

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

The research presented here is concerned with the reception history of Genesis 6.1–4 in early Enochic and Philonic Judaism during the Second Temple Period (hereafter, 2TP). I suggest that the non-specificity inherent in the biblical text of Genesis 6.1–4 opened the basis for the later emergence of an aetiology of evil spirits as Jewish authors engaged with the text. As a result, Genesis 6.1–4, particularly its interpretation in *1 Enoch* 6–16, played an important part in the development of demonology during the 2TP.

Accordingly, by the turn of the Common Era there was in place a worldview within Judaism in which the activity of autonomous or semi-autonomous evil spirits was regarded as a reality. This view is exemplified in the ministry of Jesus as described in the Synoptic Gospels of the New Testament. By contrast, there is little evidence in Jewish literature during the earlier biblical period for such evil spirits. The understanding of demonic affliction found in the Jewish Scriptures (both Hebrew and Greek traditions) does not contain any references to autonomous or semi-autonomous evil spirits that are able to afflict humanity at will. When they are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (hereafter HB), evil spirits are seen as beings sent by God to accomplish God’s plan in the lives of individuals and the nation of Israel (see e.g. Num 5.14–15, 30 – spirit of jealousy; 1 Kgs 19.7, Isa 37.7 – lying spirits; Hos 5.4 – spirit of whoredom; Judg 9.23, Job 4.12–16 – spirits in the service of God; 1 Sam 16.14–23; 18.10–12; 19.9–10 – evil spirit upon Saul). The LXX translates various Hebrew terms¹ related to some type of wild beast that lurks about in the night or in the wilderness as a demonic creature.²

¹ There are just twenty-one occurrences in the LXX of the term δαιμόνιον (δαίμων), with all but one outside the Pentateuch (Deut. 32:17). The Hebrew term translated demon in the LXX varies: אַיִם (δαιμόνια, Isa 34.14; 13.21 – desert creature); אַיִם (δαιμόνια [Isa 13.21 – hairy goat], also ὄνοκενταύριος [Isa 34.14, 13.21], ματαίσις [Lev 17.7 – goat demon], and εἰδώλοισ [2 Chr 11.15 – satyrs]); ἄσπις (δαιμονίσις, Deut 32.17, Ps 106 (105).37, 38 – demon). All English translations are from NASV.

² See Edwin Yamauchi, “Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcism,” in *Gospel Review: The Miracles of Jesus* (ed. David Wenham and Craig Blomberg;

This raises the question of how the presence of categorically evil spirits could have emerged in the writings of the first century C.E. Since no material comparable to an episode such as, for example, Mark 5.1–20 exists in the HB, we must look elsewhere.³ It is in this search that we encounter the *Book of Watchers* (1 En 1–36 = *BW*). This third-century B.C.E. pseudepigraphic composite work offers the oldest extant record of the origin of evil spirits in Judaism (see ch. 2 for question of the date of the document). As suggested above, the non-specificity inherent in Genesis 6.1–4 provided the authors of *BW* the opportunity and the biblical authority, to further develop a demonology in the 2TP. Such a view is substantiated through an examination of the continued development of the tradition around the turn of the era. In what follows, this study will attempt to reveal how the reception of Genesis 6.1–4 encouraged the development of the demonology and anthropology in the 2TP. I will endeavour to ascertain what Jews of the 2TP understood with regard to the origin and activity of evil spirits by examining the development of the concept of evil spirits alongside a developing understanding of human nature (anthropology) in early Jewish literature. Along with *BW*, I will address the interpretation of Genesis 6.1–4 in the *Book of Jubilees*, the treatises of Philo of Alexandria, and other Pseudepigrapha for any insights they might offer. In addition, I will discuss the taking up of the concept of evil spirits from the Watcher tradition by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Each of these texts sheds a particular light on the investigation and reflects significant developments of demonology and anthropology in this period.

The enigmatic nature of these sources requires an introductory caveat. One must resist approaching these sources in an attempt to find clear paths through the traditions. Clarity of this type is obfuscated by inherent complexities. Rather, it is fitting to offer plausible stages of development in the various documents. The historical disparity between the various sources only serves to validate this approach, which may offer a better view of the developing Jewish understanding of the origin of evil. These stages of growth may have merged to make possible the diversity of the

Sheffield: JSOT, 1986), 89–183. Yamauchi argues that the demonology in Israel is restrained in comparison to Mesopotamia. See Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development* (London: Epworth, 1949). Langton contends that restraint in respect of the Babylonian and Assyrian influences was due to the desire “to affirm the belief in Yahweh as the one true God.” This restraint, he argues, is the reason for the lack of references to demonology among the early Hebrews.

³ For the most recent examination of demonic activity in the New Testament, see Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (WUNT 157; Leiden: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

tradition of demonic affliction encountered in the New Testament. Andy Reimer maintains:

In this task of reconstructing demonologies, one must seek to hold a tension between an integrated and consistent reading of a text or body of texts and an awareness of the sociology of knowledge ‘gaps’ in any religious sect’s worldview. The history of demonology has certainly shown that attempts by texts such as 1 Enoch to rationalize entities that are by definition chaotic, irrational and typically open to all out speculation are bound to fail. Scholarly attempts to reconstruct any sort of ancient demonology will always have to work in the midst of chaos.⁴

Reimer is correct in his assertion that the demonology of *1 Enoch* is indeed chaotic. However, it may be possible that we can ease the sense of chaos by examining the matter of demons and evil spirits alongside a rather less chaotic anthropology, which was emerging in the 2TP at the same time as an interest in demons, was becoming apparent.

1.2 The Approach

I will attempt to unpack what can only be described as a very complicated collection of traditions that serve as the background of the “Watcher tradition” in *BW*. In an effort to trace the development of this tradition, I will subject two specific texts to close analysis. The first is Genesis 6.1–4 which, given its many peculiarities, has presented considerable difficulty for modern interpreters. The great variety of interpretations of this passage in early Jewish literature reveals that it presented similar difficulty for scripture exegetes and commentators in the post-biblical and later rabbinic periods.⁵ As this thesis will attempt to demonstrate, Genesis 6.1–4 served as the source for the story of the origin of evil spirits in our second key text, *1 Enoch* 1–36.

1.2.1 Structure of the Thesis

The present study is divided into five main sections. The first section consists of the introduction and a chapter that reviews recent research of *BW* which followed the publication of J. T. Milik’s *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* in 1976. It is necessary to present a detailed history of the research of *BW* in light of the questions raised (and

⁴ Andy M. Reimer, “Rescuing the Fallen Angels: The Case of the Disappearing Angels at Qumran,” *DSD* 7 (2000): 353.

⁵ I shall draw on exegetical traditions in the Targumim and Midrashim which, though late, may provide some insight into ways Jewish readers were attempting to understand Gen 6 during the 2TP.

not raised) in the past concerning the structure, date, interpretation, and function of the Watcher tradition.

The second section offers a detailed discussion of Genesis 6.1–4, which includes the various biblical traditions (e.g., “divine council of God”) that may lie behind the passage in its present form, and interpretations of the passage by later Jewish writers in the rabbinic period (see ch. 3). This is not an exhaustive examination of every relevant biblical text or non-Jewish works, but rather a presentation of the themes that the author of Genesis 6.1–4 may have been familiar with when he wrote the passage. I shall attempt to identify what aspects of the biblical tradition allowed the author(s) of *BW*⁶ to interpret the Genesis passage with the negative elements that are present in *I Enoch*’s version of the story.

In the third section, we shall examine the primary text that will serve as the starting point of the tradition of the affliction of humanity by evil spirits in the 2TP, *BW*. This will include three chapters that deal specifically with relevant portions of *BW* (*I En* 6–16), i.e., the author’s use of the biblical tradition of the *bene elohim*. The author’s interpretation of the *bene elohim* is subdivided into the Asa’el tradition (Instruction motif) and the Shemihazah tradition (see *I En* 4). A chapter will follow that focuses on the crux of *BW*, the rebellion motif (see ch. 5). This chapter will consider the effects of the actions of the angels on themselves, their offspring, and humanity. Following this discussion, I shall examine the reception of the Watcher tradition, and its “giantology”⁷ and anthropology in other Early Jewish literature, in particular, the *DSS* (see ch. 6).

The fourth section will examine the treatises of Philo of Alexandria of which *De Gigantibus* is the primary focus (see ch. 7). Within *BW* and the writings of Philo, I shall highlight anthropological themes that weigh heavily in the discussion of affliction by evil spirits in the 2TP. In the final section, I shall conclude with a summary of the points of the thesis and its contribution to future research of the demonology and anthropology of Early Judaism.

⁶ It is the consensus of Enochic scholars that there were likely multiple authors involved in the writing of the various sections of *BW*, however for the sake of reading ease I will use only the singular “author.”

⁷ This is a term coined in discussion with Loren Stuckenbruck about categorizing this section of the Watcher tradition. It is difficult to call it “demonology” if we consider that nowhere in chs. 6–16 are the angels, giants, or their spirits explicitly identified as demons.

1.2 Argument and Scope of the Present Study

Much of recent research on *1 Enoch*, in particular on *BW*, has focused on source and text-critical aspects of the third century B.C.E. material.⁸ Previous research has centred on the traditions that are alluded to in *BW*, i.e. Greek, Near Eastern, and Israelite. This approach has added tremendous insight into the method by which the Jewish community in the

⁸ This material will be discussed in detail in ch. 2: “*1 Enoch 1–36 The Book of Watchers: History of the Documents and a Review of Recent Research.*” See e.g. William Adler, “Berossus, Manetho, and 1 Enoch in the World Chronicle of Panodorus,” *HTR* 76 (1983): 419–42; John J. Collins, “The Apocalyptic Technique: Setting and Function in the Book of Watchers,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 91–111, idem, “Methodological Issues in the Study of 1 Enoch: Reflections on the Articles of P.D. Hanson and G.W. Nickelsburg,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1978* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 315–22; Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels At Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108, and Sectarian Writings From Qumran* (JSPSup 11 Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); Devorah Dimant, “The Fallen Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic Books Related to Them” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University 1974 [Hebrew]); idem, “The ‘Peshet of the Periods’ 4Q180 and 4Q181,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 9 (1979): 71–102; idem, “1 Enoch 6–11: A Methodological Perspective,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1978* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 323–39; Jonas C. Greenfield and Michael E. Stone, “The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes,” *HTR* 70 (1977): 51–65; Paul Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 195–223; Ronald S. Hendel, “Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6.1–4,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 13–26; J.T. Milik, *Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); idem, “Problèmes De La Litterature Henochique a La Lumiere Des Fragments Arameens De Qumran,” *HTR* 64 (1971): 333–78; Carol Newsom, “The Development of 1 Enoch 6-19: Cosmology and Judgment,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 310–329; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108*, (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001); idem, “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 383–405; idem, “Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee,” *SBL* 100 (1981): 575–600; idem, “The Books of Enoch in Recent Research,” *RelSRev* 7 (1981): 210–17; Brook W.R. Pearson, “Resurrection and the Judgment of the Titans: in LXX Isaiah 26:19,” *JSNTSup* 186 (1999): 33–51; Andy M. Reimer, “Rescuing the Fallen Angels”; James H. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992); Michael E. Stone, “The Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century B.C.E.,” *CBQ* 40 (1978): 479–492; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The ‘Angels’ and ‘Giants’ of Genesis 6:1–4 in Second and Third Century B.C.E. Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions,” *DSD* 7 (2000): 354–77; idem, *The Book of Giants From Qumran, Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (TSAJ 63; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997; David W. Suter, “Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest”; James C. VanderKam, “Enoch Traditions in Jubilees and Other Second-Century Sources,” *SBL Seminar Papers, 1978* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 229–51; idem, *1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature* (CRINT 4; Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1996); and M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Second Temple Period formulated its theology and traditions, the sources for its theology and traditions (both oral and written), and the manner in which these sources were collected. This has established a firm foundation for future research of the theological message of these documents, which until now has been inadequately addressed.

A further portion of previous research was undertaken in an effort to determine the function of *BW* (see section 2.8.0). Arguments concerning the function of *BW* have centred on why was there such a need for an explanation of the origin of evil during this period of Israelite history? I will present three main theories of interpretation that include 1) the oppression of Israel by the Hellenistic rulers, 2) the origin of evil through the rebellion of angels, and 3) the story as a polemic against the priesthood in Jerusalem.

In summary, these scholarly works have shown that the *I Enoch* 1-36 is made up of complex layers of traditions that, in general, find their origins in Genesis 6. It is no surprise that *BW* is such a complex literary construction, considering its origins lie in this enigmatic passage that invited so much speculation!

Genesis 6.1-4 tells the story of the *bene elohim* and their encounter with the daughters of humanity which resulted in the birth of the *gibborim*. The passage is positioned in the biblical narrative as a prelude to the judgment of the Flood. However, on the surface nothing in the biblical text of Genesis 6.1-4 demands that the reader understand those verses in a negative light, that is, as depicting some action or event that is considered inappropriate or dubious. It is necessary to evaluate the traditions (e.g., the negative aspects of the “angels of the nations”) that underlie Genesis 6.1-4 in order to assess properly why the text is commendable as the starting point of the Watcher tradition.⁹ This is to say, the Watcher tradition represents a type of biblical synthesis and exposition; it is the “superimposition” of negative traditions on to the relatively neutral position of Genesis 6.1-4 (i.e., it is rewritten Bible). In doing so, I shall attempt to identify possible sources that the author of Genesis 6.1-4 may have had in mind while writing the narrative, sources which may have left the text open to a negative interpretation by the author of *BW*.

The vocabulary of Genesis 6.1-4 in both the Hebrew and Greek traditions, i.e. האֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי (bene haElomim) נְפִלִים (*Nephilim*), גִּבּוֹרִים (*Gibborim*) and γίγαντες, (*gigantes*) invited various interpretations in the early post-biblical and the later rabbinic periods. These interpretations include those which contain detrimental nuances about the characters in the story that could lead to a negative understanding of the text, or portray the characters in a positive or neutral light.

⁹ These traditions will be discussed in detail in ch. 3 below.

The Hebrew expression *bene elohim* evokes images of the heavenly court of God where the “sons of God” ruled over the nations or acted as intermediaries between the God of Israel and his people (see ch. 3, section 3.2.2). Within this tradition, we find possibilities for Genesis 6.2 to take on negative imagery sanctioning the introduction of rebellious angels in *BW*. The term *gibborim* evokes images of the great heroes of Israel in the biblical period, and at the same time is used as a description of the most imposing גִּבּוֹרִים in the HB, Nimrod (see ch. 3, section 3.2.4.2). Nimrod is identified in the LXX tradition as a γίγας; and it is implied that he played an active role in the rebellion of the people at the Tower of Babel. This datum alone leaves sufficient room for a negative interpretation of the Genesis 6 text. The LXX translates גִּבּוֹרִים with the Greek term γίγαντες, which calls to mind the characters of the Greek myths of Hesiod (*Theogony* and *Works and Days*) and Homer (*Iliad*). As will be shown below, it is also possible that this translation also contributed to *BW*'s negative portrayal of the offspring of Genesis 6.4. I shall argue that the biblical tradition of Genesis 6.1–4, perhaps not immediately apparent, served as a starting point for the author of *BW* as he presented his story of the origin of evil spirits.

The negative interpretation of the biblical tradition of Genesis 6.1–4 in *BW* is centred on the *bene elohim*. It is difficult to imagine that the author of *BW* arbitrarily chose this story to present the origin of evil spirits; therefore, it is likely that this tradition had been developing long before it was unveiled as the Watcher tradition (although no direct proof, other than the biblical data listed above and in the following discussion, can be mustered). It is in this tradition that the author discloses the rebellious nature of the angels, which results in the devastation of the earth and humanity (see ch. 4, section 4.2.0).

Within this story of rebellion, scholars of *BW* have argued for at least two streams of tradition identifying a leadership group amongst the angels on which the blame of the rebellion is placed, the Asa'el (Instruction) motif and the Shemihazah motif. Each of these streams adds a particular dimension to the rebellious action of the angels, resulting in the blame for devastation of the earth being placed on the angels in one account, (Shemihazah) and being partially shifted to humanity for its part in the other (Asa'el/Instruction).

I shall discuss the author's introduction of the Instruction/Asa'el motif and possible motivation for this expansion of the Genesis story (see ch. 4, sections 4.3.0–4.3.4). Much debate has been devoted to the identity of Asa'el and his role in *BW*. He is originally one of the leaders of the angels in the opening verses of *I Enoch* 6, but is later identified as the angel responsible for teaching humanity the art of war and beautification of

women (i.e. the use of cosmetics), which brings about the corruption of the earth. Several scholars have proposed that he is connected to the character Azazel in Leviticus 16, but as will be seen, this theory has no proper foundation at the time *BW* was written. It seems likely that the author's purpose in using the Instruction motif (although this is difficult to determine with any certainty) was to connect the action of the *bene elohim* in Genesis 6 with the judgment of the Flood, placing blame for the disaster on both the angels and humanity.

The primary strand of the story is undoubtedly the Shemihazah tradition (see ch. 4, sections 4.4.0–4.4.3). The author blames the angels for the corruption of creation. Shemihazah and the angels have rebelled against God by crossing into the realm of physical contact with humanity: they have breached the cosmos. The rebellion of the angels and in particular the consequences of their actions, are the focus of the narrative (see ch. 5, section 5.2.0–5.4.0). It is within this tradition that we find motifs of impurity and corruption of the earth and humanity. Each of these is dealt with by the cleansing of the Flood. Alongside these motifs, we are told of the birth of the offspring, who, although characterized as relatively neutral in Genesis 6.4, are portrayed as categorically evil in *BW*. It is here that the synthetic nature of *BW* comes to full view—the punishment of the Flood is a result of the *negative* activity recorded in Genesis 6.1–4. The activity of these figures becomes the central point of the author's story as the rebellious angels are removed from the scene and the interaction of the evil spirits with humanity becomes the focus (*I En* 15–16). At this point, we can identify the author's giantology, which describes the spiritual nature of the giants as evil, their actions as merciless, and their future as irredeemable (see ch. 5, section 5.4.1–5.6.0). Within the author's introduction of evil spirits, he reveals a glimpse of an anthropology that portrays humanity as defenceless against the attack of these creatures.

It will be shown that other Jewish writers will take up this giantology and anthropology in the 2TP (see ch. 6). These authors pressed the motifs of the Watcher tradition into a more dualistic framework in which good and evil spirits attempt to influence human souls. At the same time, an ethical dualism is developed, which posits an internal struggle in the human spirit to live righteously (follow God) or do evil (abandon the Law and service of God). This is an overriding theme in several of the Qumran documents, as is demonstrated in several of the “incantation” prayers (see ch. 6, 6.6.2).

It seems, however, that this explanation of the problem of human suffering was not easily accepted in every Jewish community. The writings of Philo of Alexandria reveal an interpretation of Genesis 6.1–4 that differs markedly from that found in *BW* (see ch. 7). In *De Gigantibus*, Philo

rejects the notion that the giants are evil spirits; rather, they function as personifying metaphors for pleasures and vices of the human flesh (see ch. 7, section 7.4.0–7.4.2). In this manner, Philo is formulating an anthropology that assigns the responsibility of evil to human choice. Philo's anthropology corresponds with the internal struggle of the human soul that is found in some of the *DSS*.¹⁰ His demonology begins with a person's decision whether or not to pursue the desires of the flesh. This internal struggle can be affected by external forces, which are not spirits *per se*, but vices. These vices combine with the fleshly desire of the person, which leads him or her to corruption. Despite Philo's apparent rejection of the demonic interpretation of Genesis 6 found in *BW*, his anthropology has clear affinities with some of the thinking preserved in the Dead Sea documents. Philo's interpretation of the giants reflects diversity within Judaism with respect to the problem of human suffering, a diversity that is also reflected in the New Testament.

1.4 Summary

This thesis discusses the reception of Genesis 6.1–4 (Greek and Hebrew traditions) in Early Jewish literature, in particular, *I Enoch* 6–16 and the writings of Philo of Alexandria. It will be shown that a primary interpretation of the Genesis passage by these authors involved the understanding of human suffering, that is by demonic affliction in the Watcher tradition and human choice in Philo. While other scholars argue that the story presented in *BW* is simply the author's explanation of an oppressive political situation that Israel is facing, I contend that *BW* can be identified as the author's account of the origin of evil spirits based on his interpretation of Genesis 6.1–4. It should be recognized that this understanding is primarily expressed in *I Enoch* 15–16. It is clear that the giantology and anthropology, which are presented in *BW*, serve as a backdrop for what would follow in the developing anthropology and demonology in the *DSS*, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Gospels.

The developing anthropology and demonology in these documents reveal a diverse theological community within Judaism in the centuries around the turn of the era. They suggest the likelihood that the author of *BW* indeed intended the message of the book to offer some explanation for the existence and function of evil spirits in the world of third-century B.C.E. Jews. In arguing along these lines, I part company from the views of Suter, Dimant, and others. This thesis advocates that the message of *BW* may be read aetiologically rather than strictly paradigmatically. Although a

¹⁰ See ch. 6, section 6.3.0.

reading which suggests the story is a metaphor for the political situation in Israel at the time is not ruled out, the evidence presented here suggests that *BW* represented the worldview of at least a significant group of Jews in the 2TP, which believed that evil spirits were a reality that they faced on a daily basis.

Before examining the primary source materials themselves, I shall present a thorough evaluative overview of the history of research of *BW* in chapter 2. I include the history of the texts, an outline of the structure of the book, a brief summary of the book, a short excursus on notable terms in *BW*, the foci of the research, i.e., the date, place, and author; theories of source criticism; and the theories of interpretation and function of the book. This evaluation reveals that although this research is invaluable to understanding *BW*, more investigation needs to be done relating to theological issues of the document. This attention to recent research is of particular importance since the major developments in this area of study have transpired during the last three decades. It is in relation to these developments that the focus of this thesis is best delineated.