

First Enoch and the Book of the Watchers

Dr. Miryam Brand

Biblical sources

Enoch

בראשית ה:כא-כד

וַיְחִי חֲנוֹךְ חֲמִשָּׁה וְשָׁשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיֹּלְדֵת אֶת מֶתוּשֶׁלַח : וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ חֲנוֹךְ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת מֶתוּשֶׁלַח שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיֹּלְדֵת בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת : וַיְהִי כָּל יְמֵי חֲנוֹךְ חֲמִשָּׁה וְשָׁשִׁים שָׁנָה וְשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה : וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ חֲנוֹךְ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים וַאֲיַנְנוּ כִּי לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים :

Genesis 5:21-24

(21) When Enoch lived 65 years he begot Methuselah. (22) And Enoch walked with God (*elohim*) after he begot Methuselah for 300 years; and he begot sons and daughters. (23) And all the days of Enoch were 365 years. (24) And Enoch walked with God (*elohim*) and he was no more, for God (*elohim*) took him.

The “Watchers”

בראשית ו:א-ו

וַיְהִי כִּי הִחַל הָאָדָם לָרֵב עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנוֹת יֻלְּדוּ לָהֶם : וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אִשָּׁר בְּחָרוּ : וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לֹא יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָּאָדָם לְעֹלָם בְּשַׁגְּם הוּא בָּשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמָיו מֵאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה : הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרָי כִּן אִשָּׁר יָבִאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיֻּלְּדוּ לָהֶם הַמָּה הַגִּבּוֹרִים אִשָּׁר מַעֲוֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם :

Genesis 6:1-4

(1) When men began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, (2) the “sons of God” saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took wives for themselves from among all those that they chose. (3) The Lord said, “My breath shall not abide in man forever, in that he too is flesh; let the days allowed him be one hundred and twenty years.” (4) It was then, and later too, that the *nēpīlīm* appeared on earth – when the divine beings cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.

The Flood

בראשית ו:ה-ו

וַיַּרְא ה' כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל יֵצֵר מַחְשְׁבֹת לְבוֹ רַק רַע כָּל הַיּוֹם : ו : וַיִּנְחָם ה' כִּי עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֵל לְבוֹ :

Genesis 6:5-6

(5) And the Lord saw that the evil of humankind was great on the earth, and every inclination of the thoughts of its heart was only evil throughout the day. (6) And the Lord regretted that He made man on earth and his heart was saddened.

Nefilim

במדבר יג:לג

וְשָׁם רָאִינוּ אֶת הַנְּפִלִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן הַנְּפִלִים וְנָהִי בְּעֵינֵינוּ כַּחַגְבִּים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם :

Numbers 13:33

And there we saw *nēpīlīm*, giants (descended) from the *nēpīlīm*. And we were in our own eyes as grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes.

The Book of Enoch, Chapters 1-36: The Book of the Watchers

(Transl. M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Oxford University Press, 1979.)

Introduction

1:1. The words of the blessing of Enoch according to which he blessed the chosen and righteous who must be present on the day of distress [which is appointed] for the removal of all the wicked and impious. 2. And Enoch answered and said: [there was] a righteous man whose eyes were opened by the Lord, and he saw a holy vision in the heavens which the angels showed to me. And I heard everything from them, and I understood what I saw, but not for this generation, but for a distant generation which will come.

The Watchers and their sin

6:1. And it came to pass, when the sons of men had increased, that in those days there were born to them fair and beautiful daughters. 2. And the angels, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another: 'Come, let us choose for ourselves wives from the children of men, and let us beget for ourselves children.' 3. And Shemihazah, who was their leader, said to them: 'I fear that you may not wish this deed to be done, and [that] I alone will pay for this great sin.' 4. And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and bind one another with curses not to alter this plan, but to carry out this plan effectively.' 7:1. And they took wives for themselves, and everyone chose for himself one each. And they began to go in to them and were promiscuous with them. And they taught them charms and spells, and showed to them the cutting of roots and trees. 7:2. And they became pregnant and bore large giants, and their height [was] three thousand cubits. 3. These devoured all the toil of men, until men were unable to sustain them. 4. And the giants turned against them in order to devour men. 5. And they began to sin against birds, and against animals, and against reptiles and against fish, and they devoured one another's flesh and drank the blood from it. 6. Then the earth complained about the lawless ones.

Forbidden Knowledge

8:1. And Asael taught men to make swords, and daggers, and shields and breastplates. And he showed them the things after these, and the art of making them: bracelets, and ornaments, and the art of making up the eyes and of beautifying the eyelids, and the most precious and choice stones, and all [kinds of] colored dyes. And the world was changed.

(Note added after recording – the Greek Syncellus manuscript adds a sentence at the end of the verse: “And the sons of men made (these things) for themselves and their wives, and they transgressed and led astray the holy ones.” This reading reflects a tradition in which knowledge is transmitted by Asael before the Watchers’ sin. This knowledge is then used by women to seduce the Watchers.)

2. And there was great impiety and much fornication, and they went astray, and all their ways became corrupt.

The Earth Cries Out

9:1. And then Michael, Gabriel, Suriel, and Uriel looked down from heaven and saw the mass of blood that was being shed on the earth and all the iniquity that was being done on the earth. 2. And they said to one another: ‘Let the devastated earth cry out with the sound of their cries unto the gate of heaven. 3. And now, to you O holy ones of heaven, the souls of men complain, saying: “Bring our suit before the Most High.”’ 4. And they said to their Lord, the King: ‘Lord of Lords, God of Gods, King of Kings! Your glorious throne [endures] for all the generations of the world, and your name (is) holy and praised for all the generations of the world, and blessed and praised! 5. You have made everything, and power over everything is yours. And everything is uncovered and open before you, and you see everything, and there is nothing which can be hidden from you. 6. See then what Azazel has done, how he has taught all iniquity on the earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were made in heaven. 7. And Semyaza has made known spells, [he] to whom you gave authority to rule over those who are with him. 8. And they went in to the daughters of men together, and lay with those women, and became unclean, and revealed to them these sins. 9. And the women bore giants, and thereby the whole earth has been filled with blood and iniquity. 10. And now behold the souls which have died cry out and complain unto the gate of heaven, and their lament has ascended, and they cannot go out in the face of the iniquity which is being committed on the earth. 11. And you know everything before it happens, and you know this and what concerns each of them. But you say nothing to us. What ought we to do with them about this?’

The Punishment

10:1 And then the Most High, the Great and Holy One, spoke and sent Arsyalalyur to the son of Lamech, and said to him: 2. 'Say to him in my name "Hide yourself", and reveal to him the end which is coming, for the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come on all the earth, and what is in it will be destroyed. 3. And now teach him that he may escape, and [that] his offspring may survive for the whole earth.' 4. And further the Lord said to Raphael: 'Bind Azazel by his hands and his feet, and throw him into the darkness. And split open the desert which is in Dudael, and throw him there. 5. And throw on him jagged and sharp stones, and cover him with darkness; and let him stay there forever, and cover his face, that he may not see light, 6. and that on the great day of judgment he may be hurled into the fire. 7. And restore the earth which the angels have ruined, and announce the restoration of the earth, for I shall restore the earth, so that not all the sons of men shall be destroyed through the mystery of everything which the Watchers made known and taught to their sons. 8. And the whole earth has been ruined by the teaching of the works of Azazel, and against him write down all sin.'

Punishment of the Giants

9. And the Lord said to Gabriel: 'Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates and against the sons of the fornicators, and destroy the sons of the fornicators and the sons of the Watchers from amongst men. And send them out, and send them against one another, and let them destroy themselves in battle, for they will not have length of days. 10. And they will all petition you, but their fathers will gain nothing in respect of them, for they hope for eternal life, and that each of them will live life for five hundred years.' 11. And the Lord said to Michael: 'Go, inform Semyaza and the others with him who have associated with the women to corrupt themselves with them in all their uncleanness.'

Punishment of the Watchers

12. When all their sons kill each other, and when they see the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them for seventy generations under the hills of the earth until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the judgment which is for all eternity is accomplished.

Rebirth of the Earth

10:21 And all the sons of men shall be righteous, and all the nations shall serve and bless me, and all shall worship me. 10:22 And the earth will be cleansed from all corruption, and from all sin, and from all wrath, and from all torment; and I will not again send a flood upon it for all generations forever. 11:1 And in those days I will open the storehouses of blessing which [are] in heaven that I may send them down upon the earth, upon the work and upon the toil of the sons of men. 11:2 Peace and truth will be united for all the days of eternity and for all the generations of eternity.

The Answer to the Watchers after Enoch's Petition

15:1. And he answered me and said to me with his voice: 'Hear! Do not be afraid, Enoch, [you] righteous man and scribe of righteousness. Come hither and hear my voice. 2. And go, say to the Watchers of heaven who sent you to petition on their behalf: "You ought to petition on behalf of men, not men on behalf of you. 3. Why have you left the high, holy and eternal heaven, and lain with the women and become unclean with the daughters of men, and taken wives for yourselves, and done as the sons of the earth and begotten giant sons? 4. And you [were] spiritual, holy, living an eternal life, [but] you became unclean upon the women, and begat [children] through the blood of flesh, and lusted after the blood of men, and produced flesh and blood as they do who die and are destroyed. 5. And for this reason I gave them wives, [namely] that they might sow seed in them and [that] children might be born by them, that thus deeds might be done on the earth. 6. But you formerly were spiritual, living an eternal, immortal life for all the generations of the world. 7. For this reason I did not arrange wives for you because the dwelling of the spiritual ones [is] in heaven.

Consequences on Earth

8. And now the giants who were born from spirits and flesh will be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth will be their dwelling. 9. And evil spirits came out from their flesh because from above they were created; from the holy Watchers was their origin and first foundation. Evil spirits they will be on the earth, and spirits of the evil ones they will be called. 10. And the dwelling of the spirits of heaven is in heaven, but the dwelling of the spirits of earth, who were born on the earth, [is] on earth. 11. And the spirits of the giants . . . which do wrong and are corrupt, and attack and fight and break on the earth, and cause sorrow; and they eat no food and do not thirst, and are not

observed. 12. And these spirits will rise against the sons of men and against the women because they came out [from them]. In the days of slaughter and destruction 16:1. and the death of the giants, wherever the spirits have gone out from [their] bodies, their flesh shall be destroyed before the judgment; thus they will be destroyed until the day of the great consummation is accomplished upon the great age, upon the Watchers and the impious ones.” 2. And now to the Watchers who sent you to petition on their behalf, who were formerly in heaven 3.—and now [say]: “You were in heaven, but [its] secrets had not yet been revealed to you and a worthless mystery you knew. This you made known to the women in the hardness of your hearts, and through this mystery the women and the men cause evil to increase on the earth.” 4. Say to them therefore: “You will not have peace.”

17:1. And they took me to a place where they were like burning fire, and, when they wished, they made themselves look like men. 2. And they led me to a place of storm, and to a mountain the tip of whose summit reached to heaven.