

# The Temple According to 1 Enoch

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What does the Book of Enoch say or not say about the temple, and to which Book of Enoch do I refer? Is it the text called *1 Enoch*, or the one known as *2 Enoch*, or the so-called *3 Enoch*?<sup>1</sup> And all of them discuss or, better, visualize the temple. I restrict myself here to *1 Enoch*.<sup>2</sup>

*First Enoch* is a collection of five tractates—we might call them booklets—composed in the Aramaic language between the fourth century BCE and the turn of the era and ascribed to the ancient patriarch Enoch, the head of the seventh generation after creation (Gen. 5:18–24). As a whole, it is extant only in an ancient Ethiopic translation of a Greek

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1. *2 Enoch* and *3 Enoch* are modern designations. For the texts, see Francis I. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City; Doubleday, 1983–85) 1:91–221 (hereafter cited as *OTP*); and Philip S. Alexander, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch,” *OTP*, 1:223–315.

2. For the text of *1 Enoch*, see George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). For the translation and extensive commentary, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); and George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011). For summary discussions of the respective parts of *1 Enoch*, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 44–46; 47–53; 83–86; 110–15; 248–56. My discussion of *1 Enoch* here is based on my commentary, which in turn draws heavily on the work of many scholars, who are cited in the commentary. For simplicity, I cite the commentary.

translation of the Aramaic original. The first of the Enochic tractates is the Book of the Watchers (chaps. 1–36). It recounts, principally, the rebellion of the angels (called Watchers) and its consequences. The second is the Book of Parables (chaps. 37–71). It builds on the Book of the Watchers but focuses primarily on the persecution of the righteous and chosen and the great judgment that will befall their persecutors, the kings and the mighty, and that will vindicate the righteous and the chosen. The Book of Luminaries (chaps. 72–82) describes in great detail the created order that governs the movements of the sun and the moon and the functioning of the meteorological elements. The fourth book (chaps. 83–90) recounts two dream visions. The first of these foretells the Flood (chaps. 83–84); the second, the Animal Vision (chaps. 85–90), is an allegorical account of human history from creation to the end-time. The fifth and last of the main sections of *1 Enoch* is the patriarch's Epistle (chaps. 92–105), addressed to the generation that will follow him. It is mainly a collection of Woes and Exhortations that center on the suffering of the righteous during the author's time and their future vindication in and after the great judgment. Together, these five books along with three additional chapters that wrap up the Book of Enoch constitute a text that is roughly the length of the book of Isaiah.

### **The Book of the Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1–36)**

The Book of the Watchers is itself a composite text.<sup>3</sup> Its earliest part (chaps. 6–11) is an account of the rebellion of the Watchers that expands Genesis 6:1–4 and transforms the account of the Flood and the post-diluvian world (Gen. 6–9) into a description of God's eschatological judgment and the newly created earth that will follow it. Following this account, Enoch narrates how in a dream vision he ascended to heaven and progressed through the heavenly temple to the divine throne room, where he was commissioned as the prophet who would proclaim doom for the rebel Watchers (*1 Enoch* 12–16). It is this part, in chapters 14 and 15, that concerns us here.<sup>4</sup>

The Hebrew scriptures provide several descriptions of Israel's sanctuary: the tabernacle in Exodus 25–27; Solomon's temple in 1 Kings 6–7; and the future temple in Ezekiel 40–48. In the first two of these, God commands Moses and then Solomon to construct the sanctuary

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3. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 83–86.

4. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 2, 57–75.

variously of goats' hair, wood, stone, and metal. Ezekiel, for his part, is taken in a vision from his Babylonian exile to Mount Zion in the land of Israel. Here an angel, yardstick in hand, escorts the prophet through the architectural components of the postexilic temple, which are named and their material presumed. Then the Deity prescribes the rubrics of the sacrificial cult, and the angel leads Ezekiel back out of the temple and explains how it is to function in the land of Israel.

This account, composed in the voice of Enoch in the early third century BCE, is both reminiscent of Ezekiel's late fifth-century vision and differs from it. Enoch arrives at the temple in a vision. Because God is king, the heavenly structure is a palace, but because the king is God, the palace is, by definition, a temple. Enoch recounts how he moves through the temple in a vision. But there is no accompanying angel, and the divine oracle is quite different, as we shall see. The vision is similar to all three biblical accounts in that it describes the architectural components of the temple. But here the similarities end, and not surprisingly. Heaven is not the place for stone and metal, wood and goats' hair. Instead, what Enoch sees and experiences is unimaginable for the earthbound.

The wall that encloses the temple is constructed of hailstones and is encircled by a belt of fire. The temple itself is built of hailstones, its lining and its floor are of snow, and its ceiling of lightning flashes. The throne room is a roaring inferno. In the heavenly temple, one finds the coexistence of mutually exclusive snow and fire. This is no architect's walking tour; what Enoch sees fills him with sheer terror, and he shakes in his sandals. The repetitions in the following account are intended to replicate Enoch's experience for the reader.

14:8 In the vision it was shown to me thus:

Look, clouds in the vision were summoning me, and mists were crying out to me;  
and shooting stars and lightning flashes were hastening me and speeding me along,  
and winds in my vision made me fly up and lifted me upward and brought me to heaven.

9 And I went in until I drew near to a wall built of hailstones;  
and tongues of fire were encircling them all around,  
and they began to frighten me.

10 And I went into the tongues of fire, and I drew near to a great house built of hailstones;  
and the walls of this house were like stone slabs,  
and they were all of snow, and the floor was of snow.

- 11 And the ceiling was like shooting stars and lightning flashes;  
and among them were fiery cherubim, and their heaven was water,
- 12 and a flaming fire encircled all their walls, and the doors blazed  
with fire.
- 13 And I went into that house—hot as fire and cold as snow,  
and no delight of life was in it.  
Fear enveloped me, and trembling seized me,
- 14 and I was quaking and trembling, and I fell upon my face.  
And I saw in my vision,
- 15 And look, another open door before me:  
and a house greater than the former one,  
and it was all built of tongues of fire.
- 16 All of it so excelled in glory and splendor and majesty  
that I am unable to describe for you its glory and majesty.
- 17 Its floor was of fire,  
and its upper part was flashes of lightning and shooting stars,  
and its ceiling was a flaming fire.
- 18 And I was looking and I saw a lofty throne;  
and its appearance was like ice,  
and its wheels were like the shining sun,  
and †the voice (*or* sound) of†<sup>5</sup> the cherubim,
- 19 and from beneath the throne issued rivers of flaming fire.  
And I was unable to see.
- 20 The Great Glory sat upon it;  
his apparel was like the appearance of the sun  
and whiter than much snow.
- 21 No angel could enter into this house and look at his face because of  
the splendor and glory,  
and no human could look at him.
- 22 Flaming fire encircled him and a great fire stood by him,  
and none of those about him approached him.  
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him,  
but he needed no counselor; his every word was deed.
- 23 And the holy ones of the watchers who approached him did not  
depart by night,  
nor <by day> did they leave him.

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5. Words enclosed between †† are presumed to be corrupt.

And so in a vision that Enoch experiences in a dream, he finds himself in the heavenly realm where he has run a fiery gauntlet—spiced with hail and snow—and where he now finds himself facing the “Great Glory.” The Deity is seated on a high throne of icy appearance. Underneath it rivers of flaming fire pour out, and around it stand one hundred million court attendants. Little wonder that Enoch falls on his face, shaking from head to foot and feeling hot as fire and cold as ice. We have come a long way from the wilderness tabernacle and Solomon’s temple and even the massive splendor of Ezekiel’s temple of the future.

As with Ezekiel’s vision, Enoch’s vision climaxes with a divine oracle, but one that appears to be of a very different sort from Ezekiel’s. His narrative continues:

- 24 Until now I had been on my face, prostrate and trembling.  
And the Lord called me with his mouth and said to me, “Come here, Enoch, and hear my word(s).” 25/ And one of the holy ones came to me and raised me up and stood me (on my feet) and brought me up to the door. But I had my face bowed down.
- 15:1 But he answered and said to me—and I heard his voice—  
“Fear not, Enoch, righteous man and scribe of truth;  
come here, and hear my voice.
- 2 Go and say to the watchers of heaven, who sent you to petition in their behalf,  
‘You should petition in behalf of humans,  
and not humans in behalf of you.
- 3 Why have you forsaken the high heaven, the eternal sanctuary;  
and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men;  
and taken for yourselves wives, and done as the sons of earth;  
and begotten for yourselves sons, giants?
- 4 You were holy ones and spirits, living forever.  
With the blood of women you have defiled yourselves,  
and with the blood of flesh you have begotten,  
and with the blood of men you have lusted,  
and you have done as they do—  
flesh and blood, who die and perish.”

The book of Ezekiel is framed by two visions. In the first (chaps. 1–10), the chariot throne of God descends, the Deity commissions Ezekiel as a prophet of doom against Israel, in part for the cultic abominations that took place in the Jerusalem temple, and then the glory of the Lord leaves

the temple. In the concluding oracle (chaps. 40–48), Ezekiel hears the voice of the Lord prescribe the rituals to be performed in the postexilic temple, and he anticipates the glory of the Lord returning to that temple.

Here Enoch is commissioned as a prophet who is to speak doom against the priests of the heavenly temple who have polluted themselves through bloody intercourse with human women. In general, the issue is the same: pollution of the holy. But there are important differences. First, there are no prescriptions for proper cultic activity as there are in Ezekiel. Second, the priests are heavenly beings who have engaged in forbidden contact with earthly women. Third, their defilement explicitly involves blood pollution.

This last point suggests that the author, while speaking of heavenly priests, actually has in mind earthly priests. Two texts from the Second Temple period speak precisely to this issue. According to the Damascus Document, found among the Dead Sea texts and probably dating from around 100 BCE or a bit earlier, in a critique of the Jerusalem priesthood, we are told, “And they also defiled the temple for they did not keep apart in accordance with the law, but instead lay with her who sees the blood of her menstrual flow” (CD 5.6–7).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the Psalms of Solomon, a text from the first century BCE, states:<sup>7</sup>

They plundered the sanctuary of God,  
as if there were no heir to redeem (it).  
They trod upon the altar of the Lord, (coming) from all uncleanness;  
and with menstrual blood they defiled the sacrifices as (if these  
were) polluted flesh. (8:11–12)

Biblical law forbids intercourse between a man and a menstruating woman, who is considered to be cultically unclean. Such uncleanness, transferred to the male, was a critical issue for priests, who would carry this uncleanness into the holy realm of the temple. The crucial issue seems to have been when a woman’s menstrual period began and when it concluded, something that is discussed in some detail in the later law code of the Mishnah (*Niddah* 1:1). On the basis of these parallels in the *Damascus Document* and the eighth *Psalms of Solomon*, I conclude that while speaking about priests in the heavenly realm, the text in *1 Enoch* 15:3–4 is alluding to perceived practice in the Jerusalem temple.

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6. Florentino García Martínez, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, 2d ed. (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 36.

7. On this text, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 238–44.

There is another reason why I think this is the case. The account of Enoch's heavenly ascent is prefaced with these words: "I went off and sat by the waters of Dan in the land of Dan, which is south of Hermon, to the west. I recited (to God) the memorandum (of the watchers' petition for mercy) until I fell asleep" (13:7). That is, the location in which Enoch receives his dream-vision is the site of Jeroboam's separatist, idolatrous sanctuary in north Israel.<sup>8</sup> Different from Isaiah 6, where the feet of the enthroned Deity rest in the Jerusalem temple, here Enoch's vertical trip takes him up to the heavenly throne room, which is located not over Jerusalem, but above an alternative holy place in the area of Dan's temple, which was set at the foot of Mount Hermon—and not Mount Zion. Elsewhere in the Book of the Watchers, Mount Zion is considered to be "the holy mountain" (26:2), but for the author of the present part of the book, the cult in Zion's temple is polluted, and Enoch must travel to Dan and Hermon to find access to the heavenly sanctuary, where he hears what I take to be a critique of the Jerusalem temple.

### The Animal Vision

In chapters 85–90, Enoch recounts an allegorical dream-vision that depicts human history from Adam to the end-time.<sup>9</sup> The patriarchs are symbolized by bulls, the Israelites by sheep, their gentile oppressors by predatory animals and birds, and the seven archangels by men clothed in white. This section dates from around 163 BCE and perhaps in an earlier form from around 200 BCE, a few decades after the completion of the Book of the Watchers on which it is partly based. The main part of the vision takes a dim view of Israelite history, which is portrayed as continued rebellion and apostasy (the sheep are blind and wander from the right path) that is punished by gentile oppression. In the course of his exposition, Enoch tells us that before the Flood three angels descended from heaven and "took me by my hand and raised me from the generations of the earth, and lifted me up onto a high place, and they showed me a tower high above the earth" (87:4; compare Gen. 5:24). As we shall see, the high tower symbolizes a temple, in this case the heavenly temple. Here Enoch remains until the end-time, witnessing the interaction between God and the archangels (89:59–90:31).

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8. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 237–47.

9. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 364–408, esp. 394–95, 404–5. In summary, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 83–86.

In addition to this heavenly sanctuary, from time to time we hear of the various Israelite sanctuaries. Moses builds the tabernacle, which is called a house (89:36). Then, concerning Solomon's temple:

That house became large and broad [perhaps an allusion to Israel's expansion under Solomon's reign]. And a large and high tower was built upon that house for the Lord of the sheep. That house was low, but the tower was raised up and was high. And the Lord of the sheep stood on that tower, and they spread a full table before him. (89:50)

So much more the tragedy that God's sheep

abandoned the house of the Lord and his tower, they went astray in everything, and their eyes were blinded (89:54)

and that Israel's enemies

burnt down that tower and demolished that house (89:66–67).

The vision continues with reference to Zerubbabel's postexilic temple:

And they began again to build as before and they raised up that tower and it was called the high tower. And they began again to place a table before the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and not pure. And besides all these things, the eyes of the sheep were blind, and they did not see. (89:73–74)

This passage is in three respects a striking foil to the vision's depiction of Solomon's temple. First, the tower is only "called" a high tower. That is, it is not really a temple. Second, the Lord of the sheep does not stand on the tower; different from Solomon's temple, this is not the abode of the Deity. Third, the table that is placed before the tower (not before the Lord) contains polluted food. That is, the sacrificial cult of the Second Temple is polluted from the time of its construction (and this continues right up to the beginning of the end-time, compare 90:6). The wording here is reminiscent of Malachi's critique of the temple cult: "Where is my fear says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name? You say, 'How have we despised your name?' By offering polluted food (*lit.* bread) upon my altar. And you say, 'How have we polluted it?' By thinking that the Lord's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that no evil?" (Mal 1:6–8). Malachi's oracle is a stinging indictment of the Jerusalem priests, their personal lives, and the corrupt and polluted cult over which they preside. Enoch's echoing of Malachi's words calls to mind the broader context of the prophet's rebuke of the priesthood.

The Animal Vision closes with a look to the future. After the great judgment, the seer states:

I stood up to see, until that old house was folded up—and they removed all the pillars, and all the beams and ornaments of that house were folded up with it. . . . And I saw until the Lord of the sheep brought a new house, larger and higher than the first one, and he erected it on the site of the first one that had been rolled up. . . . And all the sheep were within it. . . . And the eyes of all were opened, and they saw good things; and there was none among them that did not see. And I saw how that house was large and broad and very full. (90:28–29, 35–36)

Enoch learns that in the end-time there will be no temple in the holy city. Instead, the Lord of the sheep folds up the city—and evidently the Second Temple with it—and creates a new Jerusalem that is large and broad and high. It is large and broad enough to be the home of all Israel. That the house is also “higher” than the first and that there is no mention of the high tower seems to indicate that there will be no temple in the new Jerusalem; the city itself takes on the characteristic of the temple. As the context of this passage tells us, all of Israel is purified, so there is no need of an atoning cult.

That there will be no temple in the new Jerusalem is reminiscent of the end of the Book of Revelation, which was written roughly three hundred years later. According to Revelation, “I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people’” (21:2–3, RSV). And furthermore, “I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (21:22, RSV). The Animal Vision differs from Revelation in that it does not tell us that the Deity will dwell with his people. Evidently God remains in the high tower that is the heavenly temple.

To summarize, this visionary account of human history takes note of the three Israelite sanctuaries: the tabernacle, Solomon’s temple and its destruction, and the Second Temple. Of these, Solomon’s temple was the dwelling of God and the place of a legitimate cult, but it was destroyed when the people had abandoned it. The priesthood of the Second Temple never restored the right cult; it was one element in Israel’s blindness. In the end-time, God builds a new Jerusalem, but there is no temple as such.

### The Apocalypse of Weeks (93:1–10; 91:11–17)

In the so-called Apocalypse of Weeks, which is part of Enoch's Epistle (the last section of *1 Enoch*), the seer recounts the content of a heavenly vision that sketches human history from Enoch's time to the end-time, ordering key events in Israelite history in a series of heptads, traditionally translated "weeks."<sup>10</sup> Of importance for our present purpose are its references to the Israelite sanctuaries. In this respect and in its repeated mention of Israel's wickedness, it parallels the Animal Vision and is possibly a summary of the Animal Vision or a common source. First we hear of the tabernacle (93:6), and then of Solomon's temple, "the temple of the glorious kingdom" (93:7). However, as all Israel goes astray (see 89:54), the temple is burned and the chosen people are dispersed (93:8). Then,

After this, in the seventh week, there will arise a perverse generation,  
and many will be its deeds,  
and all its deeds will be perverse. (93:9)

And that's it. As in the Animal Vision, postexilic Israel is a sinful people. As to the temple that the Animal Vision describes as polluted, this passage in the Apocalypse of Weeks simply ignores its existence. However, a few lines later we are told that a righteous generation will "uproot the foundations of violence and the structure of deceit." The architectural language here may be an allusion to the Second Temple. But if this is the case, it is the source of violence and deceit (false teaching or cultic activity). In either case, thereafter, in the eighth week, "the temple of the kingdom of the Great One will be built in the greatness of its glory for all the generations of eternity" (91:13). Thus the Apocalypse of Weeks differs from the Animal Vision in that it posits the existence of a glorious eschatological temple that will vastly surpass Solomon's "temple of the glorious kingdom," not least because it will endure "for all the generations of eternity." Of that temple we learn of nothing except its glory and its eternal existence.

Now to summarize what we have learned thus far about attitudes toward the temple in *1 Enoch*. First, the real temple is the heavenly temple. In the Book of the Watchers, Enoch is taken into heaven to its temple, where he is commissioned as the prophet who will speak doom to the fallen watchers. (Contrast the calls of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which take place on earth, in the Jerusalem temple, at an unidentified place

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10. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 434–50. On the reordering of the chapters (verses in chap. 91 before those in chap. 93), see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 438.

in Jerusalem, and by the Babylonian River Chebar, respectively.) Not surprisingly, the structure of the heavenly temple is qualitatively different from the Israelite shrines. In the Animal Vision, Enoch also ascends to the heavenly temple and witnesses the activity of the archangels, but there is no description of the temple. Secondly, implied in the Book of the Watchers, and explicit in the Animal Vision and (perhaps by its absence) in the Apocalypse of Weeks, the Second Temple is roundly condemned for its polluted cult. Third, the historical surveys in the Animal Vision and the Apocalypse of Weeks anticipate the future glory of the new Jerusalem. The latter mentions the eschatological temple, while the former makes no reference to the temple (“high tower,” of the Solomonic temple), but applies its characteristic (highness) to the city itself. In any case, the significance of the sanctuary—both positive and negative—is indicated by the fact that, explicitly or implicitly, the Animal Vision and the Apocalypse of Weeks refer to the tabernacle, the first and second temples, and the eschatological temple. Finally, as to temple ritual, we learn little. With reference to the heavenly temple, the Book of the Watchers’ account of Enoch’s ascent mentions only the fact that the Deity has a large entourage that guards the throne, and the Animal Vision describes how an angelic scribe records human activity and that of the angelic princes who have been set over the nations. As to the Jerusalem temple, purity is central. According to the Book of the Watchers, the priests have defiled themselves by sexual contact with women in a state of ritual impurity (an issue also in the Psalms of Solomon and the Qumran Damascus Document). The Animal Vision states simply that the sacrificial meat is impure. The parallel in Malachi may indicate that the offering of blemished animals was one issue.

### **The Book of Parables (1 Enoch 36–71)**

The Book of Parables was composed around the turn of the era—in the late first century BCE or the early first century CE.<sup>11</sup> As such, it is the latest major section of 1 Enoch. It is also the longest (thirty percent of the whole text). It is extant only in the ancient Ethiopic version, although some New Testament authors probably knew parts of it in a Greek or Aramaic version. No fragments of it have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The title “Parables” is a bit deceiving, especially to a reader

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11. On the Parables as a whole, see Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 3–331. For a summary, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 248–56.

of the New Testament. In *1 Enoch*, both in this section, in the Book of the Watchers (1:2, 3), and in the Apocalypse of Weeks (93:1, 3), the term “parable” refers not to a symbolic story or saying, but to a revelatory discourse. “Parables” announce events relating to the judgment to be carried out at the end-time. As for the Book of Parables, it is almost from start to finish Enoch’s narrative of his tour through the heavenly realm: the heavenly sanctuary and its environs, the place of the luminaries, and some undefined springboards from which he visits or views the places of eternal punishment or reward.

There are three points worth noting upfront about the Book of Parables as it relates to our topic. First, this section of *1 Enoch* makes no reference or allusion to any of the Israelite sanctuaries—the tabernacle, the First Temple, or the Second Temple. This is noteworthy since this section was composed in the heyday of Herod’s monumental and glorious temple in Jerusalem. Second, the narrator makes no reference to the architecture of the heavenly temple. This, too, is noteworthy, since the text is, in part, an expansion of parts of the Book of the Watchers, including Enoch’s ascent to the dwelling of God.<sup>12</sup> Only in the very last chapter, which has been tacked on to the Parables by an editor, do we find a description of the fiery residence of the Deity. Instead, Enoch describes how, as he stood in the heavenly palace or perhaps moved from place to place within it, he saw the heavenly inhabitants, whom he identifies by name and function, and how he witnessed their deeds and listened to their words. So, there is no description of the temple, only of its inhabitants and what they are doing. These heavenly beings are so innumerable and are of so many sorts that the principal title of the Deity is “The Lord of Spirits.” Third and finally, among these heavenly beings, the chief and central one is known variously as: the Righteous One, the Chosen One, the Anointed One, and the Son of Man. He is the champion of God’s people, who are called the righteous and the chosen, and in the end-time he will be the executor of the divine judgment against their oppressors, the kings and the mighty.

The Parables begin with a superscription and introduction (chap. 37), which are then followed by an oracle that introduces the first Parable (chap. 37, prefacing chaps. 38–44). Enoch is then taken to heaven (39:3), where he sees first the dwellings of the righteous dead in the company of the angels (39:4–5). “In that place” he sees the Chosen One dwelling “beneath the wings of the Lord of Spirits” (39:6–8). I take this to mean that Enoch is already in the heavenly temple in the presence of God.

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12. Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 55–56.

Here he hears the righteous and chosen blessing and praising the name of the Lord of Spirits. This motif, which will be repeated many times, highlights one of the major activities in the heavenly temple. It is the place where the Deity is blessed and praised and exalted and glorified (a recurrent set of verbs in these chapters); the singing of liturgy is a chief element in the ritual in the heavenly temple. This point is emphasized in the following verses:

For a long time my eyes looked at that place,  
 and I *blessed* him and *praised* him, saying,  
 “*Blessed* is he, and may he be *blessed* from the beginning and forever.  
 In his presence there is no limit.  
 He knew before the age was created what would be forever,  
 and for all the generations that will be.” (39:10–11, emphasis added)

This language echoes the wording of a number of Jewish prayers contemporary with the Parables. Thus, in the minds of the audience of this text (for I assume the text was read orally to an apocalyptic community rather than simply by an individual to himself), the heavenly temple was a place where the praise of God was uttered *in words that were also performed on earth*.

Next Enoch hears the chorus of “those who sleep not”—that is, the Watchers—who “*stand in the presence of your glory*, and they bless and praise and exalt, saying:

‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Spirits,  
 he fills the earth with Spirits.’” (v. 12)

These words are, of course, a slight paraphrase of the *Trisagion* that was sung by the Seraphim and heard by Isaiah in the Jerusalem temple (Isa. 6:3). They were probably also part of the earthly liturgy familiar to the Parables’ audience. The praise of the Watchers continues, echoing Enoch’s previous words of praise, “*Blessed* are you and *blessed* is the name of the Lord forever” (v. 13). As if we have not yet figured out that Enoch is witnessing events in the heavenly temple, he goes on, echoing his account in the Book of the Watchers: “And after this I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand—they were innumerable and incalculable—who were standing *in the presence of the glory of the Lord of Spirits*” (40:1).

But there is more. Enoch sees four figures flanking the divine throne (chap. 40). They correspond to the four figures that bear God’s throne in Ezekiel 1 (v. 5), and here they are the four archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel. Their functions in the presence of the Lord are: to

bless the Lord of Spirits; to bless the Chosen One and the chosen ones; to intercede for those who dwell on the earth; and, related to that, to ward off the “satans,” who accuse those who dwell on the earth. So the heavenly liturgy includes not only praise but also intercession, a function that will return in the second Parable (chap. 47).

At this point, the narrative in the second Parable describes how Enoch moves out to view aspects of the cosmos (chaps. 41–44).

The second Parable (chaps. 46–57) brings us back to the heavenly throne room after, once again, an introductory oracle (chap. 45). Here, echoing language from Daniel 7, Enoch sees the white-haired Deity,

And with him was another, whose face was like the appearance of a man;  
and his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels. (46:1)

As an accompanying angel explains to Enoch, this is the Chosen One, the Son of Man, and his function is recounted at length (46:2–8). He will crush the kings and the mighty, the oppressors of his clients, the righteous and chosen.

Enoch focuses again on the activity that is taking place in the divine throne room (chap. 47). Here, “the holy ones who dwell in the heights of heaven” and are uniting in one voice to glorify, praise, and bless the Lord of Spirits also intercede by bringing the petitions of the righteous before the throne of God. The white-haired Deity takes his seat on his throne and has the books of the living opened before him. Judgment is to take place; the murdered righteous are to be vindicated.

What follows is a second account of the function of the Chosen One; this one—different from chapter 46—describes less his judgment of the kings and the mighty as such, and more his vindication of the righteous and chosen. This scene appears also to take place in the heavenly throne room, where the springs of righteousness and wisdom flow (chaps. 48–49). In the remainder of this parable, Enoch recounts his visions of the activity that will take place on the earth in the end-time (chaps. 50–56).

Enoch’s third Parable is the longest of the three mainly because it contains a long section of astronomical and meteorological material (chaps. 59 and 60:11–23), as well a great deal of text about Noah and the Flood (60:1–11, 23, and 65:1–69:1), which was added later. Here I focus on three chapters that relate to the heavenly temple, namely chapters 61 to 63. Chapter 61 is clearly set in the heavenly throne room. Here the Lord of Spirits seats the Chosen One on the divine throne for the purpose of judging the angels, and the heavenly choruses resound with appropriate praise.

- 61:6 And all who are in the heights of heaven received a command,  
and power and one voice and one light like fire were given to him.
- 7 And that one, before anything, they blessed with (their) voice,  
and they exalted and glorified with wisdom;  
and they were wise in speech and in the spirit of life.
- 8 And the Lord of Spirits seated the Chosen One upon the throne of  
glory  
and he will judge all the works of the holy ones in the heights of  
heaven,  
and in the balance he will weigh their deeds.
- 9 And when he will lift up his face  
to judge their secret ways according to the word of the name of  
the Lord of Spirits,  
and their paths according to the way of the righteous judgment  
of the Lord of Spirits,  
they will all speak with one voice,  
and bless and glorify and exalt  
and sanctify the name of the Lord of Spirits.
- 10 And all the host of heaven will cry out and all the holy ones in the  
heights,  
and the host of the Lord—the Cherubin, the Seraphin, and the  
Ophannin,  
and all the angels of power and all the angels of the dominions,  
and the Chosen One and the other host who are on the dry land  
(and) over the water on that day.
- 11 And they will raise one voice,  
and they will bless and glorify and exalt  
with the spirit of faithfulness and with the spirit of wisdom,  
and with (a spirit of ) long suffering and with the spirit of mercy,  
and with the spirit of judgment and peace and with the spirit of  
goodness.

I have emphasized that the praise of God is really the major activity in the heavenly throne room. The verbs “bless, glorify, exalt” recur, and “sanctify” may imply the singing of the *Trisagion*. Furthermore, we hear the names of the various types of angels whose voices fill the heavenly throne room. There are: the holy ones (perhaps a general term), the hosts of the Lord (an allusion to the title “Lord of hosts”), the Cherubin, the Seraphin, and the Ofannin, the angels of power, the angels of the dominions, the angels who are on the land and over the water, those that sleep not (the Watchers), and the spirits of light. Now, in spite of

the numerous types of angels that are mentioned, we are told four times that they utter their praise “with one voice.” Of course, we have no score of their music, so we do not know if they sing in unison or in harmony. But the impression one gets is that of a huge chorus. For myself, I think of the redundant, cascading, undulating cadences of the angelic chorus in the heavenly prologue of Boito’s opera *Mefistofele*. Or perhaps we might imagine one of those thousand-voice choirs that occasionally sing Handel’s *Messiah*, pouring forth its “Hallelujah Chorus.”

The parallels between the liturgical content in the Parables and liturgical material in Judaism contemporary with it raises the question about the relationship between heavenly scenes and the Parables’ presumed audience. The Parables’ language is surely evocative. The audience is reminded of its earthly liturgical settings. Do the snippets of liturgical phraseology suggest that the heavenly choruses engage in the same kind of liturgy the audience participates in? With the recitation of the Parables’ narrative, is the audience imaginatively drawn up into the heavenly temple? Are the liturgical phrases in the Parables cues for the audience to actually utter prayers that contain this phraseology? Do they recite the *Trisagion* as the reader recites the part of the narrative that describes the heavenly chorus doing the same? In its texture and content, with accumulating lists of angelic groups and repeated verbs that describe their praise, the scene in chapter 61 is reminiscent of the so-called *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* found in numerous copies at Qumran.<sup>13</sup> I do not see any direct literary relationship between these texts, but they do attest a common tendency for people in a liturgical context to connect themselves with worship in the heavenly temple. In modern liturgies, the *Trisagion* is often prefaced with the words “so with the church on earth and the hosts in heaven we join their unending hymn”—and then “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. . . .”

The chapters that follow also bear on our topic. Chapters 62–63 describe a scene that complements chapter 61. Here the Chosen One is, again, seated on the throne of glory, where he judges and condemns the kings and the mighty, the violent oppressors of the righteous and chosen. Echoing chapter 61, these enemies of the righteous and chosen (and opponents of the Lord of Spirits) utter anguished words of repentance and pour forth the praise they should have offered to God. What is not clear is where this scene is set. The throne of glory suggests the divine throne room, but it seems unlikely that these wicked characters have been granted access to God’s throne room. Perhaps the throne of glory

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13. García Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 419–31.

has descended to earth, as is the case in Ezekiel (chap. 1) and in the Animal Vision (*1 Enoch* 90:20). In any case, the Chosen One's session on the throne of glory associates him with the heavenly temple, reiterating what has been affirmed in chapter 61. The conclusion of this scene, separated by a long literary interpolation, occurs in 69:27–29, where the Son of Man is again seated on the throne of his glory for the purpose of judgment.

Chapter 71 of the Parables, the final one in the book, is also relevant to our topic, although it is almost certainly an addition to the book. It differs from the body of the Book of Parables and is heavily dependent on chapter 14 in the Book of the Watchers—the long passage I quoted above. Here, in this last chapter of the Parables, Enoch also narrates his ascent to heaven, where he sees angels walking on fire and where he finds a house built of hailstones mortared by flames. The four archangels exit the house along with the Deity. Not surprisingly, Enoch is totally overwhelmed—although he has shown almost no such emotion elsewhere in the Parables. The Deity and the angels approach him, and he is commissioned as the Son of Man, who is this time the eternal companion of the righteous. Thus, once again the Son of Man is associated with the heavenly temple, only, to our great surprise, he is identified as Enoch himself. That is, Enoch finds out that the character he has witnessed throughout his vision is Enoch himself.

### Summary and Conclusion

The Second Temple was central to Jewish religious and social life. It was the place where humans met their God. They joined in liturgies of praise and offered sacrifices that atoned for sin and that embodied thanksgiving for divine blessing. There Torah was studied and expounded. There was a body of literature that governed much of this activity—both in the Mosaic Torah and in its exposition, and there was oral tradition on the matter. Nonetheless, there exist also the remnants of a body of literature from the Second Temple period that takes a dim view of the activity in the precincts of the Jerusalem temple. Ritual purity, especially as it pertained to sacrifice, was a principal issue. Some of the texts found at Qumran deal with this matter, and the authors of some of these texts saw the community at Qumran as an ersatz for the temple. At least for the time being, the community and its activity filled the gap left by a polluted Jerusalem temple.

Along with that literature, which was generated at Qumran or in some satellite groups, are the texts that are gathered in what we call *1 Enoch*, some of which also originated in a group or groups related in some way to the community at Qumran. In the Book of the Watchers, this critique of the temple priesthood is embodied in an account

of Enoch's ascent to the fiery and fearful heavenly temple. The Animal Vision also spotlights what it considers to be a polluted Second Temple sacrificial cult, and the Apocalypse of Weeks even ignores the existence of the Second Temple, or at best alludes to it without mentioning it as such. For the authors of these texts, the problem will be solved at the end-time in the eradication of evil.

Like the Book of the Watchers, the Book of Parables recounts Enoch's ascent to the heavenly temple, but focuses on the activity—pre-eminently the liturgical activity—in that temple. It emphasizes Enoch's vision of the angelic entourage and the liturgies that they sing, which have counterparts in the earthly places of worship. We learn nothing about the author's attitude toward the Second Temple. Perhaps he expresses a negative view toward the temple on Mount Zion simply by ignoring it. Alternatively, this silence may be a function of his pressing, obsessive concern. He lives in a time of bloody oppression and he assures his people that the time is coming when the Son of Man, who is hidden in the heavenly realm, evidently the heavenly temple, will appear to vindicate his own and crush their oppressors.

With respect to the topic of temple, what is perhaps most striking in *1 Enoch*? Maybe two things. First, for the authors of the Book of the Watchers, the Animal Vision, and the Apocalypse of Weeks, who are concerned about a dysfunctional Jerusalem cult, the resolution of the problem lies in the approaching eschaton. Second, for the author of the Parables, as well as the Book of the Watchers and the Animal Vision, the real action is already taking place in the real temple, which is the *heavenly* temple. There, variously, God is enthroned, and the Son of Man is being prepared to enact divine judgment so that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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