not that every date can be established beyond dispute. Its value is that it demonstrates the historical possibility of placing the entire New Testament within the pre-AD 70 period, provided that the early dating of the Johannine writings is accepted.

That is an important, but limited, conclusion. Possible does not mean proved.

Chapter 14 John A T Robinson and the Case for an Early New Testament

John A T Robinson and Early Dating

An important modern contribution to this discussion came from John A. T. Robinson in his work Redating the New Testament. Robinson is significant because his conclusions concerning chronology did not arise from the same theological commitments as conservative preterist writers. He questioned many conventional later dates and considered whether the New Testament documents might all belong before the destruction of Jerusalem.

His central observation concerned the New Testament's silence regarding AD 70 as a completed historical event. Jerusalem's destruction was one of the most momentous events in first-century Jewish history. The temple was destroyed, the sacrificial order ended, and the political and religious world of Judaism radically altered. Yet no New Testament writer plainly says that Jerusalem has been destroyed, the temple has fallen, or Christ's prediction concerning the temple has now been fulfilled. Robinson considered this silence historically significant.

The Force of the Silence Concerning AD 70

An argument from silence must always be used cautiously. The absence of a statement cannot, by itself, prove that an event had not occurred. But cumulative silence can become significant.

The New Testament repeatedly discusses Jerusalem, the temple, priesthood, sacrifice, covenant, persecution, approaching judgment, and the coming destruction of the city. If many of these writings were composed after AD 70, one might reasonably expect at least some writers to refer explicitly to that event as past history. Yet they do not.

This does not prove that every New Testament book predates AD 70. It does, however, create a legitimate historical question. Robinson's importance lies partly in his refusal to treat late dates as self-evident. He asks instead: what evidence actually requires a post-AD 70 date? That is a fair question.

Predictive Prophecy Must Not Be Ruled Out in Advance

Another important issue concerns the dating of the Gospels. Some critical approaches argue that detailed predictions of Jerusalem's

destruction prove that the Gospel accounts must have been written after the event. But such an argument rests upon a prior assumption: that genuine predictive prophecy cannot occur.

For a Christian who accepts the prophetic authority of Christ, that assumption cannot simply be granted. Jesus could genuinely predict the destruction of Jerusalem. The presence of the prediction, therefore, does not establish a post-AD 70 date. The question of date must be decided upon broader historical and textual considerations.

Instructions to Flee Make Sense Before the Event

Christ's warnings also possess an immediate practical character. He said:

> *"Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."*
> *— Matthew 24:16*

Luke records:

> *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."*
> *— Luke 21:20*

These are not merely abstract theological statements. They are instructions. They tell people what to do when particular conditions arise. Such instructions make especial sense if they were written for Christians who might actually face the approaching crisis. Again, this does not prove the date of the Gospels by itself, but it fits naturally within a pre-AD 70 setting.

This Generation

Christ says:

> *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*
> *— Matthew 24:34*

The natural meaning of "this generation" is the generation then living. Jesus had spoken directly to His disciples. They had shown Him the temple buildings, and He told them that those buildings would be destroyed. They then asked, "when shall these things be?" Christ described the approaching troubles and said that the generation would not pass until these things were fulfilled.

Jerusalem fell approximately forty years later. From a preterist perspective, this supplies a natural chronological framework for the discourse. It also supports the broader argument that the New Testament belongs within a world still anticipating the destruction, rather than looking back upon it.

Other First Century Time Statements

The same general issue appears elsewhere. Christ says:

> *"There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."*
> *— Matthew 16:28*

And:

> *"Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."*
> *— Matthew 10:23*

These statements have been interpreted in different ways. From a preterist perspective, they belong naturally to first-century fulfilment. Robinson's chronological observation is that, if such statements had already appeared plainly false by the time Matthew wrote, one might expect explanatory modification. Instead, they remain in their direct form. This may suggest that Matthew was written within the period in which their fulfilment was still expected. Again, the argument is cumulative, not absolute.

The First Requirement Is Historically Possible

The evidence considered thus far allows a measured conclusion. It is historically possible to defend a pre-AD 70 date for Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, the Pauline writings, James, Peter, Jude, Hebrews, and, if an early Johannine chronology is accepted, the writings of John.

Therefore the first requirement of Stevens' apostolic canonization theory is possible. But possibility is not proof. The weakest part of the reconstruction remains the precise dating of the Johannine corpus and the hypothesis concerning John's early death. Those points should be acknowledged openly.

The doctrine of apostolic authority does not collapse if Stevens' precise reconstruction is wrong. That is an important safeguard.

Chapter 15 Writing Collecting and Certifying the Canon

Writing Is Only the First Question

Even if all twenty-seven books were written before AD 70, two further questions remain. First, were they collected into a recognisable body whilst apostolic authority was still functioning? Second, were they certified or recognised as canonical by those possessing apostolic authority?

These are more difficult historical questions than the question of composition. Writing a book is one thing. Circulating it is another. Collecting the whole body of New Testament writings is another. Certifying that complete body as canonical is another still.

Stevens' theory requires all these stages. Therefore, after establishing that an early date is possible, the historical argument must proceed further.

A Necessary Distinction

At this stage it is helpful to distinguish three propositions.

The first is that the New Testament writings belong to the apostolic and prophetic foundation established by Christ. This is the fundamental theological claim.

The second is that the New Testament writings were already being circulated and recognised as authoritative Scripture during the apostolic age. There is direct New Testament evidence supporting this.

The third is that all twenty-seven books were collected together and formally certified as a complete canon before AD 70. This is the strongest and most historically specific claim. It requires more evidence.

The first two propositions should not be made unnecessarily dependent upon proving every detail of the third.

The Relevance to Enoch

This distinction helps us return to the Book of Enoch. Even if the precise date of every New Testament book remains disputed, the authority of the Christian Scriptures still arises from the apostolic and prophetic revelation given through Christ's appointed witnesses.

The Book of Enoch does not acquire apostolic authority merely

because later Christians valued it. No evidence considered here shows that the Apostles gathered it amongst their own authoritative writings. No apostolic text instructs the Church to receive the whole Book of Enoch as Scripture. The uncertainty surrounding the precise chronology of John does not, therefore, give Enoch canonical standing. These are separate questions.

Conclusion

The question, Were all the New Testament books written before AD 70?, cannot be answered merely by appealing to traditional dates. Many New Testament writings fit naturally within the earlier period. Acts appears to end while Paul is still alive. Luke precedes Acts. The Pauline epistles necessarily belong to Paul's lifetime. James, Peter, and Jude fit naturally within the apostolic period. Hebrews speaks of the Levitical order in language compatible with the temple still standing.

The main chronological difficulty lies with the Johannine writings. Ed Stevens proposes an early chronology for John and Revelation and argues that John died during the Neronic period. That reconstruction is possible, but parts of it remain speculative.

John A. T. Robinson approached the question from another direction. He drew attention particularly to the striking New Testament silence concerning Jerusalem's destruction as a past event. His work demonstrates that a pre-AD 70 chronology cannot simply be dismissed without examination.

The result is significant but limited: a pre-AD 70 New Testament is historically arguable. But the stronger theory of apostolic canonization requires more. It must still be shown that these writings were not merely composed, but were collected and recognised as a complete authoritative corpus whilst apostolic authority remained alive. That is the next question to which we must turn.

Chapter 16 Jerusalem the Temple and This Generation

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was one of the most significant events of the first century. The city was devastated, the temple was destroyed, the sacrificial system centred upon the temple ceased, and the political and religious order of Judaism was fundamentally altered.

For the Christian interpreter, this event is important for at least two reasons. First, it bears upon the dating of the New Testament writings. Secondly, it bears upon the interpretation of Christ's prophecies concerning Jerusalem, the temple, and the end of the age.

These questions are related, but they should not be confused. A book may be dated before AD 70 without requiring a preterist interpretation of every prophetic passage. Likewise, a preterist interpretation of Matthew 24 does not by itself prove the date of every New Testament book. Nevertheless, the two questions naturally interact.

John A T Robinson and the Case for an Earlier New Testament

John A. T. Robinson made an important contribution to the question of New Testament chronology in Redating the New Testament. He did not approach the subject from a conservative evangelical or preterist position. Rather, he questioned the conventional dating of a number of New Testament books and asked whether they had been placed too late.

His investigation led him to test the possibility that the whole New Testament might belong to the period before the destruction of Jerusalem. One of his central observations concerned the remarkable New Testament silence about AD 70 as a completed historical event. That silence deserves careful consideration.

The Problem of Conventional Dating

New Testament chronology has often been influenced by larger theories concerning the development of early Christianity. A scholar may reason that a particular theological idea represents a late development; the book containing that idea is then assigned a late date; and the late date is afterwards used as evidence that the theology was indeed late. Such reasoning can become circular.

Robinson sought to reconsider the evidence for dating the books themselves, rather than merely inherit conventional assumptions. His question was not, What date is usually assigned to this book? It was, What evidence actually requires that date? That is a legitimate historical

question.

The Destruction of Jerusalem as a Chronological Marker

The destruction of Jerusalem provides a particularly important point of reference. Jesus had prophesied:

> *"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
> *— Matthew 24:2*

That prophecy was fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. If large parts of the New Testament were written after that event, we might reasonably expect some writers to refer directly to its fulfilment. Yet no New Testament writer plainly says that Jerusalem has been destroyed, the temple has fallen, or Christ's prophecy concerning the temple has now been fulfilled.

The absence of such statements does not by itself prove a pre-AD 70 date. But when the temple, priesthood, sacrifice, Jerusalem, persecution, covenant, and impending judgment are repeatedly discussed, the silence becomes increasingly noteworthy.

The Temple as a Continuing Reality

The Epistle to the Hebrews provides one of the strongest examples. Hebrews discusses the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices at length. The writer says:

> *"For there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."*
> *— Hebrews 8:4*

And:

> *"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices…"*
> *— Hebrews 10:11*

This language appears to speak of an order still functioning. The writer also says concerning the old covenant:

> *"Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."*
> *— Hebrews 8:13*

The expression "ready to vanish away" naturally suggests that the old order had not yet disappeared completely. If the temple had already

been destroyed, the writer could have pointed to that event as a dramatic historical confirmation of his argument. Yet he does not. This gives strong support to a pre-AD 70 setting for Hebrews.

Christ's Prophecies and the Question of Dating

Some have argued that the Synoptic Gospels must have been written after AD 70 because their predictions concerning Jerusalem are too accurate to have been written beforehand. Such reasoning rests upon an assumption which a Christian cannot simply accept: that genuine predictive prophecy is impossible.

If Jesus Christ truly possessed prophetic knowledge, He could foretell the destruction of Jerusalem before it occurred. The accuracy of the prediction cannot therefore prove that the Gospel was written afterwards. Historical dating must be established by broader evidence.

The Practical Nature of Christ's Warnings

Christ's words are not merely theological predictions. They contain practical instructions. He said:

> *"Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."*
> *— Matthew 24:16*

Luke records:

> *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."*
> *— Luke 21:20*

These are instructions addressed to people who might actually witness the approaching crisis. They are told what to observe, what to do, and when to flee. Such instructions have obvious practical meaning before the catastrophe. Their usefulness is more difficult to explain if they were first composed after Jerusalem had already been destroyed. Again, this does not prove the Gospel date by itself, but it fits naturally within a pre-AD 70 setting.

This Generation Shall Not Pass

One of the most important statements in the Olivet Discourse is:

> *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*

— Matthew 24:34

The natural meaning of "this generation" is the generation then living. Christ was speaking to His disciples. They had shown Him the buildings of the temple, and He told them that those buildings would be destroyed. They asked Him concerning those things. Christ then described approaching events and concluded, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Jerusalem was destroyed approximately forty years later. This fits naturally within the lifetime of the generation to which Christ spoke. From a preterist perspective, it provides one of the strongest reasons for interpreting much of Matthew 24 as referring to first-century events.

The Immediate Audience Must Be Taken Seriously

Christ repeatedly addresses those before Him in direct terms. He says:

"when ye therefore shall see…"
— Matthew 24:15

And:

"when ye shall see all these things…"
— Matthew 24:33

He warns those who would be in Judaea, instructs them to flee, and tells them that the generation would not pass until the predicted events were fulfilled. Sound interpretation should begin by asking: What would these words have meant to the disciples who first heard them? We should not immediately move the fulfilment thousands of years into the future unless the text itself requires us to do so.

Chapter 17 The Fig Tree Israel and 1948

The Fig Tree

Christ says:

> *"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh."*
> *— Matthew 24:32*

A popular dispensational interpretation treats the fig tree as a symbol of national Israel. The budding of the fig tree is then identified with the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. But Christ does not say, "The fig tree represents Israel."

The point of the illustration is stated directly. When leaves appear on a tree, one knows that summer is near. Likewise:

> *"when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."*
> *— Matthew 24:33*

Luke makes the illustration still clearer:

> *"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees."*
> *— Luke 21:29*

This creates a serious difficulty for the view that the fig tree is a coded prophecy of modern Israel. If the fig tree represents Israel, what do "all the trees" represent? The more natural interpretation is that Christ uses an ordinary observation of nature to teach nearness. Leaves indicate an approaching season; the signs He had described would indicate an approaching judgment.

The Problem With Making 1948 the Fulfilment

The establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948 was unquestionably a major historical event. The question, however, is whether Jesus predicted that event in Matthew 24. The text itself does not say so.

The interpretive chain often runs as follows: the fig tree equals Israel; the budding fig tree equals the establishment of Israel; therefore 1948 fulfils Matthew 24. But each stage depends upon an identification supplied by the interpreter. Christ Himself does not make that identification.

Once that assumption is removed, the whole theory concerning the 1948 generation loses its foundation.

This Generation and the 1948 Calculations

The identification of the fig tree with Israel has sometimes been joined to Christ's statement, "This generation shall not pass…" The reasoning then became: Israel became a state in 1948; that was the budding of the fig tree; therefore the generation alive in 1948 would live to see the remaining prophetic events fulfilled.

This led to repeated attempts to calculate the length of a biblical generation. As the years passed, the calculations had to be revised. The problem did not lie in Christ's words. The problem lay in the initial interpretive assumption that the fig tree represents the State of Israel established in 1948.

This is an important example of how an external historical event can become an interpretive key and then be treated as though Scripture itself had supplied the identification.

Providence Is Not the Same as Prophetic Fulfilment

Nothing in this argument requires us to deny that the establishment of Israel in 1948 occurred within the providence of God. Scripture declares:

> *"For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations."*
>
> *— Psalm 22:28*

God governs all nations. Modern Israel therefore exists under divine providence, just as Britain, America, Egypt, Syria, and every other nation do.

But providence is not the same thing as fulfilled prophecy. An event may be providential without being the specific fulfilment of an ancient prophetic passage. This distinction is essential. Otherwise every striking historical event can be made into a fulfilment of whatever prophecy an interpreter chooses to attach to it.

Chapter 18 Israel the New Covenant and the Apostolic Interpretation of Prophecy

Ezekiel 36 and the Restoration of Israel

Ezekiel 36 is frequently cited in support of a modern restoration of Israel. God says:

> *"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."*
>
> *— Ezekiel 36:24*

Taken by itself, this verse may appear to support a twentieth-century geographical return. But the prophecy does not end with the gathering. The next verses speak of cleansing, regeneration, and the gift of the Spirit:

> *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean…"*
>
> *— Ezekiel 36:25*
>
> *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you…"*
>
> *— Ezekiel 36:26*
>
> *"And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes…"*
>
> *— Ezekiel 36:27*

The prophecy therefore includes gathering, cleansing, a new heart, a new spirit, the Spirit of God, and obedience. It is not merely geographical or political; it is spiritual and covenantal.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 did not produce the national regeneration described here. There was no national reception of Christ, nor was the Holy Ghost given nationally in the manner set out by Ezekiel. If verse 24 is said to have been fulfilled in 1948, the interpreter must explain why the spiritual promises which immediately accompany it were not fulfilled at the same time.

Ezekiel 36 and the New Covenant

The language of Ezekiel 36 closely resembles the New Covenant promises elsewhere in Scripture. Jeremiah says:

> *"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their*

hearts."

— Jeremiah 31:33

Ezekiel speaks of a new heart and of God putting His Spirit within His people. Christ, when instituting the Supper, said:

"This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

— Luke 22:20

The New Testament repeatedly connects these promises with the saving work of Christ. The centre of fulfilment is therefore not merely a geographical land. It is Christ and the New Covenant established in His blood.

Ezekiel 37 and the Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37 is also often associated with 1948. The prophet sees a valley full of dry bones, and God explains:

"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel."

— Ezekiel 37:11

"I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."

— Ezekiel 37:12

The imagery of restoration is striking. It is understandable that readers who observed a Jewish return to Palestine in the twentieth century saw a parallel. But the prophecy again continues:

"And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live."

— Ezekiel 37:14

The restoration is not merely political. It concerns the Spirit of God and spiritual life.

The Two Sticks and the One Shepherd

The latter part of Ezekiel 37 makes the Messianic character of the prophecy still clearer. Judah and Israel are represented by two sticks which become one. God says:

"And I will make them one nation in the land."

— Ezekiel 37:22

"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall

have one shepherd."

— Ezekiel 37:24

"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them."

— Ezekiel 37:26

The prophecy includes one people, one king, David's promised ruler, one Shepherd, an everlasting covenant, and God dwelling among them. For the Christian these promises point naturally to Christ. Christ is the Son of David, the Good Shepherd, and the Mediator of the everlasting covenant. The prophecy cannot therefore be reduced to the establishment of a secular political government in 1948.

Isaiah 11 and the Root of Jesse

Isaiah 11 is another passage used in connection with the restoration of Israel. The chapter begins:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

— Isaiah 11:1

The prophecy plainly concerns the Messiah. Later Isaiah says:

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people."

— Isaiah 11:10

The Apostle Paul quotes this verse:

"There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

— Romans 15:12

This is of great importance. We are not left merely with competing theological systems. Paul gives an inspired apostolic application of Isaiah 11. He connects it with Christ, His reign, and believing Gentiles. That is the interpretive centre of the prophecy.

The Gathering Must Be Read in Its Messianic Context

"the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people."

— Isaiah 11:11

Some separate this gathering from verse 10 and make it chiefly

a prophecy of a modern national return. But verse 10 has already placed the chapter in the context of the Root of Jesse and the Gentiles trusting in Him. Paul expressly applies that verse to the Gospel. Any interpretation of the gathering in Isaiah 11 must therefore take seriously the Christological and Gospel context supplied by the Apostle. It is questionable to remove the gathering from that setting and make 1948 its principal fulfilment.

The Apostles Must Interpret the Prophets

This brings us to an important principle of interpretation. When the New Testament Apostles interpret an Old Testament prophecy, their inspired interpretation must carry greater authority than a later prophetic system. Paul applies Isaiah 11 to Christ and the Gentiles. The writer to the Hebrews applies New Covenant promises to Christ. Peter interprets the prophets through the sufferings and glory of Christ.

Christ Himself taught His disciples:

> *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."*
> *— Luke 24:27*

The great interpretive key to prophecy is not a twentieth-century political development. It is Jesus Christ.

Israel According to the Flesh

The New Testament does not deny the historical privileges of Israel. Paul says:

> *"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants…"*
> *— Romans 9:4*

But he immediately introduces an important distinction:

> *"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."*
> *— Romans 9:6*

> *"They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God."*
> *— Romans 9:8*

Natural descent alone does not establish saving covenant status. The promise must be understood through God's purpose in Christ.

Abraham's Seed and Christ

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
— Galatians 3:26

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
— Galatians 3:29

This is highly significant. The New Testament does not direct us away from Christ towards an independent redemptive programme founded solely upon natural descent. It directs us into Christ. This does not erase ethnic distinctions, but it does mean that covenant blessing and inheritance must ultimately be interpreted through Him.

Romans 11 Must Be Treated Carefully

"And so all Israel shall be saved."
— Romans 11:26

Christians have interpreted this statement in different ways. Some understand it as a future widespread conversion of ethnic Jews. Others understand "all Israel" as the complete elect people of God, or as the complete number of elect Israelites gathered throughout history. This study need not settle every aspect of that debate.

One point, however, is clear. Romans 11 speaks of salvation, reconciliation, faith, unbelief, and being grafted into the olive tree. It does not say that the establishment of a political state in 1948 fulfils Ezekiel 36 or Ezekiel 37. Even a Christian who expects a future large-scale conversion of Jewish people is not thereby required to believe that 1948 was the fulfilment of those passages. These are separate questions.

The Same Interpretive Error

At this point a striking parallel appears with the Book of Enoch. In Genesis 6, the method can become: Scripture says "sons of God"; Enoch supplies fallen angels; Jude speaks of angels who sinned; the conclusion is then drawn that Genesis must describe fallen angels mating with women. But the decisive connection has been supplied from outside Genesis.

Likewise, Ezekiel speaks of restoration, history records that the State of Israel was established in 1948, and the conclusion is then drawn that Ezekiel must have predicted 1948. Again, the decisive identification has

been supplied by the interpreter. In both cases the proper question is: Where does Scripture itself make the connection?

Scripture Must Not Be Interpreted by Headlines

Prophecy is particularly vulnerable to sensational interpretation. Wars occur, nations rise, political alliances change, earthquakes take place, and Jerusalem appears in the news. A striking event is then attached to a prophetic text. The interpretation may seem persuasive because the event itself is dramatic.

But the Christian must resist the temptation to interpret Scripture by the newspaper. The meaning of Scripture was not waiting for a twentieth- or twenty-first-century event before Christians could understand what God had revealed. The Apostles themselves interpreted the prophets, and their interpretation must govern ours.

The Importance of AD 70

For the preterist, AD 70 is important for two connected reasons. First, it provides a natural fulfilment of Christ's warnings concerning Jerusalem and the temple. Secondly, it provides an important chronological marker for the writings of the New Testament.

The temple was standing when Christ spoke. The disciples were told that it would be destroyed, and they were instructed concerning events they could witness. Christ said:

> *"This generation shall not pass…"*
> *— Matthew 24:34*

The destruction occurred within that generation. AD 70 is therefore a far more textually grounded reference point for Matthew 24 than the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Robinson's Contribution

John A. T. Robinson did not settle every question concerning New Testament chronology, and his proposed dates remain debated. His importance lies elsewhere. He challenged the assumption that later dates should be accepted without demonstration, and drew attention to the remarkable absence of any unmistakable New Testament reference to Jerusalem's destruction as a completed event. He therefore asked whether the documents might be earlier than commonly assumed.

For those considering apostolic authority, preterism, and the formation of the canon, this question is significant. If the New Testament writings belong to the period before AD 70, they belong unquestionably to the living apostolic age. That strengthens the argument that their authority derives from Christ's commissioned Apostles and prophets, rather than from later ecclesiastical institutions.

Apostolic Authority and Later Religious Literature

This also gives us a standard by which later writings may be assessed. A writing may claim ancient authorship, contain religious teaching, preserve genuine traditions, quote Scripture, or even contain some truth. None of these things makes it apostolic Scripture.

The Book of Enoch provides a clear example. Jude authenticates the historical Enoch as a prophet, but Jude does not authenticate the whole composite work known as 1 Enoch. Later Christian infancy stories may speak concerning Christ without possessing apostolic authority. In the same manner, later prophetic systems may attach modern historical events to biblical prophecy without proving that the biblical writers themselves made those identifications.

The decisive question remains: Does this interpretation or writing belong to the authoritative revelation given through Christ and His Apostles?

Conclusion

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 stands as a major interpretive and chronological landmark. The New Testament repeatedly speaks of Jerusalem, the temple, sacrifice, priesthood, persecution, and approaching judgment. Yet it nowhere plainly describes the destruction of the city and temple as a past event. This silence cannot, by itself, prove the date of every New Testament book, but it is historically significant.

The teaching of Christ also points naturally towards first-century fulfilment. He spoke to His disciples, warned those in Judaea, told them what they would see, told them when to flee, and declared:

> *"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*
> *— Matthew 24:34*

The preterist interpretation therefore takes seriously the immediate audience and the temporal language of the prophecy. By contrast, the identification of the fig tree with the modern State of Israel, and of its

budding with 1948, introduces an identification which Christ Himself never makes. Luke's words, "the fig tree, and all the trees", make the ordinary illustrative meaning clearer still.

The same caution applies to Ezekiel and Isaiah. Ezekiel's restoration includes cleansing, regeneration, the Spirit of God, David's Son, one Shepherd, and an everlasting covenant. Isaiah 11 centres upon the Root of Jesse, and Paul applies that prophecy to Christ and believing Gentiles. These passages demand a Christ-centred and apostolically governed interpretation.

The establishment of Israel in 1948 may be a remarkable providential event. But providence is not the same thing as prophetic fulfilment. The Christian must not allow modern history to become a new source of revelation by which ancient prophecy is redefined.

The same principle governs our examination of the Book of Enoch. Ancient tradition must not determine the meaning of Scripture. Modern political events must not determine the meaning of Scripture. The Apostles must not be displaced by later systems of interpretation. The proper order is Christ, His Apostles, and the inspired Scriptures; every later tradition, historical claim, and interpretation must be tested beneath that authority.

That brings us back to the central principle of this study: Scripture must interpret Scripture, and the inspired apostolic witness must govern our understanding of the prophets.

Final Conclusion

The Authority of Scripture and the Danger of Adding to What God Has Revealed

The subjects considered in this study may at first appear unrelated: the Book of Enoch, the sons of God in Genesis 6, the Nephilim, the Ethiopian Bible, the authority of the Apostles, the formation of the New Testament canon, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Matthew 24, and the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. Yet all these matters lead to one fundamental question: By what authority do we determine what God has revealed? That is the real subject of this book.

The danger confronting the Christian is not always an open denial of Scripture. More often, something is added to Scripture: an ancient tradition, a religious book, a theological system, a speculative interpretation, or a modern political event. Once the addition has

been repeated often enough, Christians may speak as though the interpretation itself were part of the inspired text. This is the error against which this study has sought to warn.

Christ Is the Foundation

The Christian Church did not arise from the authority of a later ecclesiastical institution. Christ said:

> *"I will build my church."*
> *— Matthew 16:18*

Peter confessed:

> *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
> *— Matthew 16:16*

Christ is the foundation and chief corner stone. Paul writes that the Church is:

> *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."*
> *— Ephesians 2:20*

The authority of the Church therefore proceeds from Christ. He appointed and authorised His Apostles, promised them the Holy Ghost, and caused His teaching to be preserved through their ministry. The Apostles did not possess independent authority; their authority was derived from Him. For this reason the Christian canon must be understood in relation to Christ and His authorised apostolic and prophetic witnesses.

The Church Recognised Scripture It Did Not Create It

Scripture was inspired by God before any later council listed it. Paul writes:

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."*
> *— 2 Timothy 3:16*

The Church could recognise inspired writings, preserve them, copy them, translate them, and defend them against corruption. But it could not take an uninspired book and transform it into the Word of God by ecclesiastical decree.

This is why the question concerning the Book of Enoch cannot be answered simply by saying, "The Ethiopian Church includes it."

That establishes Ethiopian reception; it does not establish apostolic inspiration. The distinction must be maintained.

The Ethiopian Bible Must Be Treated Fairly

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church deserves to be treated accurately. It is an ancient Christian tradition and its preservation of the complete Book of Enoch has been of great historical value. The classical Ethiopian biblical language, Ge'ez, preserves a textual tradition whose Old Testament was substantially translated through the Greek Septuagint. The Ethiopic Book of Enoch likewise belongs to a later transmission history involving earlier Semitic material, Greek transmission, and eventual Ge'ez preservation.

None of this should be denied. But neither should these facts be made to prove more than they prove. They demonstrate preservation, antiquity, and reception. They do not demonstrate that the historical Enoch, the seventh from Adam, wrote the whole composite work now called 1 Enoch, nor that Christ and His Apostles received that entire work as canonical Scripture.

Enoch the Prophet and the Book of Enoch Must Be Distinguished

Jude states:

> *"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these."*
> *— Jude 14*

The Christian should believe this without reservation. Enoch was a real man; he walked with God, was translated, and genuinely prophesied. But Jude does not say, "Everything contained in the Book of Enoch is inspired." A genuine saying of Enoch may have been preserved within a later collection without making the entire collection inspired Scripture.

Enoch the prophet is authenticated by Scripture. The whole later Book of Enoch is not authenticated merely because Jude preserves one genuine prophecy of Enoch. This distinction allows us to honour Jude without being compelled to receive the whole of 1 Enoch as Scripture.

Genesis 6 Does Not Require the Watchers Story

The Watchers narrative in 1 Enoch is elaborate. It speaks of heavenly beings descending from heaven, gives them names, describes their agreement and attraction to women, their sexual unions, gigantic offspring, forbidden knowledge, and consequences far beyond anything

stated in Genesis. Genesis says much less:

> *"the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."*
> *— Genesis 6:2*

That is the inspired text. Everything beyond it must be demonstrated rather than assumed.

Adam Abel Seth and the Sons of God

The immediate Genesis narrative supplies a coherent human setting. Adam is expressly called:

> *"the son of God."*
> *— Luke 3:38*

Abel was a righteous worshipper; Cain murdered him; and Seth was appointed:

> *"instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."*
> *— Genesis 4:25*

Then:

> *"began men to call upon the name of the LORD."*
> *— Genesis 4:26*

The narrative therefore provides a human line associated with the worship of God before Genesis 6 speaks of the sons of God. This does not force the Sethite interpretation beyond all possible dispute, but it demonstrates that the phrase need not be restricted to angels. The text may be understood coherently within human history.

The Attraction of the Eye and Ungodly Marriage

Genesis tells us what attracted the sons of God: the daughters of men were fair. They saw, desired, chose, and married. The difficulty need not be found in supernatural biology. The spiritual danger lies plainly in the unions themselves.

Throughout Scripture God's people are warned against marriages which draw them away from Him. Israel was warned:

> *"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them."*
> *— Deuteronomy 7:3*

And the reason was:

"For they will turn away thy son from following me."
— Deuteronomy 7:4

The New Testament likewise warns:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."
— 2 Corinthians 6:14

Marriage is to be:

"only in the Lord."
— 1 Corinthians 7:39

The corruption of God's professing people through ungodly relationships therefore requires no mythological explanation.

Balaam Demonstrates the Same Principle

Balaam could not successfully curse Israel. Yet Moses later said:

"these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor."
— Numbers 31:16

Israel:

"began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab."
— Numbers 25:1

Those relationships led to idolatry:

"they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods."
— Numbers 25:2

Christ later refers to Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel. Here Scripture itself gives the pattern: sensual attraction, ungodly union, spiritual corruption, idolatry, and judgment. That pattern is far more scripturally grounded as a comparison with Genesis 6 than a theory of angels producing hybrid offspring.

The Nephilim Do Not Prove Supernatural Parentage

Genesis 6:4 uses the Hebrew word Nephilim. The Authorised Version renders this "giants," but the English word comes through a translation history. Nephilim was rendered in the Greek Septuagint by gigantes, from which the English word later developed. The Hebrew term itself does not mean "children produced by fallen angels and human women."

Scripture never provides that definition.

Genesis instead speaks of "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." The same term Nephilim appears in Numbers 13:33 concerning the sons of Anak, inhabitants of Canaan who occupied territories, were fought, and were defeated. Joshua cut off the Anakim from the land. Nothing in these passages requires supernatural hybrids.

The appearance of Nephilim after the Flood creates a serious difficulty for the hybrid theory unless further unrecorded supernatural events are introduced. Again, one theory requires another theory to sustain it. The simpler reading is that the biblical term does not define a supernatural biological species.

Scripture Does Not Present Angels as a Reproductive Race

> *"ministering spirits."*
> *— Hebrews 1:14*

Mankind was created:

> *"male and female."*
> *— Genesis 1:27*

And commanded:

> *"Be fruitful, and multiply."*
> *— Genesis 1:28*

Christ says concerning angels:

> *"they neither marry, nor are given in marriage."*
> *— Matthew 22:30*

Scripture nowhere establishes a reproductive angelic order. It nowhere says that fallen angels possess biological powers unavailable to holy angels, nor that angels can father human children. Such propositions arise from the Enochic interpretation; they do not arise plainly from the canonical text.

Jude and Peter Must Be Allowed to Say What They Say

Jude tells us that angels:

> *"kept not their first estate."*
> *— Jude 6*

Peter tells us:

"God spared not the angels that sinned."
— 2 Peter 2:4

These passages establish angelic rebellion and divine judgment. They do not tell us that angels married women, produced the Nephilim, or are explicitly identified with the sons of God in Genesis 6. To make those connections, the interpreter must import additional information. The proper method is simpler: let Jude say what Jude says, and let Peter say what Peter says. Do not make them say what Enoch says merely because the narratives can be joined together.

The Danger of Filling Biblical Silence

This principle extends far beyond Enoch. Human beings dislike unanswered questions. Where Scripture is brief, curiosity wants detail, and religious tradition readily supplies it. A possibility becomes a story; a story becomes a tradition; the tradition is repeated; repetition gives it authority; and later generations may forget that it was never part of Scripture in the first place.

This is how legends arise around biblical persons. Stories concerning the childhood of Jesus developed long after the apostolic Gospels. The story of the child Jesus forming birds from clay appears in later Christian infancy traditions and again in the Qur'an. But the Apostles never delivered it as part of the Gospel. The Christian therefore has no reason to receive it as inspired revelation. The same test must be applied consistently to Enoch.

Apostolic Authority Provides the Boundary

The Christian faith was not left open indefinitely to new revelation. Jude writes concerning:

"the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
— Jude 3

Peter refers to Paul's writings alongside:

"the other scriptures."
— 2 Peter 3:16

Paul required his letters to be read among the churches. New Testament writings were already being circulated and recognised in the apostolic period itself. Canonical recognition did not suddenly begin in the fourth century.

The stronger claim that all twenty-seven books were written, collected, and certified before AD 70 requires further historical demonstration. But the more fundamental principle remains secure: the authority of New Testament Scripture belongs to the apostolic and prophetic foundation established by Christ, not to the creative power of a later council.

AD 70 and the Apostolic World

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 provides an important chronological and prophetic boundary. Christ foretold the destruction of the temple, warned His disciples of events they would see, instructed those in Judaea to flee, and said:

> *"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*
> *— Matthew 24:34*

The destruction occurred within the lifetime of that generation. John A. T. Robinson drew attention to another important fact: nowhere in the New Testament is Jerusalem's destruction unmistakably described as a completed historical event. The temple is threatened, judgment is approaching, and the disciples are warned; but no writer plainly says, "Jerusalem has now fallen." This does not prove every New Testament book was written before AD 70, but it makes the early chronology worthy of serious examination.

Prophecy Must Not Be Reinterpreted Through Modern Events

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was historically remarkable. But historical importance is not the same thing as prophetic fulfilment. Matthew 24 never says, "The fig tree represents the future State of Israel." Luke says:

> *"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees."*
> *— Luke 21:29*

The illustration concerns observable signs of approaching events. The leaves indicate the nearness of summer; the signs Christ described indicated the nearness of the judgment He had foretold. To transform the fig tree into a coded reference to a twentieth-century political state requires an identification Christ Himself does not supply.

Ezekiel Cannot Be Reduced to 1948

> *"I will take you from among the heathen… and will bring you*

into your own land."
— Ezekiel 36:24

But the prophecy continues:

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you."
— Ezekiel 36:25

"A new heart also will I give you."
— Ezekiel 36:26

"I will put my spirit within you."
— Ezekiel 36:27

The prophecy concerns more than geographical relocation. It concerns cleansing, regeneration, the Spirit, obedience, and covenant blessing. Ezekiel 37 likewise speaks of David my servant as king, one shepherd, and an everlasting covenant. These promises direct the Christian towards Christ and the New Covenant; they cannot be reduced simply to the creation of a political state in 1948.

Isaiah Must Be Interpreted Apostolically

Isaiah 11 begins with a rod out of the stem of Jesse. It concerns Messiah. Paul quotes the prophecy:

"There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."
— Romans 15:12

Here an Apostle interprets the prophet, and that interpretation must govern the Christian. The centre of Isaiah's prophecy is Christ. The gathering of God's people must therefore be understood within the Messianic setting which the Apostle supplies. A later political system cannot possess greater interpretive authority than Paul.

The Same Error Appears in Ancient and Modern Forms

With Enoch, Genesis says "sons of God"; Enoch supplies fallen angels; Jude says angels sinned; and the interpreter concludes that Genesis must teach the Watchers story. But Scripture never makes the whole connection.

With modern dispensational interpretation, Ezekiel speaks of restoration, history records that Israel became a state in 1948, and the interpreter concludes that Ezekiel must therefore have predicted 1948.

Again, the decisive identification is supplied by the interpreter. In each case the same question must be asked: Where does Scripture itself make the connection? This is one of the most important safeguards available to the Christian reader.

Providence Is Not Revelation

God governs history. Nothing occurs outside His providence. But providential events are not new Scripture. The existence of modern Israel may be providential without being the fulfilment of a particular prophecy. A war may be providential without being Armageddon; a political alliance may be providential without being Daniel's final kingdom; an earthquake may be providential without proving that an interpreter has correctly identified the end of the world. History must be judged by Scripture. Scripture must not be rewritten by history.

The Responsibility of the Reader

The purpose of this work is not merely to persuade the reader to adopt a particular conclusion. The reader has a responsibility before God to examine these matters. The Bereans were commended because they:

> *"searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*
> *— Acts 17:11*

If someone teaches that angels mated with women, let him demonstrate it from Scripture. If someone maintains that the Book of Enoch is inspired Scripture, let him establish its apostolic and prophetic authority. If someone says that the fig tree of Matthew 24 is the State of Israel, let him show where Christ makes that identification. If someone says Ezekiel 36 was fulfilled in 1948, let him explain the cleansing, new heart, Spirit, and covenant within the same prophecy. If someone claims a later revelation from God, let him demonstrate what authority Christ gave for receiving it.

The Christian should not be intimidated by teachers who present themselves as possessing secret knowledge. The proper question remains: What saith the Scripture?

A Warning Against Sensational Religion

Spectacular interpretations possess a natural attraction: fallen angels, hybrid giants, secret heavenly knowledge, hidden books, lost Scriptures, end-time chronologies, modern wars fulfilling prophecy,

and political states identified with ancient symbols. Such ideas attract attention precisely because they are extraordinary. But extraordinary claims require more than enthusiasm; they require biblical proof.

Fascination is not revelation. Antiquity is not revelation. Tradition is not revelation. A modern headline is not revelation. The Christian already possesses the revelation God intended His Church to receive.

The Sufficiency of the Word of God

The deepest issue is the sufficiency of Scripture. If God has spoken, His Word does not require completion by mythology, secret books, later prophets, modern political events, or teachers claiming hidden knowledge. The Scriptures are sufficient to make the man of God:

> *"perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."*
> *— 2 Timothy 3:17*

This does not mean that history, archaeology, language, Jewish literature, or early Christian writings have no value. They may illuminate historical backgrounds, show what ancient people believed, and help us understand how interpretations developed. But they remain servants; they must never become masters of the inspired text.

Where God Has Spoken

The safest theological discipline is simple. Where Scripture speaks clearly, believe it. Where Scripture gives a reasonable inference, distinguish inference from explicit revelation. Where Scripture is silent, resist the temptation to fill the silence with certainty. Paul gives an important principle:

> *"that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written."*
> *— 1 Corinthians 4:6*

The Christian honours revelation partly by respecting its boundaries. To refuse speculation is not intellectual weakness; it is submission. There are matters God has chosen not to reveal, and we are not authorised to complete His revelation for Him.

A Final Appeal

This study began with a question concerning the Book of Enoch. It has ended with a larger question: What is our final authority? If

our authority is ancient tradition, Enoch may be accepted because an ancient church preserved it. If our authority is ecclesiastical succession, later churches may claim authority to determine revelation. If our authority is religious experience, new visions and prophecies may continually arise. If our authority is contemporary history, every generation may reinterpret prophecy according to the events appearing in its newspapers.

But if our authority is Christ speaking through the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, then every later claim must stand beneath that Word. That is where the Christian must remain. Christ is the foundation. The Apostles are His authorised witnesses. The Scriptures are the written testimony delivered to the Church. Everything else must be tested by them.

The Book of Enoch must be tested. The Ethiopian canonical tradition must be tested. Church traditions must be tested. Preterism must be tested. Dispensationalism must be tested. Our own interpretations must be tested. No theological system is above correction, no respected teacher is above examination, no ancient tradition is beyond question, and no modern event is permitted to dictate the meaning of Scripture.

The standard remains:

> *"To the law and to the testimony."*
> *— Isaiah 8:20*

And:

> *"What saith the scripture?"*
> *— Romans 4:3*

If an interpretation cannot stand before that test, the Christian has no reason to receive it merely because it is ancient, popular, exciting, or confidently taught. We should return continually to the Word of God: search it, compare it, read it in context, allow the Apostles to interpret the prophets, and allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Where Scripture has not spoken, we should have the humility to say: God has not revealed this, and I will not pretend that He has. That is not a retreat from faith. It is faith submitting itself to the authority of God.

APPENDIX QUESTIONS CONCERNING ENOCH

A Response Concerning the Enochic Writings Their Transmission and Their Authority

The Question

The questions raised concerning Enoch are matters of real importance. What is meant by the name Enoch? How old are the writings called 1 Enoch? What relation do they bear to Genesis? How should claims of ancient, hidden, or additional revelation be judged? The answer must distinguish historical interest from divine authority. A writing may be ancient, influential, and sincerely received without being inspired Scripture.

Enoch and the Books Bearing His Name

Enoch is the godly man named in Genesis 5:21-24, who walked with God and was taken by Him. The expression 1 Enoch does not mean a single book demonstrably written by that historical Enoch. It is the conventional title for an ancient collection of Jewish writings attributed to him. It is also called the Book of Enoch, or Ethiopic Enoch, because its complete form has been preserved in Ge'ez, the classical language of Ethiopia.

The title 1 Enoch distinguishes this collection from two other, much later works: 2 Enoch, preserved chiefly in Slavonic, and 3 Enoch, a Hebrew mystical work. These are separate books from different settings and periods. They should not be treated as further chapters of one continuous work, nor as independent confirmation of the historical Enoch.

The Manuscripts and Their Date

The earliest surviving witnesses to parts of 1 Enoch are fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts found at Qumran among the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were copied in the Second Temple period, broadly from the third century BC into the first century BC or early first century AD, and are now held in the Israel Antiquities Authority collection in Jerusalem.

These fragments establish that substantial Enochic material circulated before Christianity. They do not establish that Enoch himself composed it, nor that it belonged to the canon of Scripture. Greek fragments also survive from late antiquity. The only complete text of 1 Enoch is preserved in much later Ge'ez manuscripts, the earliest known

complete witnesses being medieval.

The writings in the collection were composed over time. Their oldest portions are generally placed in the third or second century BC, while some later portions remain debated. We must therefore distinguish the period of composition from the date of any surviving copy.

Genesis and the Aramaic Enochic Writings

Genesis 5 was written in Biblical Hebrew. Its account of Enoch is brief and restrained. Later Jewish communities provided Aramaic renderings of the Hebrew Scriptures, known as Targums, because Aramaic became the everyday language of many Jews. But the Aramaic materials from Qumran called 1 Enoch are not a translation of Genesis 5 or Genesis 6.

They are independent writings which expand the biblical notices concerning Enoch, the sons of God, the Nephilim, and the Flood. Genesis gives no detailed narrative of fallen Watchers, heavenly journeys, angelic instruction, or the origin of demons. These are additions supplied by the Enochic writers. The fact that they are ancient does not make them part of the Genesis account.

Where Did the Additional Material Come From

We cannot now identify the precise source of all this additional material. Its authors may have drawn upon oral traditions, earlier writings now lost, interpretations of biblical passages, and their own theological imagination. Nor can we prove that they knowingly invented what they wrote. They may well have written intentionally while sincerely believing the traditions and revelations they recorded to be true. Yet sincerity does not confer inspiration, and antiquity does not supply what Scripture has not revealed.

The collection bears the name of a remote patriarch rather than the names of its known authors. Such attribution gave a work the weight of ancient authority. It does not prove that the historical Enoch was its author, any more than a claim to recover forgotten revelation proves that the revelation was given by God.

Qumran Ezra and Nag Hammadi

Qumran preserved biblical books, including material from Ezra, together with many other Jewish writings. A community's copying or valuing a work is evidence of its circulation, not a declaration that it is canonical Scripture. The Qumran evidence is important for the

antiquity of 1 Enoch, but it cannot settle its authority.

The ancient Egyptian library sometimes mentioned in this connection is Nag Hammadi. It is chiefly a collection of later Coptic Gnostic texts. It does not contain 1 Enoch and provides no manuscript witness for its authority or transmission.

The Test of Scripture

The issue is not whether an extra-biblical work contains interesting traditions, or even statements which agree with Scripture. The issue is whether it may speak with the authority of God. The canon is not enlarged by a work's antiquity, its attribution to a patriarch, its use by a religious community, or its claim to a vision. Scripture itself is the rule by which all such claims must be tested.

This pattern did not end with the ancient world. In every age men and women have claimed visions, hidden records, lost books, or further revelations. Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon is very different in date and character from 1 Enoch, but both illustrate the wider tendency to extend biblical history through writings presented as ancient or divinely given. Such claims may be made sincerely; sincerity alone cannot make them true.

There is, indeed, nothing new under the sun. Where God has spoken briefly, men are often tempted to speak at length. The believer is not required to receive every religious narrative which seeks to fill the silences of Scripture. Where a supposed revelation adds to, alters, or opposes what God has revealed in His written Word, it cannot be received as divine truth.

Conclusion

First Enoch is an important witness to Second Temple Jewish thought and to the history of interpretation of Genesis 5 and 6. It helps us understand how later Jewish writers developed themes which Scripture states with great reserve. But Genesis remains the inspired account. The added narratives of 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, and 3 Enoch must be read, if read at all, as extra-biblical writings and judged by the authority of apostolic Scripture, not used to enlarge or correct it.

2 Enoch 3 Enoch Slavonic and Earlier Jewish Material

The writings called 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch are separate works from 1 Enoch, produced in different settings and at different times.

Second Enoch, sometimes called Slavonic Enoch or The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, describes Enoch's journey through ten heavens. He sees angels, places of blessing and punishment, the ordering of the cosmos, and mysteries of creation. He receives instruction, returns briefly to teach his sons, and is then taken away. Some versions also contain a further narrative concerning Melchizedek.

It is called Slavonic Enoch because its full text survives principally in Old Church Slavonic manuscripts. Old Church Slavonic was a church and literary language developed in the ninth century AD for Slavic-speaking peoples in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The surviving manuscripts of 2 Enoch are later medieval copies, mainly dating from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries AD.

We do not possess the original text of 2 Enoch, and its original language, authorship, and date remain disputed. When scholars speak of "earlier Jewish material", they mean possible traditions from the Second Temple period, roughly 500 BC to AD 70. They do not mean that we possess a known earlier Jewish manuscript from which 2 Enoch was certainly copied. The cautious conclusion is that 2 Enoch may preserve earlier Jewish ideas, but we cannot prove precisely when, by whom, or in what language it was first written.

Third Enoch is a much later Hebrew mystical work. It is presented as a vision of Rabbi Ishmael, who is guided through heaven by Metatron. In this work Metatron is identified with the exalted Enoch, portrayed as a supreme angelic figure, heavenly scribe, and ruler among angels. The book contains extensive descriptions of angelic ranks, the heavenly throne, divine names, and the heavenly courts.

The contrast is important. First Enoch principally expands Genesis 5 and 6, especially the Watchers, Nephilim, and divine judgment. Second Enoch develops Enoch's ascent through the heavens and hidden cosmic knowledge. Third Enoch develops the still more elaborate idea that Enoch became Metatron. Genesis simply says that Enoch walked with God and that God took him. It gives no account of ten heavens, hidden heavenly secrets, or Enoch becoming an exalted angelic being. These are extra-biblical additions, not part of the inspired Genesis record.

Concern

A particular concern arises when Christians say, "The Holy Spirit has shown me", or "The Lord has spoken to me", when what they mean

is that they strongly believe, feel, or infer something to be true. They may be entirely sincere; nevertheless, sincerity cannot turn error into revelation.

If a person declares, "The Lord has shown me", when the Lord has not shown it, or when the claim contradicts the teaching of Scripture, he speaks falsely in the name of God. That is not a harmless mistake in language, but a false prophetic claim and a serious error. The Holy Spirit does not contradict the Word which He inspired. All spiritual impressions, visions, and supposed messages must therefore be tested by Scripture. It is safer and more honest to say, "I believe", or "I have been led to consider", than to place one's own thought under the authority of the name of the Lord.

An Example

The following is an example of a claimed prophecy. It is reproduced here in order to apply the principles established in this study.

Prophecy Transcription September 13 2026

Prophecy from the Lord given by Lori Bray

KEEP PUSHING, YOU'RE ALMOST THROUGH

My children, you are moving through the birthing canal. Be prepared. Any moment it can happen. All of a sudden, a new thing will occur.

A great shaking, a violent shaking, a violent earth-changing shaking will appear. It will shake you loose of all the evil Nephilim. I will cleanse my earth of them all in one twenty-four-hour period.

Then you will move on. You will pick up the pieces and march through. You will remember my instructions. You will know what happened. And it will be your voices that carry the truth to those in shock. It will be all you know that will help the lost. Take your responsibilities seriously.

You were born for such a time as this. You were prepared for greatness. As you are pressing forward, the miraculous will appear. Miracle signs and wonders from out of nowhere. Things will manifest from my spirit into the natural.

You will pass through the gap into your Red Sea moment. Many things will change over. What marks the great and terrible day? The markers are there: My beloved Dolly passing, purple skies appearing, the ring of fire lighting up.

Do you see the signs right in front of you? Are you paying attention? Are you on the edge of your seat on high alert? You had better be. The time is now. No more delay. My power will be on full display.

You are watching it all come together. You are in the final moments before nothing will ever be the same. I AM parting the sky open. I AM releasing my death angel. Fear and anguish will fill the earth as these events occur. Hold on to me, my child. I will hold you close through it all.

You will be filled with power from on high. This will be what you have waited for. It will be all I said and more. No more distractions. No more Nephilim. It is time to get you in shape for the golden age era. You are the righteous that will reign.

You all have assignments I have ordained. You will walk through with your wealth transfer. I AM handing it out as we go along. Expect your finances to change overnight. Expect your healing when you wake up. Expect the unexpected everywhere you go.

I will lead you to those to help. I will uncover mysteries before your eyes. The world is in for a big surprise. A mass exodus from bondage to freedom. Glory days will soon appear. Freedom never felt so good.

You will witness the fall of the cabal: the world system, the banking structure, the underground government, the fall of all seven mountains. I am redesigning the school system, your workplace, the way things operate.

This is your miracle moment. The supernatural will appear, and all your dreams will come true. My faithful remnant, you stood the test, the trials, the waiting. You trusted me for everything. Your reward is here. It is time to celebrate. It is time to cheer. An ice cream float with a cherry on top.

This is the moment for it all to start. Soon you will pull up your anchors and set sail for your promised land. All I promise is there and waiting. I will bring heaven down to you. I AM opening the door now. Come on now. Give it one more hard push.

You are just about through your birthing canal. You are birthing a whole new era with a life of freedom where you, the righteous, reign. Let us be all in together, says the Lord of Hosts, your Redeemer.

Evaluation Using the Principles Established

Scripture gives no warrant for these detailed end-time scenarios or for claims about Nephilim, a coming death angel, and cosmic signs. The message attaches God's authority to material promises of sudden healing, financial change, and wealth. It uses urgency and fear—"the time is now", "no more delay", and "fear and anguish"—to press the hearer into acceptance.

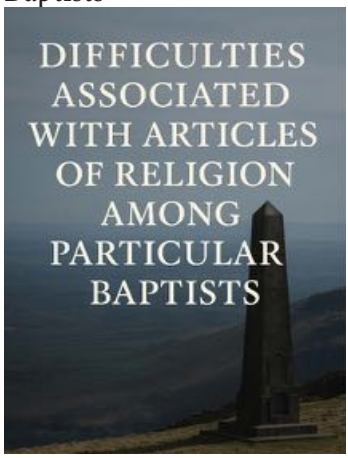
It also makes predictions which can be tested. If God did not give them, then saying, "the Lord has spoken", is a false prophetic claim, however sincerely the speaker may believe it. Several themes resemble the kind of extra-biblical enlargement examined in relation to Enochic writings: Scripture's silences are filled with elaborate narratives and then presented as revelation.

The transcript may express the writer's sincere convictions, fears, hopes, or interpretations of events, but it should not be accepted as divine prophecy. It goes beyond Scripture and in important respects introduces claims which Scripture does not authorise.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Among Particular Baptists



David Clarke

Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831,of which he is the sole surviving member, the **First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646,** and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

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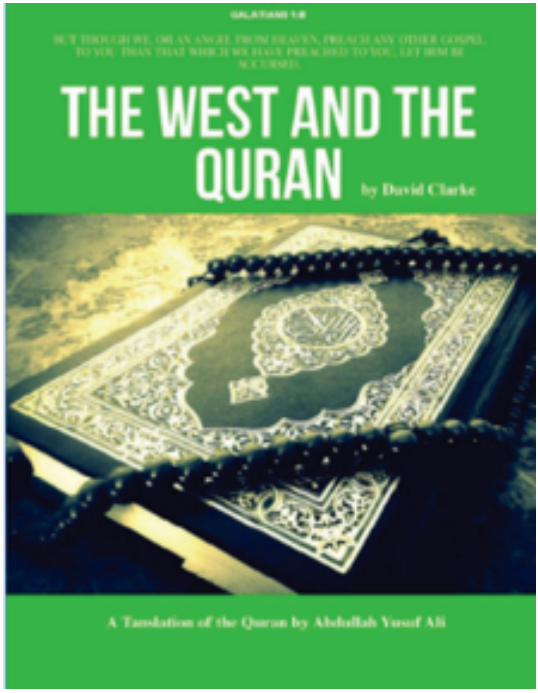
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THE WEST AND THE QURAN



Translation of The Quran

Authored by David Clarke, Authored with Abdullah Yusuf Ali

ISBN-13: 978-1548914042 (CreateSpace-Assigned)
ISBN-10: 1548914045
BISAC: Religion / Biblical Criticism & Interpretation / General

This Publication treats the subject of the Quran and the reason for presenting this is due to a rise in Islamic terrorism which has caused great concern to many in the West. So with the current massive influx of Muslim's migrating from the various parts of the world into Europe, Great Britain and the USA, it seems reasonable to discover the roots of Islam in order to deal with the problems that have occurred. Our Politicians seem clueless on how to deal with this enemy and when they are questioned they appear to know relatively little about Muhammad and his teaching. One of our greatest Prime-ministers in Britain William Gladstone declared the Quran an "Accursed book" and once held a copy of Muhammad's Quran up in Parliament, declaring: "So long as there is this book

there will be no peace in the world".

Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th Century, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II and again from 1951 to 1955.

As an officer of the British Army in 1897 and 1898, he fought against a Pashtun tribe in the north west frontier of British India and also at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. In both of those conflicts, he had eye-opening encounters with Muslims. These incidents allowed his keen powers of observation and always-fluid pen to weigh in on the subject of Islamic society.

While these words were written when he was only 25-years-old (in 1899), they serve as a prophetic warning to Western civilisation today.

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy."

Churchill apparently witnessed the same phenomenon in several places he visited. "The effects are apparent in many countries: improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live."

He saw the temporal and the eternal tainted by their belief system. "A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity," he wrote.

The second-class status of women also grated at the young officer. "The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men," he noted.

"Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world."

Well before the birth of modern Israel, its terror tactics and drive for world domination were felt. "Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every

step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it (Islam) has vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome."

With the influx of Muslim people from the various parts of the continent along with their culture all of which is shaped by the teachings of Muhammad in the Quran.

Some objections and Observations are as follows:

Islam means submission

Islam does not mean peace

Multiculturalism is a failure.

Islam denies the natural rights of women

An Objection Halal Meat

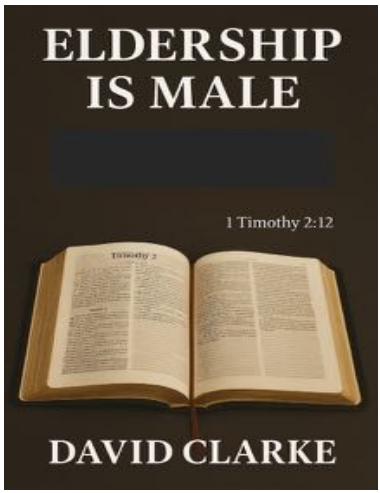
An Objection To Shari-ah Law

Objects to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

An objection to Jihad which seeks over throw Western culture through education, Social activity, political activation and Law.

For this reason, this publication is made available for education purposes. With this prayer that God may grant us all wisdom as to how we may respond to the rise and threat of Islam.

ELDERSHIP IS MALE



Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ? ?

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

The Suffragettes

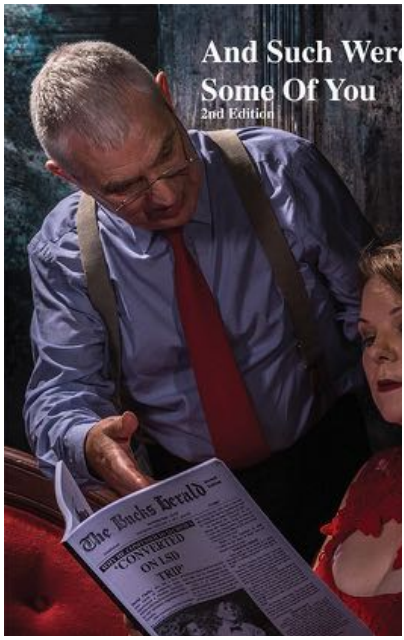
Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay,

bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU



David Clarke

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

When I first published my story of conversion from Crime to Christ I thought every one would be delighted to hear all about it so I asked my boss the principal of Fareham College to write a foreword to my book. I was very disappointed, surprised and hurt at his answer.

He said he would have nothing to do either privately or publicly

with a book that overlay refers to drug taking.

I understood he was a Christian and thought that he would have been delighted and pleased to hear my story and have it told to all the world.

You see I had written all about my past criminal life as a youth, my imprisonment for violence and drug taking that led to my downfall.

It was when I was down and at rock bottom that I cried out to God for help asking Jesus please help me. He answered me on the 16th of January 1970 saying He was with me and would never leave me and that what I had been going through was nothing compared to what hell was like.

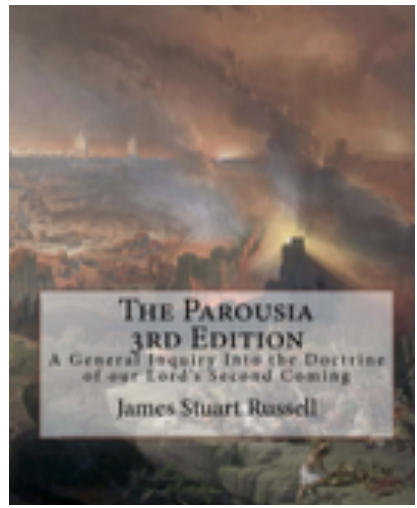
You see title of my book was, 'Converted on LSD Trip' and on its front page was a write up of the court case where I confessed to 24 crimes and a three year career of undetected crimes and my former profligate life.

So this time my book has a different title and written to remind my readers, religious and none religious friends, family and acquaintances that we have all sinned and cannot throw stones at others thinking we are better than them and that such were some of you. I other words we are all in need of the salvation I write about and have experience. I was saved for a life time of crime immorality and drug taking and live to tell the story.

This tells true story and reason for Christmas.

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

THE PAROUSIA



James Stuart Russell

The Parousia is J. Stuart Russell's landmark examination of New Testament prophecy and the promised coming of Jesus Christ.

First published in 1878, this influential work asks a fundamental question: when Jesus and the apostles declared that Christ's coming was "near," "at hand," and expected within their own generation, should those statements be understood according to their plain and immediate meaning?

Through a detailed study of the Gospels, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation, Russell argues that the principal prophecies concerning the Parousia—the coming of Christ in judgment—were fulfilled in the first century, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70.

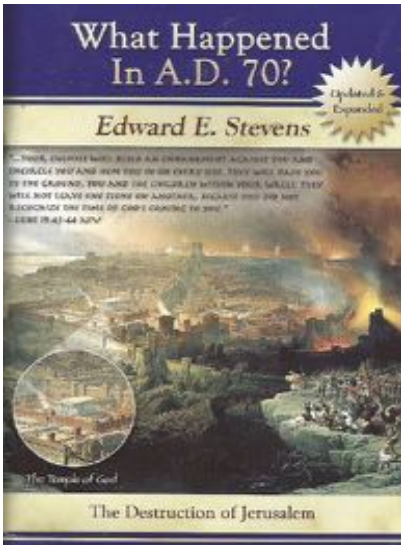
Russell carefully examines Christ's Olivet Discourse, the apostolic expectation of His return, the resurrection, judgment, the gathering of the saints, and the prophetic imagery of Revelation. His interpretation emphasises the original audience and historical setting of the New Testament, challenging readers to consider what these prophecies meant to those who first heard and received them.

Widely regarded as a foundational defence of the Preterist interpretation of prophecy, The Parousia has influenced generations of theologians, ministers, and Bible students. Its close attention to

the New Testament's time statements has compelled many readers to reconsider traditional futurist interpretations and to recognise the significance of Jerusalem's fall in redemptive history.

Scholarly, thorough, and deeply concerned with the authority of Scripture, this classic work invites readers to examine the biblical evidence for themselves and to search the Scriptures to determine whether these things are so.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Ed. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a ***consistent view*** which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more ***conservative*** on most other issues than traditional views. And there is ***no compromise*** of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {***audience relevance***). Two thousand yeas from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of

"American English" to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the "donkeys and elephants" (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are "hard to understand" (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that ***the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them.*** It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus

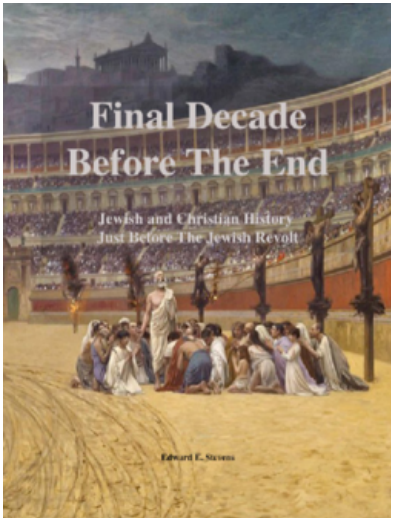
repeatedly said His Kingdom is "not of this world" and that it would "not come with observation." It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed ***futurist*** interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

"Preterist" simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and "search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true" You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read

April 17,2010

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed. Stevens

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/

Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, First Century Events in Chronological Order. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to "teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul's other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for

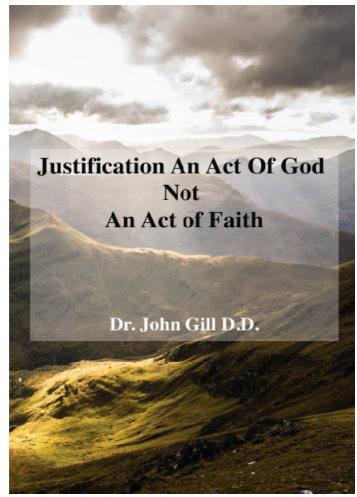
Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end-time prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronic persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end-time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of "tribulation" upon the church and the "days of vengeance" upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION
Bradford, Pennsylvania
April 17,2010

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

JUSTIFICATION AN ACT OF GOD



Dr. John Gill

Alternatively Eternal Justification an Antidote To Fullerism Paperback – November 21, 2020

By Dr John Gill DD (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

This book treats the subject of Justification by faith and is Dr. John Gill's treatment of the subject as taught in his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity in which he demonstrates that Justification is an Act of God and not an act of man's faith. It is written Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness Gill shows that the 'it' that was counted to him for righteousness was the righteousness of Christ as it is to all who are justified by faith. Abraham believed God and by faith depended and believed all the promises of God, just as believers do in the Old and New Testaments. We are not justified because of the exercise of our faith as many Christian beliefs, but by believing in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is an act of the new man, and a faith that draws assurance from the promises of God in the scripture.

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