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Why 1 Enoch Matters

Outside Historic Biblical Canons

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- **Canon Boundaries Reflect History, Not Heaven**

The formation of the biblical canon was a gradual, Spirit-guided historical process—not a single moment or decree. While Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians all affirm divine inspiration, they nonetheless recognize different canonical boundaries. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, for example, continues to include 1 Enoch within its canon, preserving the oldest complete Christian canon still extant today.

Dismissing 1 Enoch as “non-canonical” often assumes that later Western ecclesial decisions alone define divine authority—a historical claim rather than a biblical one. Canon boundaries determine what a given tradition formally reads as Scripture, but they do not erase the wider body of literature that informed, shaped, and influenced the biblical authors themselves. Just as extra-biblical writings influenced those who later compiled canonical lists, so too did texts like 1 Enoch shape the worldview and theological vocabulary of Second Temple Judaism and the early Church.

Authority Is Not the Same as Canonicity

Dr. Michael Heiser noted: “1 Enoch is not part of the Protestant canon, but it is essential for understanding the theology of New Testament writers who did consider it part of their intellectual and spiritual world” (Reversing Hermon, p. 25).

Jude 14–15 cites 1 Enoch 1:9 directly, and 2 Peter 2 echoes its Watcher narrative. A text can therefore be non-canonical yet theologically authoritative—functioning as background revelation to illuminate inspired Scripture.

- The Continuity of the Spirit’s Guidance**

To claim that only the 16th-century Reformers “got the canon right” implies that for over a thousand years, the global Church lacked access to the full Word of God. Yet Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide His people “into all truth” (John 16:13). The Spirit’s illumination must be seen as continuous, not restricted to a late Western correction.

- 1 Enoch as Contextual Revelation**

1 Enoch provides a key to the worldview of the apostles: the Watchers of chapters 6–16 frame the background of Genesis 6:1–4; demons as disembodied spirits of the Nephilim explain New Testament unclean spirits; and the Son of Man passages (chapters 37–71) anticipate a divine-human judge. Studying 1 Enoch does not *add* to Scripture — it restores the ancient context that shaped it.

- **A Balanced View**

Respecting Protestant caution about the canon's boundaries is appropriate. Yet honoring the Holy Spirit's work in history means acknowledging that God's truth often overflows beyond our attributed categories.

Reading 1 Enoch is not a challenge to Scripture but an opportunity to see Scripture through the eyes of its writers—as well as through the ears of those who first heard it read aloud.

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*This resource contains original commentary and synthesis by Daniel Thornton,
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