

 P.O. Box 61 Keavy, KY 40737  keavychurchofchrist.com  keavychurchofchrist@outlook.com  Brother Mark Tabata (606) 216-1757 (Text or Call)	 KEAVY CHURCH OF CHRIST 371 LEVEL GREEN ROAD, CORBIN, KY 40701 <i>Across from Keavy Elementary School</i>	MEETING TIMES  Sunday Bible Classes (All Ages) 10:00 AM  Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 AM  Sunday Evening Worship 5:00 PM  Tuesday Support Group for Addicts and Survivors of Domestic Violence 6:00 PM  Wednesday Afternoon & Evening Jail Ministry @ Knox County Detention Center 1:00 PM  Wednesday Evening Bible Classes 5:00 PM
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Was The Book Of First Enoch Removed From The Bible?

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Jude 14-15-Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, **15** to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Jude here quotes from a book known as First Enoch.

First Enoch 1:9-“9Behold! He comes with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, to destroy all the ungodly, to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Many believe that this book was originally part of the Bible, and that it was later removed. Popular social media conspiracy theories even suggest that the Ethiopian canon of the Bible is the oldest in the world, and that because it includes First Enoch, we should all therefore accept this book as part of the inspired Word of God as well.

Is all of this true?

Let's study.

First, this fascinating book was never a recognized part of the canon of the Old Testament. The Hebrew Old Testament contains the same thirty-nine Books as are found in our Protestant Bibles, although they are arranged and grouped differently. The Jews often referred to the Old Testament canon

with a specific formula (“the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings”). Since Psalms was the first Book of the “Writings,” it is likely that this reference was often worded as “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

Luke 24:44-Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me."

Commenting on this, Bruce notes:

“How old is the threefold division? It is widely believed, and perhaps rightly, that it is referred to for the first time by the grandson of Jeshua Ben Sira when, shortly after emigrating from Palestine to Alexandria in Egypt in 132 BC, he translated his grandfather’s book of wisdom (commonly called Ecclesiasticus or Sirach²⁸) from Hebrew into Greek. Repeatedly in the prologue to his translation he speaks of his grandfather as a student of ‘the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers’, ‘the law itself, the prophecies and the rest of the books’. Here we may indeed have a reference to the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. But it is just possible to understand that Ben Sira is being described as a student of the holy scriptures (the law and the prophets) and of other Jewish writings not included among the scriptures. ²⁹ There is one place in the New Testament which may reflect the threefold division. In Luke’s account of the appearance of the risen Lord to his disciples in Jerusalem, they are reminded how he had told them ‘that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled’ (Luke 24: 44). Here ‘the psalms’ might denote not only the contents of the Psalter³⁰ but also the whole of the third division—the Writings—of which the Psalter was the first book.” (F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 32 (Kindle Edition): Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press)

Jesus thus affirms the 39 Book canon of the Old Testament, which does not include First Enoch. Indeed, a variety of other evidence equally demonstrates that First Enoch was not considered part of the canon of Scripture.

Godawa documents:

“Though claims have been made for the canonicity of 1 Enoch by some early Church Fathers, it was not considered to be Scripture by any of the ancient traditions. The traditional thirty-nine books that we now call the Old Testament, was referred to in the New Testament and other Second Temple literature as “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms” (Luke 24: 44).[22] There is no manuscript or historical evidence that 1 Enoch was ever a part of this traditional threefold designation. The earliest manuscripts we have of Old Testament canonical writings are from 400-300 B.C. from the library of Qumran.[23] But as Bauckham points out, the Enoch literature and other apocryphal works at Qumran were evidently valued as literary works by the Essene community but were not included in their canon of Scripture.[24] The Septuagint (LXX) was considered the authoritative Greek translation from around 200-100 B.C. and was quoted or alluded to by Jesus and the apostles. [25] The LXX did include additional apocryphal books along with the traditional threefold division, but 1 Enoch was not one of them.[26] The Hebrew Masoretic texts (MT), compiled between A.D. 500 and 900 by Jewish scribes, is considered by both Christians and Jews to be one of the most authoritative set of manuscripts reflecting the ancient Jewish canon.[27] 1 Enoch was never a part of this set. The only manuscript collection that does include 1 Enoch as canonical is the Ethiopic canon of the Coptic Church. But this designation was solidified sometime in the 13th century A.D. in response to Western pressure and under Muslim influence.[28]”. (Brian Godawa, *The Book of Enoch: Scripture, Heresy or What? (Chronicles of the Nephilim)*, 12-13 (Kindle Edition): Warrior Poet Publishing)

Please notice that the Hebrew canon of Scripture predates the Ethiopian canon by over a thousand years. The claim therefore that the Ethiopian canon is the oldest canon of Scripture is simply not true. The Hebrew canon of Scripture existed for over a thousand years before the Ethiopian canon, and in all that time, First Enoch was not recognized as inspired Scripture by the Jews, nor the Christians,, nor by the Lord Himself!

Second, there were reasons why First Enoch was not understood to be canonical. There is evidence of editing that took place in the copies of the book that we have, as well as some historical discrepancies and scientific

errors that are found within. We may also add to this the fact that the book of First Enoch itself says it is not part of God's Word by which humanity will be redeemed!

As Johnson documents:

“Fundamentalist Scholarship Since we can see that editing was done, such as replacing the ancient names of cities and rivers (e.g. Dan and Mt. Hermon), then we know the current version of the Book of Enoch is a translation of the original. This means it may have errors in it; it may be wholly corrupted in some sections, but it may also contain real history and real prophecy relevant to our generation. Fragments of the Book of Enoch were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. Later, in AD 1956, a Dead Sea Scroll was found to contain the whole Book of Enoch written in Aramaic. When this Aramaic version is published, it will prove the parables section was indeed pre-Christian and that the prophecies about the coming of the “Son of Man,” or Messiah, were written before the Christian church began. Enoch Should Not Be Placed in the Scripture The Book of Enoch teaches that the righteous are to live their lives by a series of books that will be given to them. Further, they will be judged by these books, not the Book of Enoch (104). Now we know this to be true; Christians are judged by the sixty-six books of the Bible. Because of the way Enoch states this, it is obvious that the Book of Enoch was not supposed to be placed into the canon of Scripture but kept as a special message to those who lived in the generation just prior to the Tribulation period.” (Ken Johnson, *Ancient Book of Enoch*, 9-10 (Kindle Edition): CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform)

Finally, just because First Enoch is not inspired does not mean it is not valuable and that we should not learn from it! As Godawa elaborates:

“But the preponderance of evidence shows that not only does the New Testament letter of Jude quote directly from 1 Enoch 1 (Book of the Watchers), but the entire letter and its alternate version in 2 Peter, show signs of literary and theological dependency on the rest of the Book of the Watchers (Chaps. 1-36), as well as chapter 80 (Book of Luminaries), chapter 46 (Book of Parables), and chapter 100 (Epistle of

Enoch). 2 Peter shows evidence of structural and thematic dependency on 1 Enoch 17-22 and 108 (Additional Books). But the fact is, the entire New Testament shows such a multitude of allusions and linguistic echoes of the entire corpus of 1 Enoch, that one can safely say, the book and its basic interpretations may not be Scripture, but are surely legitimated by the Bible and are therefore worthy of study and high regard by the Christian Church.” (Brian Godawa, The Book of Enoch: Scripture, Heresy or What? (Chronicles of the Nephilim), 34-35 (Kindle Edition): Warrior Poet Publishing)

The Bible often refers to uninspired books in order to help us better understand what is in the inspired Scriptures themselves. What a blessing for us today!

Lord, thank You for every blessing. Help us to study and learn so that we may better apply Your inspired Word to our lives. Amen.