
Chapter 29

THE TEMPLE IN THE BOOK OF ENOCH

THE HISTORICAL SOURCE called the Book of Enoch has some important information that has not been appreciated for its historical value, but it is time to give it the attention that it richly deserves. Indeed, the Book of Jude in the New Testament makes a reference to this very book as though it contained significant information that future historians and theologians ought to pay attention even though the book was not canonical. What we discover is the fact that the tearing down of the original Temple in the time of Simon the Hasmonean is not only referred to in detail, but the book also confirms that another Temple was built to replace the one that was demolished. It even shows that this replacement was an action that had the approbation of God. Let us see what this document tells us.

The author of the Book of Enoch in its Fourth Division spoke first of the Tabernacle that was raised up in the time of Moses and how it became a portable Temple. It was called “a House for the

Lord of the Sheep.”⁵⁵² The author then showed how the Tabernacle became “the House among them [the Israelites] in the pleasant land [the Land of Canaan].”⁵⁵³ Then he said that Solomon finally built the Temple in Jerusalem.

The author of Enoch described it in the following fashion:

“And that House became great and broad, and it was built for those Sheep [Israel]; and a Tower [Citadel] lofty and great was built on [by] the House of the Lord of the Sheep, and that House [of the Sheep] was low, but the Tower [the Citadel] was elevated and lofty, and the Lord of the Sheep stood on that Tower and they offered a full table before him.”⁵⁵⁴

Later, said the author, God “forsook the House of the Lord and His Tower.”⁵⁵⁵ So, the House of the Lord is clearly the Temple.

This means that in the time of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar the Gentiles

“burnt that Tower and demolished that House. And I [the author of Enoch stated] became exceedingly sorrowful over that Tower because of the House of the Sheep was demolished, and afterwards I was unable to see if those Sheep entered that House [the Temple].”⁵⁵⁶

Then, said the author, in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua (and also in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah) the

“Sheep turned back [to Canaan] and came and entered [Jerusalem] and began to build up all that had fallen down of that House [the Temple], but the wild boars [the Gentiles] tried to hinder them, they were not able. And they [the Sheep] began again to build [the House, the Temple] as before, and they reared up that Tower [the Citadel], and it was named the High Tower.”⁵⁵⁷

The author of Enoch then continues his history after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Professor Charles shows Enoch as indicating that there were thirty-five shepherds that ruled Jerusalem after the

⁵⁵² Enoch 89:36.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, verse 40.

⁵⁵⁴ Enoch 89:50.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, verses 54,56.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, verses 66–67.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, verses 72–73.

time of Alexander the Great.⁵⁵⁸ Twenty-three of those shepherds were those who ruled during the Egyptian/Greek period (330–200 B.C.E.) and followed by twelve shepherds of the Syrian/Greek period (200 to about 140 B.C.E.). Professor Charles shows that the author of Enoch finally arrives at a historical incident that can only refer to Judas Maccabeus. He spoke about the breaking of the horn of a ram. This was Judas Maccabeus.⁵⁵⁹ This is in the period when the author mentioned “seven white ones.”⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, the angels of these “seven white ones” were mentioned as the precursors of those who would defend Israel at the very beginning of this section of Enoch’s prophecy.⁵⁶¹ And who are these “seven white ones” who would be so glorious that they will even be able to judge evil angels because of their righteous deeds?

Look at these “seven white ones.” The number “seven” is intimately associated with the family of the Maccabees. One of the cardinal tributes that Simon the Hasmonean did in honor of his whole family (who were the responsible ones for delivering Israel from desolation to triumph over the Gentiles) was to raise up “seven pyramidal shaped sepulchres” in their ancestral city of Modein.⁵⁶² This reference may be what the author had in mind.

There is, however, another explanation. It is found in *The Assumption of Moses*. It says:

“Then in that day there will be a man of the tribe of Levi, whose name will be Taxo, and he will have seven sons. And he will ask them, saying, See, my sons, a second cruel and unclean retribution has come upon the people [the cruel tactics of Antiochus Epiphanes] and a punishment without mercy and far worse than the first [by Nebuchadnezzar].”⁵⁶³

In interpreting who these “seven” are, Professor Charles said they could be the children of “the widow of Second Maccabees 7 (following on the martyrdom of Eleazar in 6:18–31) and Fourth

⁵⁵⁸ Enoch 90:1, see his comments on this verse.

⁵⁵⁹ Enoch 90:13.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 90:21.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 87:3.

⁵⁶² I Maccabees 13:25–30; Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII para. 211.

⁵⁶³ *The Assumption of Moses* 9:1–2.

Maccabees [who] has seven sons.”⁵⁶⁴ Whatever the case in identifying the “seven white ones” in the Book of Enoch, the account takes us to the period of the Hasmoneans. Then Enoch mentions something glorious.

At this very time of the “seven white ones,” the author of Enoch saw that

“a great sword was given to the Sheep [Israel], and the Sheep proceeded against all the beasts of the field [the surrounding Gentile nations], and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air fled before their face [the face of Israel].”⁵⁶⁵

This describes the time of Simon the Hasmonean when he assumed full dictatorial power over the Israelites as I have previously shown. The Jews were then in control of Judaea without the interference of the Gentiles.

Then notice what happened to the House [the Temple] at this very period when the author of Enoch terminated his historical account about Israel. The author then spoke favorably about a major architectural undertaking brought on by God himself in a context of judgment on the wicked people of the world (and even some in Israel were included in this judgment). After mentioning the evil deeds of some angelic powers in heaven and God’s judgment upon them and also on some evil men, the author of Enoch then described a final action that he placed in the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The text of Enoch 90:28–30 bears quoting in full. I will cite the translation of H.F.D. Sparks (with the renderings of Charles and Charlesworth interspersed at important junctures that reflect the full meanings of the words). Notice what the Book of Enoch states was happening at the time of Simon the Hasmonean.

“I stood up to see till the old House [the old Temple] was removed [the text reads ‘submerged,’ see R.H. Charles]; and all the columns were brought out [Charles: ‘carried off’], and all the pillars and ornaments of the House [the old Temple] were at the same time wrapped up [Charles: literally, ‘submerged’] along with it [the House was also ‘submerged’], and it [the old Temple] was taken

⁵⁶⁴ *Pseudepigrapha*, vol.II., p.421.

⁵⁶⁵ Enoch, 90:19.

out [Charles: 'carried off; Charlesworth: 'abandoned'] and put in a place [literally, in 'one place'] in the south [literally, at the 'right hand'] of the land. And I looked till the Lord of the Sheep brought [Charlesworth: 'brought about'] *a new house greater and loftier than that first and raised it up* [a new Temple was built] *in the same place as the first* which had been removed [Charles: 'folded up' — like taking a blanket off a bed and 'folding it up']: all its columns were new, and its ornaments were new and larger than those of the first [Temple], the old one which he had taken away; and the Lord of the Sheep [Israel] was in the midst of it [this new Temple]. And I saw all the Sheep which had been left, and all the birds of heaven, falling down and doing homage to those Sheep and making petition to them in everything."⁵⁶⁶

This is a clear description of the tearing down of one Temple in Jerusalem, and the building of another in its place. This was accomplished when Israel [the Sheep] would be top in authority. This new Temple was built "in the same place as the former one." Note carefully. According to the author of Enoch, God was the one who directed that the Temple be torn down. The text in Enoch actually shows that it was God who had Israel demolish *and to ABANDON* the former Temple. That Temple had been so defiled that God did not want it to remain. So, according to Enoch, God ordered the Temple to be torn down and replaced.

True, some scholars have seen in Enoch's description of this tearing down of the old Temple and the building of a new Temple as being a mystical and eschatological account, and not a literal one. They imagine that the author of Enoch was simply describing a future prophetic advent of a New Jerusalem coming to earth that was expected to emerge in the age of the Messiah. True enough, this prophesied action of God was no doubt intended by the author of Enoch, but note that the author was recording contemporary events (both heavenly and earthly) that were *occurring in his day*. He thought that he was witnessing *in his time*, a war in heaven in which the angels of the evil powers had been defeated along with the earthly powers. He thought he was living in the last days.

⁵⁶⁶ See Matthew Black, "The Book of Enoch" in *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, p.82, italics are my emphases and the words in brackets are mine.

Even the main group, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, as we will see, also believed they were living in the final generation, just before the emergence of the Kingdom of God (and His Messiah). To the author of Enoch, this new Temple even appeared to be a type of that end-time Temple prophesied in the Holy Scriptures. To him, this new Temple was a victory for God and for Israel. It was a consequence of God's triumph. What is important to recognize is the fact that the author of the Book of Enoch gave a literal account in symbolic language of the history of Israel to his own time. Then he described contemporary events. A Temple was built and this new Temple was the fulfillment of prophecy.

The people who did the "carrying off" of the stones of the old Temple took the ashlar (even the foundational stones on which the Temple stood) and placed them in one particular area. Where was this single region? The Book of Enoch said it was in the "right hand side of the land"? As viewed from God's vantagepoint as He figuratively sat in the Temple, His "right hand side" was to the *south* of where the Temple stood. Interestingly, directly to the south of Jerusalem was the Valley of Hinnom. And in Enoch 90:26,27 (the verses immediately before Enoch's description of the tearing down of the Temple) he said God was judging certain "blinded sheep" in "the middle of the earth" (a phrase meaning "Jerusalem") and at an abyss located on "the right hand side of the house" (that is, on "the right hand side of the Temple"). That abyss in the Jerusalem area was clearly the Valley of Hinnom. Professor Charles shows that the author of Enoch was referring to the Valley of Hinnom as this place of judgment. This is contextual evidence that the remains of the polluted Temple were deposited in the Valley of Hinnom.

Remember an important point. Recall that when Simon and the Jewish authorities read the Law of Moses that any contaminated house of the Israelites was to be torn down, a further command was given about the disposition of the polluted stones of the house.

"And he [the priest] shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he [the priest — and remember, Simon was the High Priest of the nation]

shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.”⁵⁶⁷

Everything connected with a contaminated house (even God’s House) had to be carried off to an unclean place. And what was the Valley of Hinnom? It was long known as an unclean place where defiled idols and polluted houses had their remains buried and destroyed.

It was simple for Simon and the Jewish authorities to read what happened to such contaminated houses in Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah. They read how the Royal Houses of the kings of Judah (and the other houses of Jerusalem) were defiled in the time of Jeremiah. And what did the prophet Jeremiah inform the people to do with those defiled houses?⁵⁶⁸ Jeremiah ordered that those contaminated houses would be broken down into pieces “and they shall bury them [the pieces of the houses] in Tophet.”⁵⁶⁹ And where was Tophet? It was the Valley of Hinnom on the southern side of Jerusalem.⁵⁷⁰ Tophet was also “an unclean place” and a fit place to fulfill Leviticus 14:45 which instructed that the defiled stones, timbers and mortar of any polluted house should be buried in such a place.

So where did Simon place the stones of the former Temple that was now polluted beyond the place of purification? The Book of Enoch says the stones were placed at *one place* on the “right side of the land.” This is a perfect description of the Valley of Hinnom.

Simon and the Jewish authorities also noticed that the abominable possessions of Achan were thoroughly destroyed and even the geographical area where the abomination had occurred was declared anathema (it was called “the Valley of Achor”). They concluded that even the area where the polluted Temple once stood was also no longer a holy and sanctified region. Even the ground that supported the Temple had been defiled. It was like the ground of the City of Tyre that was so judged that God caused the very

⁵⁶⁷ Leviticus 14:45.

⁵⁶⁸ Jeremiah 19:1–15.

⁵⁶⁹ Jeremiah 19:11.

⁵⁷⁰ Jeremiah 19:1–2.

soil of the city to be scraped off and thrown into the sea,⁵⁷¹ which Alexander the Great did in fact accomplish during his siege of the city. Even later, in the time of Constantine, the emperor ordered that the soil that supported the Temple of Venus (where he imagined wrongly that Jesus was crucified) was to be carried off. Constantine considered the biblical rule that designated even the soil supporting such a polluted place as equally defiled.⁵⁷²

Simon and the Jewish authorities understood these requirements. After the stones of the Temple and the immediate topsoil that supported the Temple were disposed of according to the biblical instructions, the Jewish authorities then began to level the elevated area of the southeast ridge on which the City of David once stood. They no doubt carted off the remainder of the topsoil (and the rubble that made up the "Millo" area) and used it to fill up some of the steep valleys around Jerusalem or they made terraces for the new "Upper City" that they began to build. Once bedrock was reached, they then began to quarry the rock for suitable stones that could be used to construct walls and buildings for the New Jerusalem that they were building.

Simon even found a biblical reason for building Jerusalem on the southwest hill that they began to call the new "Upper City." Jeremiah prophesied⁵⁷³ that a new measuring line would reach from a "Gate of the Corner" (identified in verse 40 with the "Corner of the Horse Gate") and that it would go around to the "Tower of Hananeel" (located at the northwest section of the crescent-shaped original city of Jerusalem) and extend westward from that "Tower of Hananeel." This measuring line was prophesied to proceed westward up the Hill Gareb (a former unclean area and a place for lepers located on the backside of the original Temple). The line would reach to a high overlook of the upper Hinnom Valley called Goath and then go southward along the Hinnom Valley to its confluence with the Kedron Valley.

This western region surrounded by this new measuring line was

⁵⁷¹ Ezekiel 26:4.

⁵⁷² Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III.27.

⁵⁷³ Jeremiah 31:38-40.

situated on the backside of the Temple (remember, the Temple was on the *Ophel* knoll and faced eastward). This backside area was not at first a holy region. Indeed, being on the backside of God's presence was best described by Jesus when he told Peter to "get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me."⁵⁷⁴ The backside of the original Temple on the *Ophel* was considered a place for Satan and unclean people. Recall that at the base of this Mount Gareb near the Tyropoeon Valley, Nehemiah found the "Dragon" or "Serpent's Well."⁵⁷⁵

This backside region from the original Temple was looked on at first as being the domain for Satan and unclean persons (so the name "Gareb," that is, "scabby or leprous"). Mount Gareb reached westward to the upper (northern) parts of the Hinnom Valley (the valley normally associated with evil). This new measuring line prophesied by Jeremiah, however, which would render a new holiness to the region was measured to reach southward from Goath at the upper region of the Hinnom Valley unto the Kedron Valley and then it would proceed back north to the same Corner at the Horse Gate from which it began.⁵⁷⁶

It no doubt was because of this prophecy of Jeremiah that Simon and the Jewish authorities considered it proper to include the western hill in their "new" Jerusalem that they were planning to build. This whole region of the southwest hill (Mount Gareb) was no longer just to west (or the backside of the Temple) and this would prevent the region from being considered an area in which Satan would be disposed as it was in the former and original Temples. Whatever the case, we have the historical record in the Book of Enoch (albeit given in symbolic language) that in the time of Simon the Hasmonean the old Temple was torn down and a *new* Temple was built in a larger and higher aspect in the same area as before.

⁵⁷⁴ Matthew 16:23.

⁵⁷⁵ Nehemiah 2:13.

⁵⁷⁶ Jeremiah 31:38-40.