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Enoch: A Man for all  
Generations

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE BEGINNING OF A CAREER

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A character named Enoch appears in two biblical genealogies: Gen. 5:21–24 and 1 Chron. 1:3. The verses in Genesis proved to be such fertile exegetical ground that luxurious and complex traditions were later to grow from it. Paying careful attention to the primary reference to Enoch should show something of its cryptic character and potential for imaginative, learned elaboration.

#### A. ENOCH IN GEN. 5

The first place in which one meets this Enoch is in Gen. 5, a chapter that gives the second biblical genealogy. The first genealogy names the descendants of Cain, the oldest son of Adam and Eve (see Gen. 4:1–2), for five generations (Gen. 4:17–22). They are worth mentioning here because there is something strongly similar between this family tree and the one that includes Enoch in Gen. 5. Actually, the list in Gen. 4 stems from a different literary source than that of chapter 5. Gen. 2:4b–4:26 is normally identified as coming from the J (Yahwist) source, while Gen. 5 is traced to the P (Priestly) source. The J story in Gen. 2–4 speaks of Adam and Eve and their two sons, Cain and Abel. After Cain murdered his brother, he was banished, but Abel's place was taken by another son born to the original parents, Seth, who in turn became the father of Enosh (4:25–26).

With this information in mind, one can reproduce the genealogy that emerges from the J sections in this way:

Adam	
Cain	Seth
Enoch	Enosh
Irad	
Mehujael	
Methushael	
Lamech	

So, the J source names these seven generations in the Adam-Cain line and places alongside them a three-generation sequence in the Adam-Seth branch.

The editor next calls on the P source to supply a list, traced this time not through Cain but, rather, through his brother Seth (there is, of course, no genealogy for Abel, who, one should assume, died before fathering any children). The priestly list not only supplies the names of the ancient heads of humanity but also specifies their ages when they became fathers for the first time, the number of years they lived after that event, and the sum of the years in their lives.

Adam	130 + 800 = 930
Seth	105 + 807 = 912
Enosh	90 + 815 = 905
Kenan	70 + 840 = 910
Mahalalel	65 + 830 = 895
Jared	162 + 800 = 962
Enoch	65 + 300 = 365
Methuselah	187 + 782 = 969
Lamech	182 + 595 = 777
Noah	500 + 450 = 950 (Gen. 9:28) <sup>1</sup>

The first point to notice from the Gen. 5 genealogy is that Enoch occupies the telling seventh position, a fact noted in, among other places, the New Testament book of Jude (v. 14). Not only does he fill that slot; it also seems that the genealogist purposely moved him to it from a less conspicuous place in the J arrangement in which there is a total of seven members (counting Adam). This inference follows from a comparison of the two genealogies in Gen. 4 and 5. If they are set side by side, it soon becomes evident that they share a number of names.

Gen. 4	Gen. 5
1. Adam	1. Adam
2. Cain	2. Seth

1. Gen. 5:32 gives Noah's age at the time when triplets were born to him as 500 years. To this total one has to add another 100 years to reach the time of the flood (7:6) and then 350 more for the time that he lived after the flood (9:28). The numbers reproduced here are those of the Hebrew text of Genesis. The Greek translation differs for some (usually by 100 years), and other systems are also attested.

3. Enoch	3. Enosh
4. Irad	4. Kenan
5. Mehujael	5. Mahalalel
6. Methushael	6. Jared
7. Lamech	7. Enoch
8.	8. Methuselah
9.	9. Lamech
10.	10. Noah

Obviously, some of the names are the same (Adam, Enoch, Lamech) and others are similar (e.g., Methushael and Methuselah), but, if one sets the names in the first and shorter list next to those with which they are most closely parallel in the second genealogy, interesting results emerge.

Gen. 4	Gen. 5
3. Enoch	5. Mahalalel
4. Irad	6. Jared
5. Mehujael	7. Enoch
6. Methushael	8. Methuselah
7. Lamech	9. Lamech

It is very likely that the priestly genealogist had before him a list much like, or even identical with,<sup>2</sup> the one in Gen. 4 along with the names from Gen. 4:25-26 (Adam, Seth, Enosh) and that he simply switched the positions of number 3 Enoch and number 5 Mehujael (the name that most closely resembles Mahalalel in Gen. 5), perhaps added one name (no. 4),<sup>3</sup> and thus was able to make Enoch the seventh. Otherwise he retained the names (with slight changes) and order of the J genealogy.<sup>4</sup> That is, it was so important for the writer of the Gen. 5 genealogy to give Enoch an especially prominent position that he altered the givens of his source.

2. H. S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*, WMANT 61 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 44.

3. It has been suggested that the name Kenan is a variant of Cain; the Hebrew spelling of the two differs by one letter. See C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 357.

4. This explanation presupposes, as scholars have usually maintained, that the J source was written at an earlier time than the priestly document. Several experts have argued recently that the order of the sources should be reversed,

A second point is that Enoch serves as a highly unusual link in the chain. His age at the birth of his first son is 65 years, a number that ties him with Mahalalel, the fifth member, for the lowest in the list. While Mahalalel goes on to live an additional 830 years, only 300 years separate the birth of Enoch's son Methuselah from the end of his earthly life. The closest in comparison is Noah's 450 years. As a result, the full life span of Enoch is far and away the lowest; in fact, his nearest competitor (Lamech) lived 412 years longer. The brevity of his stay on earth is accented to an even greater degree by the fact that he is sandwiched between the two longest-lived members: his father, Jared, lived to be 962, and his son Methuselah died at 969 years.

The position that he holds and the numbers assigned to him are, then, conspicuous ways in which the writer calls attention to Enoch, but he does so in others as well. Frequently, ancient genealogies appear to be uninspiring lists of names that are presented in stereotypical, patriarchal language: a became the father of b, b became the father of c, etc. The priestly genealogy in Gen. 5 is organized around a different set of typical expressions. For the antediluvian patriarchs one finds these basic elements:

- a. When a had lived n years
- b. he became the father of b
- c. after fathering b he lived nn years and had other sons and daughters
- d. so all the days of a were nnn
- e. and he died.

When the compiler of the genealogy wished to underscore the importance of a character, he altered the set pattern to a slight extent. For example, in the case of Adam, the son whom he begets is said to be "in

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but at least for these two genealogies it is more plausible to suppose that P changed the order of J than to hold the opposite. What would be the point of eliminating two names from the P list and switching Enoch and Mahalalel, if J had worked with the earlier P list? For the change in order, see also Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 45, although he believes two changes occurred: Enoch moved from fifth to seventh, and Mahalalel (Mehujael) and Jared (Irad) had their order reversed. But the latter could be the simple result of switching Enoch and Mahalalel (Mehujael).

his likeness, according to his image"—a phrase that reminds one of the priestly statement about the creation of humanity (Gen. 1:26, in which the order is: image/likeness) and of the paragraph that opens Gen. 5 (vv. 1–2). It is hardly surprising that the first man and his son receive special attention, nor is it unexpected that the last and tenth person, Noah, also breaks the genealogical mold. For Noah's birth the writer does not content himself with saying that Lamech became the father of Noah, as he had for all the others after the first birth; rather, he calls attention to Noah's unusual significance by writing: "When Lamech had lived one hundred eighty-two years, he became the father of a son; he named him Noah, saying, 'Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands'" (5:28–29).<sup>5</sup>

Besides underscoring the import enjoyed by the first and last links in the chain, the priestly writer has also forced the reader to turn his attention to the seventh member—that is, to Enoch. Note which parts of the pattern he uses and which he alters.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. When a had lived n years   | a. When Enoch had lived sixty-five years   |
| b. he became the father of b  | b. he became the father of Methuselah  |
| c. after fathering b he lived nn years and had other sons and daughters | c. after fathering Methuselah he <i>walked with God</i> three hundred years and had other sons and daughters |
| d. so all the days of a were nnn  | d. so all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years  |
| e. and he died.   | e. Enoch <i>walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.</i>                                  |

As the lists show, there are two points at which Enoch's section differs from the pattern: the added notice that he walked with God for the three hundred years during which he had other sons and daughters; and the

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5. The etymology of Noah's name, which is not technically correct but apparently calls attention to his success in planting a vineyard after the flood, should be attributed to the J writer. This is the only place in the genealogy of Gen. 5 in which the deity is referred to as "Lord," not "God."

replacement of "he died" by a second statement that he walked with God plus a notice that "he was no more," for God had taken him. Consequently, there was something unusual about Enoch during most of his earthly sojourn, and he was unique at the end of it as well.

Why did the priestly editor put Enoch in seventh position and credit him with unusual numbers of years for the different segments of his life on earth? Also, what did he mean by the expressions "walked with God" and "he was no more, because God took him"? For at least partial answers to both questions one must look to Akkadian sources to discover the background from which the editor has compiled his genealogy in Gen. 5.

## B. MESOPOTAMIAN TRADITIONS ABOUT THE SEVENTH KING

Akkadian sources about the earliest days of humanity ought to be promising ones to check because it is evident that they influenced the priestly editor when he wrote his account of creation in Gen. 1:1-2:4a and his story of the flood in Gen. 6-9. If he used such sources or traditions for these two major sections, it is not unreasonable to think that he also did so in Gen. 5—the only other contribution that he made to the first nine chapters of Genesis. In the nineteenth century, when the myth entitled *Enuma elish* was found and deciphered, scholars perceived a marked resemblance between the order in which the young god Marduk created the universe and the one according to which God fashions it in Gen. 1:1-2:4a. Other features of the two accounts are massively different (polytheism vs. monotheism for one), but with all the discrepancies the shared order is unmistakable. The most startling convergence of stories, however, became evident when the biblical story about the flood was put side by side with the eleventh tablet of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. There the similarities were not only in the general order of the narrative but also in specific details such as the dispatching of birds by the flood heroes at the same juncture. If the priestly writer drew inspiration from Mesopotamian accounts of creation and the flood, perhaps he did for his genealogy in Gen. 5 as well. The fact that the last member of the list of long-lived prediluvians is Noah, whose story so strongly resembles the one about Utnapishtim in *Gilgamesh XI*, adds to the likelihood that borrowing from this source may indeed have occurred.

The comparative sources to which scholars have turned in their analyses of Gen. 5 are first and foremost the various versions of the pre-flood

king list.<sup>6</sup> These lists were copied over an immense range of years: the oldest comes from before 1500 B.C.E. and the latest from 165 B.C.E. They exist in different languages and display discrepant numbers of kings and years for their reigns. One feature of these lists is the extraordinarily long reigns that are attributed to the monarchs: the lowest total is a 3,600-year reign, and the highest is one of 72,000 years. That is, the king list and the genealogy of Gen. 5 share the trait of crediting large numbers of years to their members, although the long lives of the Genesis patriarchs are trifling in comparison to the long reigns of the Mesopotamian kings. Moreover, in two versions of the king list—the earliest copy and one of the latest—there are ten kings, the last of whom is the hero of the flood. The same is the case, of course, in Gen. 5, in which Noah occupies position number 10 in the genealogy.

Besides these similarities of character and structure, the two antediluvian lists share another feature: some copies of the king list place in the seventh position a monarch who displays a number of traits that remind one of Enoch, the seventh biblical patriarch in the Gen. 5 genealogy (not the one in Gen. 4). That king is named Enmeduranna or Enmeduranki, and he is the seventh in one very early (Weld-Blundell 444) and two relatively late (Berossus, Uruk) copies of the king list. Elsewhere he figures in eighth or sixth position. Consequently, in some versions of the list, which vary greatly in date and hence cannot be reflections of a temporary glitch, Enmeduranki appears just where Enoch does in Gen. 5. That fact alone, however, could be dismissed as accidental, were it not the case that the two individuals also share a surprising number of traits. This emerges from a study of the texts in which this Enmeduranki figures.

First, all versions of the king list that name the city over which a monarch ruled locate Enmeduranki in the ancient Sumerian city of Sippar. Sippar was the city of the sun god (Utu was his Sumerian name, Shamash the Akkadian one) who was worshiped in the great temple called Ebabbarra. The god with whom Sippar was associated reminds one of Enoch in that his unusual age at removal—365 years—is the equivalent in years of the number of days in a solar year. That is, it may be that Enoch's low total of years offers not so much a chronological statement as a reflection, however indirect, of Enmeduranki's ties with the sun god.

6. For a summary of the data from the versions of the king list, see VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 33-38.

Second, two Akkadian texts show clearly that Enmeduranki entered a special relationship with the major deities of the Mesopotamian pantheon. The first of these compositions, which comes from Asshurbanipal's libraries, reads as follows:

Shamash in Ebabbarra [appointed] Enmeduranki [king of Sippar], the beloved of Anu, Enlil [and Ea]. Shamash and Adad [brought him in] to their assembly, Shamash and Adad [honoured him], Shamash and Adad [set him] on a large throne of gold, they showed him how to observe oil on water, a mystery of Anu [Enlil and Ea], they gave him the tablet of the gods, the liver, a secret of heaven and [underworld], they put in his hand the cedar-(rod), beloved of the great gods. (ll. 1-9)<sup>7</sup>

What is of special note here is that Shamash and Adad brought Enmeduranki into their council or assembly. Hence, he had with them a closer association than humans could normally enjoy. While he was in their assembly, the gods taught him various divinatory techniques, which he then, in the sections that follow, relays to other humans. Enmeduranki in this way was regarded as the founder of a guild of diviners—the *baru* priests.

A second and briefer reference to the same primordial king occurs in a first-person statement delivered by a monarch who appears to be Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1103 B.C.E.). The king refers to himself as: "Distant scion of kingship, seed preserved from before the flood, Offspring of Enmeduranki, king of Sippar, who set up the pure bowl and the cedar-wood (rod), Who sat in the presence of Shamash and Adad, the divine adjudicators."<sup>8</sup> Here again Enmeduranki benefits from intimate association with the two great gods who instructed him in divinatory practices.

### C. GEN. 5 IN LIGHT OF THE COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

These two texts along with the king lists reveal important comparative information regarding the seventh member of the pre-flood genealogy.

7. The translations of the two texts about Enmeduranki are taken from W. Lambert, "Enmeduranki and Related Matters," *JCS* 21 (1967): 126-38.  
8. *Ibid.*, 126-27.

Both men are said to have had some special relationship with the divine realm: Enoch walked with God, and Enmeduranki was welcomed into the fellowship of the great gods. Moreover, Enoch lived a highly unusual total of 365 years—the same as the number of days in a solar year—while one of the gods with whom Enmeduranki had special communion was the sun deity Shamash. These data alone suggest that the similarities are no coincidence; it seems far more likely that they exist because the biblical writer has exploited yet another Mesopotamian tradition in his presentation of the seventh man. The conclusion appears natural that the priestly writer moved Enoch to seventh place in his genealogy to reflect what some forms of the Mesopotamian list said about the seventh king.

Not everyone accepts this conclusion, even among critical scholars of the Bible. There is not only the problem of the relative dates of the J and P sources already mentioned, but some aspects of the king lists have also led no less an authority than C. Westermann to deny that the P genealogy was based on the Mesopotamian lists of the antediluvian kings—or so it seems. In his commentary on Genesis, Westermann, after noting that earlier scholars had asserted a strong relationship between Gen. 5 and the king lists, argues that almost all has changed because of the discovery of cuneiform texts that embody the lists. Before 1923 experts had to rely on Berossus's Greek list, and on that basis they had found a number of parallels in names between the lists. Westermann draws several conclusions from the newer evidence, among which is this one:

It has been established likewise that the number of kings before the flood in the older lists is eight, not ten. The dominance of the number ten in Weld-Blundell 62 . . . goes back to the insertion into the second place in this list of the city Larsa with two kings, which does not occur in any other list. The list of Berossus comes to ten by means of two demonstrable elaborations. Later the number ten became as it were a norm for genealogies of kings; . . . But not even the number eight is certain. Though the great majority of lists contain the name Ziusudra as the king in the time of the flood, it is lacking in some.<sup>9</sup>

He sums up the matter by writing: "The old Babylonian list of primeval kings can no longer then be regarded as a parallel to Gen. 5. . . . Whatever parallels remain, such as the remarkable numbers, the number ten,

9. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 350.

the last name on the list, are to be explained from later stages of the tradition history, and exclude one from regarding the Old Babylonian king list in its original form as the basis of Gen. 5."<sup>10</sup> The hedging phrase "in its original form" is noteworthy. Those who assert a relationship between the two lists need not claim that P, like a modern textual critic, refused to be content with any but the oldest, most original form of the text he could find. If any text of the king list has ten members, then its very existence means it was possible that P somehow knew of that sort of tradition—whatever the original shape of the tradition might have been. That is, if it is true to assert, as Westermann does, that Gen. 5 was not modeled on the original form of the king list, it does not follow from this that it was not patterned on some later version of it.

Moreover, Westermann does not pay adequate attention to the parallels between Enoch and Enmeduranki. His comment is again worth quoting because it is so surprising:

Before the discovery of the cuneiform texts, one had seen the prototype of Enoch in the seventh king of the list of Berossos, Evedoranchos = Enmeduranki. It was said of him that he was taken up into the company of Shamash and Ramman and was inducted into the secrets of heaven and earth. Since the new discoveries have shown that the parallel between the series of ten in Berossos and Gen. 5 is no longer tenable, one can no longer maintain a dependence of what is said of Enoch in Gen. 5 on the seventh king in Berossos. . . . One can only point in general to a theme that occurs often in the myths of Israel's neighbors, that a certain person is especially near to God or is taken up to God or the gods. One would be more inclined to admit a parallel to Adapa, the first of "the seven sages," of whom it is said that he was taken away and given wisdom, being entrusted with the divine secrets.<sup>11</sup>

It was noted earlier that Westermann has hardly given adequate reason for dismissing the parallels between Gen. 5 and the king lists. In light of those unmistakable similarities and the intriguing set of traits shared by Enoch and Enmeduranki, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was precisely on traditions about the seventh king that the priestly editor drew.

10. Ibid., 351.

11. Ibid., 358.

Returning to the text of Gen. 5, we can come to a fuller understanding of the Enoch paragraph if we recall the surviving evidence about Enmeduranki.

1. Gen. 5:18: "When Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch." Though it is not a part of the Enoch pericope per se, the initial mention of Enoch sets his exact chronological position after the creation of Adam. If one combines all of the relevant numbers in Gen. 5:3–18, the result is that, according to the Masoretic (i.e., the traditional Hebrew text of the Bible) chronology, he was born in the year 632. It is not obvious what significance this number has, but the person responsible for the genealogy implies that all of his ancestors were still alive at this point. Adam lived to be 930 years of age. Hence, he lived during the first 298 years of Enoch's earthly life. When the text goes on to say that it was Enoch, and apparently not Adam, Seth, etc., who walked with God, the writer may be hinting that there was something superior about the religious life of this seventh man. If we add Enoch's 365 years to the 632 that elapsed until his birth, he disappeared in the year 997, just three years short of 1000. All of this is true of the Masoretic system; other chronologies will be examined later in this study.

2. The name Enoch (*hanók*): While names such as Adam and Jared are clearly related to familiar Hebrew words, the meaning of *Enoch* is disputed. In Gen. 4:17 the Enoch of the J list is associated with the first city: "Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and named it Enoch after his son Enoch." It may be that the author is here exploiting the Hebrew root *hmk* in its sense "to dedicate" (cf. Deut. 20:5; 1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron. 7:5). But in Gen. 5:18 and 21–24 nothing is said about a city or anything else involving a dedication, unless one is supposed to conclude that Enoch himself is the one dedicated (to God). Another suggestion is that the name is related to a word that means something like "retainer, vassal."<sup>12</sup> Experts who favor this derivation often refer to Gen. 14:14, in which Abram, on learning that Lot had been captured by the four invading kings, "led forth his trained men *hanikim*], born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan." On this explanation Enoch would be a retainer of God, one constantly at his service. P. Grelot has argued that

12. For references to the scholars who have held this view, see *ibid.*, 327. Westermann here fails to note that W. F. Albright also explained the name in this fashion ("The Babylonian Matter in the Predeuteronomic Primeval History [JE] in Gen 1–11," *JBL* 58 [1939]: 96); but see p. 357, on which he does mention Albright's theory.

the meaning intended by P is *wisdom, understanding*; in support he appeals to Arabic and Ethiopic cognates that have meanings of this sort.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, there are no Hebrew cognates that express this sense, and Grelot may be guilty of reading later traditions about Enoch back into the text of Genesis. If the editor wished to evoke any meaning for his readers, it is likely that "dedicate" is the one intended.

3. The Enoch paragraph begins as the others do with the notice of his becoming a father at a certain age—the very low one of sixty-five in his case (like Mahalalel in 5:15).

4. The first unusual feature—replacement<sup>14</sup> of the expected "Enoch lived after the birth of Methuselah 300 years" by the first reference to his walking with God—is worth examining a little more closely. The key expression, regularly translated "Enoch walked with God," involves, besides Enoch's name, an expressive verb and a prepositional phrase. The verb *wayyithallek* seems to entail more than just "walking." Enoch and Noah are the only scriptural characters who are said to have walked in this sense. The verb has Enoch as subject in 5:22 and 24 and Noah in 6:9: "These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God." In Noah's case the context seems to be supplying more information about the meaning of "walked with God." Also, the editor has playfully established a link between the two men in the way in which he has phrased the statement about Noah: in the expression *bitlk nb* (Noah walked) the last three consonants spell the name *bnk* in reverse.<sup>15</sup> Westermann adduces 1 Sam. 25:15–16 to elucidate the meaning of the verb and preposition: "Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we never missed anything when we were in the fields, as long as we were with them [*bitballaknu 'itam*]." That is, "it describes friendly everyday conduct with regard to one's neighbors."<sup>16</sup> Or, to put it in other words, for Enoch and Noah it connotes "intimate companionship" . . . with God.<sup>17</sup> The fact that this is said about Enoch alone in the Gen. 5 list may imply that it was not true of the others.

13. "La légende d'Hénoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible: origine et signification," *RSR* 46 (1958): 186.

14. It is in fact a replacement in the MT; in some later versions it is prefixed to the notice about his living 300 years after Methuselah's birth and bearing sons and daughters (see Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 347).

15. As noted by J. Sasson, "Word-Play in Gen 6:8–9," *CBQ* 37 (1975): 166.

16. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 358.

17. F. J. Helfmeyer, "Halakk," *TDOT* 3.394.

Though the commentators find in the special verb used with Enoch an indication of his extraordinary relationship with God, one should be careful about reading from the full expression a notion of this sort. The text says that Enoch enjoyed this continuing association with *ba-'elohim* (the *'elohim*). Admittedly, this is a common way of referring to God in the Hebrew Bible, and in both instances in the Enoch paragraph in which he is said to have walked with God the form with the definite article is used. However, in the concluding statement—"then he was no more, because God took him" (v. 24)—the word for "God" is *'elohim*, that is, it lacks the definite article. This is a clue that the priestly writer meant to distinguish between *ba-'elohim* with whom Enoch had ongoing fellowship and the deity who removed him after 365 years. It has often been observed that in a number of other biblical passages the definite form *ba-'elohim* refers not to God himself but, rather, to angels (see Ps. 8:6; 82:1, 6; 97:7; 138:1); this may well be the intended meaning in Gen. 5:22 and 24. It should be noted, too, that at this juncture the text says that Enoch's walk occurred during the three hundred years between Methuselah's birth and the end of his earthly life. It says nothing about what happened after those years.

5. The notice about Enoch's final age of 365 years matches the statements at this point in the other paragraphs of Gen. 5; it is different only in the sense that the number is by far the lowest. It has already been pointed out that 365 at least suggests solar associations, and this connection is confirmed by the close parallels between Enoch and Enmeduranki, the devotee of the solar god Shamash in Sippar.

6. Where the genealogical form dictates the words "and he died," one finds three unexpected clauses in the Enoch paragraph. The first ("Enoch walked with God" [the *'elohim*]) appears for the second time. Commentators tend to miss the significance of the double reference to his continual association with *ba-'elohim*. The editor does not appear to be summarizing here; rather, he is emphasizing that Enoch's walk with *ba-'elohim* took place after his 365-year life as well as during it. The end of his stay on earth did not mean the end of this communion.

7. The final two clauses in the Enoch pericope report that "then he was no more, because God took him." What they mean is not explained, but the suggestive words hold forth real possibilities for elaboration.

Gen. 5:21–24 appears to be the oldest surviving instance of the Enoch tradition. The growth from that root was to be greatly disproportionate to its modest size. Whole books were to be written, and numerous references were later to be made to them by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim writers. There is reason to believe that much of the subsequent material about Enoch derives from careful and expansionary interpretation of the

four verses and their context in Genesis, which are extraordinarily suggestive and enigmatic. It does seem unlikely, however, that all of even the earliest subsequent writings about Enoch arose from this modest base. It may be that Gen. 5 is just a small dose of what Jewish tradents had to tell about him in the postexilic period and that if all ancient Judean literature had survived we would have been able to read much more about him. But it has not, with the result that we are reduced to guessing.

It is plausible that those Jewish people who lived in Babylonian and other eastern territories heard stories about characters such as Enmeduranki and adapted them to their native traditions about Enoch. Those Jews, too, who lived elsewhere in the great empires may well have heard similar material and shaped it as they desired. It is highly likely that something like this happened in the centuries between the writing of Gen. 5 and the earliest of the postbiblical texts about Enoch or that it had already happened in the time before and around when the priestly part of the Pentateuch was written. Otherwise, it would be difficult to account for the explosion of Enochic literature that begins no later than the third century B.C.E.

The next several chapters provide a chronological survey of the sources for the expanding Enoch tradition. It begins with a series of texts that may be assigned to the third century B.C.E. and continues to the first century B.C.E. At that point the nature of the material seems to change: books of Enoch are rarely written; instead, the older ones are cited and interpreted by Jewish and Christian writers for a variety of purposes. Before turning to them, however, we should study what may be the earliest extant interpretation of Gen. 5:21–24—the Greek translation of Genesis.

#### D. THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF GEN. 5:21–24

There is insufficient evidence for determining which of the Enochic texts is the second oldest after Gen. 5:21–24. It is convenient, however, to use the Greek translation of Genesis as the next in line. There is good reason for believing that the Old Greek translation of the Pentateuch was made in the third century. One of the strongest arguments is the fact that it is cited already by approximately the end of that century. A certain Demetrius, a Jewish author who wrote in the last part of the third century, used it: "The LXX serves as his only source, and his knowledge of its contents is detailed and exact."<sup>18</sup> The *Letter of Aristeas*, the tradi-

tional story about the Greek translation of the Pentateuch, places it during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–42). Too much of what the letter says is legendary and apologetic to take its claims at historical face value, but it may not be far off the mark for the date when at least the Pentateuch was rendered into Greek, as the example of Demetrius shows.

The Greek translation of the Enochic pericope follows the Hebrew text very closely but deviates from it in several interesting ways. A literal rendering of the Greek follows:

5:21 And Enoch lived 165 years and became the father of Methuselah. 22 Now Enoch pleased God after he became the father of Methuselah for 200 years and he became the father of sons and daughters. 23 And all the days of Enoch were 365 years. 24 And Enoch pleased God, and he was not found because God removed him.

Armin Schmitt has detailed the points at which the the Greek translation, the Septuagint (LXX), which normally stands in the closest relation to the Hebrew text in Genesis, dispenses with a literal translation of the original for the Enoch verses.<sup>19</sup> Schmitt examined the differences between the Hebrew and the Greek to determine whether specific tendencies and motives of the translator can be detected behind the changes. He notes that several of the deviations are of no consequence (e.g., the word chosen for the conjunction in v. 22) or may be attributed to the dictates of Greek syntax (expressing the word *year* only once in age formulas rather than twice, as in Hebrew).

For Schmitt the significant departures are: (1) the two instances in which "Enoch pleased God" (vv. 22, 24) stand where "Enoch walked with God" appears in the Hebrew; (2) "he was not found" instead of "he was not" (v. 24); and (3) "God removed him" in place of "God took him" (v. 24). For the first case Schmitt adduces several other passages in which the LXX translates the Hebrew form "he walked" with the same Greek verb "he pleased"; but he adds others in which the Greek offers a literal rendering. For him, cases such as Gen. 5:22 and 24 evidence a "spiritualizing tendency in the LXX. The literal rendering of these phrases would easily have aroused the impression among Greek readers as though En-

18. C. R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, vol. 1: *Historians*, SBLTT Pseudepigrapha Series 10 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 52.

19. "Die Angaben über Henoch Gen 5, 21–24 in der LXX," in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch: Beiträge zur Septuaginta. Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler*, edited by J. Schreiner, *Forschung zur Bibel* 1 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972), 161–69.



och 'walked with God' in a literal sense."<sup>20</sup> As for the expression "he was not found" for "he was not," he notes that "not finding" is characteristic of a number of Greek stories about removals of individuals from one place to another. Once the character is removed, others search for him but find nary a trace. The translator of Gen. 5:24 may, then, have adopted this equivalent because of his familiarity with such removal stories. Finally, the expression for removal or transfer rather than "God took him" is more difficult. The Greek verb in question is never used for removals in the stories just mentioned, although synonyms are. Possibly our verb, too, was employed and the examples have perished. The expressions for not being found and for removal could have been selected to remind Greek readers of such accounts about transfers of individuals, just as Enoch was transferred from one mode or place to another.

Schmitt did not notice, however, that another difference separates the Greek from the Hebrew. Earlier it was pointed out that, in the Hebrew, when Enoch walks he walks with the *'elobîm* (possibly meaning the angels) in both cases, but the one who took him is called *'elobîm* (God). The Greek translator leveled out that important distinction by rendering in all three cases with *the God*, its standard translation of *'elobîm* and *the 'elobîm*. By doing so, the translator deprived readers who had access only to the Greek of any chance of observing and interpreting the significant difference found in the Hebrew text.

20. *Ibid.*, 164.

## THE EARLIEST ENOCHIC BOOKLETS

### A. THE ASTRONOMICAL BOOK (1 ENOCH 72–82)

Sometime after the final editor completed the Book of Genesis, booklets centering on Enoch began to appear. This chapter examines the two most ancient ones: the Astronomical Book (AB) and the Book of the Watchers (BW).

The AB is an Enochic text that may date, like the Greek translation of Genesis, from the third century B.C.E. It is the first extrabiblical documentation for Enoch and includes far more information than Gen. 5:21–24 afforded. The eleven chapters of the AB assume or reproduce the data of Gen. 5, but they virtually explode one aspect of it: whereas Gen. 5:23, in assigning Enoch the highly unusual number of 365 years, hinted at some astronomical associations with him (something the LXX in no way changed), 1 *Enoch* 72–82 present extended heavenly revelations that deal almost exclusively with astronomical matters and assert that all of them were disclosed to Enoch by an angel. It would be difficult to maintain that this exponential increase in astronomical material was purely an exegetical inference from the number 365 in Gen. 5:23; surely something more would be needed to connect him not only with the solar year (which may be the intent of his age of 365) but also with the moon and related phenomena. Either there was much more material about Enoch when P wrote Gen. 5—material that the editor chose not to reproduce—or major developments occurred between the sixth and third centuries. Perhaps both took place.

A third-century date for the AB is now widely accepted by scholars, although there is room for debate about it. The primary argument in favor of a time of composition no later than the third century arises from one of the four copies of the AB found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Milik dates its script to the end of the third or beginning of the second century.<sup>1</sup> Since there is no reason for thinking that the manuscript is the

1. *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 7, 273–74.