

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Introduction to Biblical Studies, Session 15, 1 & 2 Enoch

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 15, First and Second Enoch.

We have done a brief introduction to extracanonical literature at large, and we've seen that it's a complicated study.

We want to focus, in this session, on what I've called probably the premier examples of pseudepigrapha, which itself is one of the categories of extracanonical literature. So, the direction we're going for this particular lecture is to get some sense of review first, but then some sense of what pseudepigrapha at large is doing as a genre or a vast body of literature. Then we're going to focus on the First and Second Enoch and some ways that those texts, First and Second Enoch, actually help us again understand the backdrop, especially for the New Testament.

So pseudepigrapha, simply put, as we've already said in our preceding introductory lecture, are writings falsely attributed to ideal biblical figures. Now, of course, the question is, who might that be? Well, we've got pseudepigraphic texts that are attributed to, among others, these folks, Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Daniel, Ezra, and there are reasons for that. So, I'll ask the question, why these particular people? Well, the answer runs something like this.

As you have writing communities in the particular time periods, the centuries, which I'm going to describe in just a moment a little bit more, but we have communities who are living under duress in one form or another. They're God's people. As we said, they accept the canon. They understand the canon to be their authoritative scriptures, but they're trying to figure out how to make it fit with, generally speaking, the rather harsh context in which they are living.

One of the ways of doing that is to presume and present a sense of messages from God, messages that are coming that are with regard to the future, by and large, not exclusively, but with regard to the future. And what better way to present those messages than to choose some, well, some biblical figure who, in some way in which that figure is represented in the biblical text, would be presumed to have a special connection with the heavenly realms, a special experience with God. So just two examples.

Enoch, we're going to expand on quite a bit, but remember, in chapter five, Enoch walked with God and was not. Well, that became perfect fodder for some kinds of explorations. How is it that Enoch had that special experience? What might he have

been shown in that time, et cetera? The second one, just as a quick example, would be Abraham because, as we know from Genesis 15, when God cut the covenant with Abraham, it was a rather stunning experience.

You have these animal parts that are set apart there, and then the smoking fire pot passes between those animal parts while Abraham is in a deep sleep, and there's a revelatory experience there in terms of the future of God's people, of Abraham's covenant seed. Well, again, that becomes a ground for these communities taking that and saying, oh, he would also be a perfect conduit for some kind of revelation of what we might like to think is hopeful news for the future. So, just to review what I've just said here, special revelation regarding God's plan for his people in the face of the kinds of things they were experiencing, and generally speaking, these are our ballpark beginning and end dates.

Between 200 BC and AD 200, God's people underwent horrible duress, just in terms of two significant things that had long, long, long-term impact. When Antiochus Epiphanes, in the middle of the second century BC, desecrated the temple, all the implications of that reverberated for a whole century and well beyond. And then when the Romans came in, and you have a first Jewish revolt against Rome and a second Jewish revolt against Rome, these are challenging times, and this is the time frame within which we see a good number of these pseudepigraphic compositions.

They're also characteristically apocalyptic, which means revelatory, we would expect that. Not all aspects of the pseudepigrapha are necessarily apocalyptic in nature. For example, parts of 4th Ezra are more philosophical speculation, but by and large, we're thinking of material that is apocalyptic.

So, we need to just unpack, and for some of you, this is a review, what by and large, characterizes apocalyptic literature. Well, the big overarching purpose is posed sort of like this, because of the grim circumstances within which they're living, this is a literature that's looking forward to some time when good's going to triumph. And just to remind ourselves, within the canon, we have this. We certainly have it in the New Testament when we have the Book of Revelation, which, in cryptic terms, is looking forward to a time when good will triumph.

In fact, those of you who know the King James Bible know that it's not called Revelation; it's called the Apocalypse of St. John because it's revelatory in terms of good finally triumphing over evil. We see apocalyptic literature in Daniel as well because those were tough times for God's people. Other characteristics, just as a reminder, are the messages presented in terms of the figure, our major figure, our pseudepigraphic figure in terms of the non-canonical texts, having dreams and visions.

Now again, these apocalyptic pseudepigraphic texts find their basis in the canonical apocalyptic texts. So, we do know, just to repeat myself, Daniel has dreams. He interprets dreams from Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel will have visions. Those are apocalyptic, but we're not going to call them pseudepigraphic. Instead, they're providing our genre foundation for this burgeoning in the centuries between 200 BC and AD 200 of our pseudepigraphic apocalyptic stuff.

Significant use of symbolic numbers, symbolic figures, and fantastic images. Some people suggest that those fantasy images that we read, locusts that are described in Revelation chapter nine, for example, or some of the things that Daniel saw when he saw the beasts of chapter seven in Daniel. These are images you don't encounter, obviously, and there are those who suggest, in some ways, they're almost the equivalent of what we would think of cartooning today, emphasizing certain characteristics to make symbolic messages come alive.

Well, in terms of our pseudepigraphic and also apocalyptic literature at large, there seem to be some recurring themes. And just to articulate these, these are not coming across in very boilerplate ways in every text. In fact, they're going to be refracted through a number of different experiential philosophical religious lenses.

But one of the questions that is always dealt with is this business of evil. How do we address evil? Where does it come from? What's it like? Obviously, this is a significant concern for these communities because they're dealing with rampant evil as it is tearing them apart in one form or another. So oftentimes our texts are going to wrestle with that.

We're going to see First Enoch clearly wrestling with it. Come back to that in a moment. In addition, there is a sense in many of these texts that God is so transcendent.

Now, in some ways, this is partly an influence, probably the Hellenistic, Neoplatonic way of thinking, but there's a sense that God is far enough removed from this horrible evil that something has to be done to access him if you will. And so, just by way of example, in a number of these texts, we have levels of heaven. And so, God is not presented as imminent, but never, I mean, he's accessible, but he's accessible to our figures if they make their way through a variety of levels of heaven.

We're going to come back to that. With a number of these texts, we also have, as would be expected by a community that is under duress, a figure, a person, someone who's going to be a source of salvation. And so, it'll come across in some ways as a messianic figure, or at least someone who has chosen, specifically chosen, to accomplish God's purposes.

And then finally, because life was so grim in these contexts, there is a growing interest, desire, craving for life and life in some exalted state, resurrection. So, in a variety of ways, these other themes as well, we'll visit a few of them, but these keep recurring. So, we want to keep that in mind.

There's also something that we saw when we were visiting our Dead Sea texts. We saw kind of this tendency to view things as either good or evil. And by the way, that's very biblical, but our spheres of dualisms do show up in a number of different ways.

Within some of our Judaisms, we're going to see kind of a temporal dualism, living in this world, but looking forward to the world to come. So that emphasis on resurrection is going to be an important one. This is a theme, by the way, that we're going to revisit when we take just a brief look into the rabbinic materials, because they too are going to distinguish between this world and the world to come.

So, there's a temporal sense and distinction, a barrier that has to be crossed. There's also, I'll put these two together, kind of a vertical dualism, heaven on the one hand, earth on the other. And this, of course, is going to be the locus within which we think of the transcendence of God, and then how these particular pseudepigraphic figures that are selected ideal figures from the biblical text, how they access through these levels of heaven, as it's often represented, the heavenly realms in some way.

So, there's that kind of vertical dualism. Finally, we saw this when we were dealing with the Dead Sea texts. There's a sense of the good on one hand and the evil on the other.

As some of the Dead Sea texts would put it then, the sons of light versus the sons of darkness, and an ongoing battle between them. And in some cases, within individuals themselves, the good inclination and the evil inclination are battling right within those persons. Although we're not going to look at the text of 4th Ezra, you do see that coming up in that text.

Well, with that in mind, as sort of our real thumbnail sketch of Pseudepigrapha at large, let's make our way for our next moments together to the Enoch literature, which is more complicated than we can give it really fair, but we'll do as much as we can. When Genesis 5, as I said a little bit ago, articulates that Enoch is different. We've got a whole genealogical pattern, rhetorical patterns going there.

But suddenly, here's Enoch; he walks with God, and he is not because God took him. And unlike the other folks in that list, he doesn't live more than 900 years. His years are 365.

So therefore, as we've said already, he becomes a perfect, perfect biblical ideal figure. Although there's more than First and Second Enoch, those are the only two I'm going to deal with, and even those only partially. So, first Enoch, just to give us a sense in terms of, you know, how to think about this text.

It's a big text, by the way. It's a long text. It's a composite text.

And we see in terms of the languages within which we have our fragments or whole things, that it's the church, again, who has kept this. There are all kinds of really interesting reasons for that, but we don't have time to go into that at this point. And as we can see, and I'm going to map out the separate segments of it in a moment, we have the early 3rd century, as in the 200s BC, and then some of it's supposed to be maybe even into the 1st century AD.

Second Enoch, a different text, quite different text. We have its preservation within the Eastern branch Orthodox Church. Slavonic is the language.

It's going to be later than we have for the 1st century AD. Now, as I note for you here, there are two distinct versions. I'll make a couple of notes where those versions are a little bit different in terms of what we want to deal with, with the levels of heaven.

But by and large, we don't have to worry terribly much about that. There's a third Enoch that will not concern us today. Notice that is a later text anyway, possibly as late as 4th, 5th century AD.

So, let's pick up on our sections of Enoch first of all--First Enoch. And we're only going to dig into two or three of these, but this will be enough to give us a sense of why this is important stuff.

These are in chapters, but they're very short chapters by and large. And you know, this book is all about judgment. No surprise there.

It's written in contexts. Those centuries I mentioned a moment ago were these people, and this authorship was waiting for judgment against evil. Going on from there, chapters 6 through 36 are called the book of the Watchers.

Now, Watchers is a distinction that refers to fallen angels. We're going to come back to that and see how they work in this. But in Genesis 6, 1 through 4, this is one of the texts that is a foundation text for this particular part of First Enoch.

In Genesis 6, 1 through 4, we have the sons of God who saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took some of them. And then, of course, a little later on, we have Nephilim as part of that picture as well in verse 4. So, chapters 6 through

36 of First Enoch is going to, those chapters are going to expand a lot on who these Watchers were, what they did, and how it all worked out. So, we're going to see little segments of that.

Again, notice that's early, at least second century BC. Continuing on in terms of our sections 37 through 71, usually called the similitudes, it's a little bit later, as you can see from the date.

Again, judgment is a big theme. But as we dip just briefly into this, we'll see a strong emphasis on someone called the Son of Man and the Elect One, especially from chapters 38 through 46. So, hang on to that.

Obviously, those are ringing some bells for you if you know your gospel narratives. I am going to deal with all in our study today with the subsequent sections, just so you know that we have about 10 chapters that are going to address the calendar. The calendar was always a bit of a subtext for these Jewish communities because, as we said, with regard to our Qumran texts, there were those who adopted a solar calendar with 364 days per year.

There were those who went with a lunar calendar. And then moving ahead, there are some very odd chapters. Animals are used to kind of make a grand rush through history from, as I say, Adam right to the Maccabean period, i.e., the second century BC.

So those chapters are going to do that. And then finally, can't get away from the judgment theme. So there is going to be judgment, judgment, apocalyptic judgment, and then the presumed prediction of the birth of Noah.

Remember, Genesis 6, which is where Noah shows up, follows Genesis 5, which is where Enoch was taken up, walked with God, and was no more. So, this text is going to envision a move toward the thing that prompted the flood. Those are the sections.

Let's just get a look in terms of why this ended up being such an important, or how I should say, manuscript of it. But I want to simply see a couple of places where references to Enoch show up in literature that's contemporary, right? So it's not just, oh, here are first and second Enoch, aren't they interesting? But even in those centuries back then, notably the first century AD, there were those who were saying, hmm, this is interesting. Here's Enoch, and Enoch said, so the Testament of the 12 Patriarchs, which we're going to just briefly dip into in another lecture, repeatedly references Enoch.

Enoch, we have the Qumran community; Enoch's scroll is found in that context. We have, within the Ethiopic Church, even a sense that in some ways this text was canonical. That's rather amazing.

The Church Fathers quote extensively, and I'm sure you're all just waiting for the next point, which is Jude, which we're going to get to in a moment. So clearly, this was perceived as really important literature for our first-century audiences, in which we have folks interpreting the Old Testament, yes, and in which we have a church that is going to grow and flourish. So, let's think about First Enoch in terms of the New Testament.

Jude, and Enoch, the seventh from Adam. By the way, that's what he's called in the first Enoch.

I've given you the reference here. He's actually labeled the seventh from Adam. And so, Jude is picking up on the whole statement that shows up in first Enoch, and he is going to pretty much paraphrase it.

Let me read this, and then I'll quote you the parallel passage in Enoch. Enoch prophesied of these things, saying, see, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy angels to judge everyone and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they've done in an ungodly way. And of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Pretty strong statement. And, of course, as you know, Jude is all about false teachers. Well, here's the Enoch passage.

Chapter 1, verses 9 and 10. And just, I mean, you can make this parallel if you're looking at the screen or listening to me. Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all, to destroy the ungodly, to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness, which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

I mean, there's very clearly a resonance there. And Jude has a strong sense of quoting Enoch. Again, he's not necessarily attributing this to, oh, this is something that Enoch wrote way back when, but he's taking the literary affirmation from chapter 60, 7th from Adam and saying, yeah, we've got this text telling us about this.

But it gets better. Exegesis. I mentioned, or I should say briefly summarized, Genesis 6, 1 through 4. So, I won't do that again.

But what we have in Enoch, especially starting with chapter 6—excuse me—and going through 16, are descriptions of these fallen angels. They're called the Watchers. They are named.

There's a number of names, excuse me, that show up, and somebody called Azazel is their chief demon. Hold on to that. It turns out they lead humans astray, and they do it, particularly by teaching warfare and seduction.

So, remember, one of our pseudepigraphic themes is dealing with nature and origin of evil. Well, our Enoch folks that are coming up with this particular treatment as they're thinking through Genesis 6 are saying, ah, evil originated because you've got these fallen angels, and they're coming down, and they're teaching the two basic foundational seminal sins. Violence and warfare on the one hand, sexual seduction on the other.

And the text waxes pretty long on that. Where is Azazel coming from? Well, that's an interesting question because if you know your Old Testament and your Pentateuch and Leviticus, you know that the name Azazel shows up only once in the Hebrew Bible, and it happens to be in conjunction with the description of the Day of Atonement. When you have those two ghosts, one is sacrificed for the Lord, the other has the sins of the people confessed over its head, and he is sent to Azazel.

He's not a scapegoat. That's a bad interpretation of the word Azazel, so just leave scapegoat out of it. He is the goat for Azazel.

Well, our students of Scripture in this community and others as well understand that then as the chief demon in the wilderness, goat demon. By the way, Leviticus 17 is going to mention goat and goat idols, so there's interesting stuff going on here. But Azazel becomes their named figure.

Lots more to say about that, but time is the issue. Here's a quote to give us a sense, and just part of a quote, as you can see, it's coming out of chapter 8. Azazel taught men to make swords, knives, shields, and breastplates and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them. So, in that little segment you've got this warfare and all the implications of it, but then it goes on.

Bracelets, ornaments, use of antimony, the beautifying of the eyelids, all kinds of costly stones, coloring tinctures, i.e. seduction. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray and became corrupt in all their ways. So, our text is in very, very embellished terms, taking these biblical names, these biblical themes, the prelude to the flood, and developing a very interesting narrative from it.

Again, it goes from chapters 6 through 16 in First Enoch. Well, then we also have our Nephilim, as I mentioned in Genesis 6:4.

Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. Sorry, that should be them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

Well, of course, if you've studied this, you know there's lots of discussion on how the Nephilim are related to that prior description of sons of God and daughters of men. But here's what Enoch is going to do with it. The women became pregnant, and they bore great giants whose height was 3,000 cubits.

They consumed all the produce of the people until the people detested feeding them. You see all sorts of interesting extra-biblical cultural things coming in there. The giants turned against them and devoured humankind.

And they began to sin against birds and beasts and reptiles and fish and to devour one another's flesh and to drink the blood. So, you see Nephilim, and of course, the giant-Nephilim connection, is coming straight out of the Book of Numbers where Anakim, Nephilim, and giants are represented. Again, we don't have time to go there either, but see what our authorship has done here in terms of the frightening, horrendous, supernatural in a very bad way nature of these Nephilim.

Well, of course, as we continue to read on, I won't quote any more, but the question is, and the question for our authorships, did the fallen angels get away with the salacious behavior? No. As the text goes on, God sends his archangels. They don't necessarily want to execute judgment right away, but he has them do it.

Raphael, Michael, and Gabriel have the task of punishing those fallen angels. Now, we have Gabriel and Michael showing up in the biblical text, but we have, in addition to naming some of our fallen creatures, Azazel is among them, we also have additional names in this literature, in addition to Michael and Gabriel, of some of our angels, archangels. So, Raphael, God heals, is the implication of that as part of this picture as well.

The long and the short of it is Azazel is bound. He's cast into darkness in a desert, placed with sharp rocks, which is, of course, drawing on the implications of what was to happen to the goat for Azazel being sent into the wilderness and going to its death in that context. Enoch is presented in these texts as wanting to pray for these creatures, these watchers.

He's presented as being a compassionate individual. He's presented in some ways as a prophet, but in this context, he was admonished not to pray for them. There's no chance.

There's much more to say about chapters six through 16, but we're going to move on because we want to tackle a couple more things with regard to first Enoch, notably

the son of man issue. And then I want to spend some time with Second Enoch as well. So, in the chapters that are called the parables of Enoch or the similitudes, we have some fascinating, fascinating things.

We have an ongoing description, and I would encourage you to read those chapters because the son of man and someone called the ancient of days, we know that title from Daniel chapter seven. This is the answer to the question, what is the prophetic foundation for the Son of Man title and the scene in Enoch 46 through 62? It's Daniel seven, where we have Daniel seven with the ancient of days. There's a judgment seat.

He's on the throne. And then, of course, into his presence versus 13 and 14 comes a son of man. Enoch literature is going to represent that as the before all time, right? That's the ancient of days.

And then you have the prototype of the before all time. I'm reading through the translation as it shows up in Charlesworth, but I notice the prototype of the before all time, the before all time, we have the elect one, and then we have the son of man. So, here's just a quick thumbnail sketch of what I've said already, our ancient of days in Daniel seven.

And then we have, and I'll read it specifically. There was before me one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence, given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

All nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away. His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Now, we could take that right across into the gospels, where Jesus chooses the title son of man specifically for himself. Certainly, I would suggest that that is intentionally based on what we see in Daniel seven, especially in Matthew 26, where he says, you'll see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven as he's standing before Caiaphas. But having said that, we want to move it through this bit of literature in between Daniel and the gospels, because what Enoch literature is doing with this is helpful.

Now, before I go any further, the truth is not everybody agrees with this whole son of man developing context concept. So, you will read different presentations of it. Take what I'm saying to you as what I think works best here, but I reflect that there might be some other ways of dealing with the development of that particular title and what it meant for Jesus when he chose it.

Having said all that, let's kind of articulate who our particular figures and events are in these chapters and then draw some things together that I just repeat myself, become the platform for Jesus using that term, which, by the way, in Ezekiel means a fully human person, but in Daniel seems clearly to mean fully God, puts them together for himself. At any rate, chapter 46 describes one to whom belongs all time, or the before all time, and one who has a face like a human. That's part of our description.

He's called a prototype, and I mentioned that a moment ago, of the before all time. He's called the son of man, he's called Messiah, and he's called the elect and chosen one, whoever this is. That's a really significant range of titles, and again, if this text is written in the first century BC, that's part of the cultural perception of whatever is being reflected or suggested or adumbrated by Daniel 7. This is interesting as well.

This elects one, this chosen one, tasks involve justice and called the light of the Gentiles. Of course, that's making our antennas wave, too, isn't it? The remnant of the righteous are going to be saved in his name. Well, obviously, for those of us who are digging into Isaiah from time to time, and particularly those servant songs in the book of Isaiah, we know the servant of the Lord, among many other things, was called to be light to the nations and bring justice, light to the Gentiles, bring justice.

And so, we've got some of that interwoven then with what we have in Daniel. This is a rich figure; this is a rich articulation of the thinking of at least certain segments of our populations at that point in time, and I would suggest already, I've suggested that this then is part of the foundation for Jesus' self-identification as the son of man. So, just to reiterate, we have in Ezekiel, that's the term God uses to call to Ezekiel, Son of Man do this, son of man do that, son of man take this scroll and eat it, son of man lie on your side.

And basically, when the Lord calls to Ezekiel in that way, he's referring to Ezekiel as a human being, who's a prophet, who's a servant, who's given over to serving God. In Daniel, we have a different picture, don't we? The passage I just quoted for you is clearly a heavenly being to whom is given all the attributes of a sovereign God, and that's important. Now, what's really interesting is that towards the end of chapter 7, the saints will also adopt that title.

Just as in Isaiah, we see the Lord first being Israel, and then the servant of the Lord being a person who is called to restore and redeem Israel, by the time you get to Isaiah 56, God's people who are associated with the servant will be called servants. And the same parallel is happening here. Anyway, I've mentioned that combination, rich, rich, rich, intertextual combination between these Son of Man references and servant of the Lord references, as they get interwoven together in 1 Enoch.

All that then would be the backdrop, not only for seeing Jesus using it in the gospels, when he's referring to himself, self-referential, but particularly when he's before Caiaphas, and he's admonished or put under oath by Caiaphas, are you the son of God? And Jesus' response is drawn directly, I would suggest, out of Daniel 7, but also reverberating with all these other cultural echoes we've just talked about. Of course, it results in a charge of blasphemy, because what Caiaphas hears is this person who simply looks like a human being, claiming, by virtue of using that expression, coming on the clouds of heaven to be God. Well, that's enough for 1 Enoch.

Let's pick up just a little bit with our 2 Enoch. Again, keep in mind that 2 Enoch has two different versions, two different recensions of it, and that's going to affect a little bit in terms of how we look at our levels of heaven, which is why we're looking at this text eventually. However, just to get a flavor of the text, this is a later text, 1st centuries BC AD, and we see an emphasis on God as creator.

There's also more of an emphasis here, it's not so much on exploring some of those esoteric things we saw in 1st Enoch, but there's an emphasis on almost, well, proverbial wisdom, practical righteousness. But for our purposes, for our greatest interest, we're going to think about Enoch's ascent through the heavens. Now, in 1st Enoch, you have several heavens.

In chapter 16, I didn't talk about this, but Enoch is going to kind of go from one house to another house to a greater house. That's in 1st Enoch. But by the time we get to 2nd Enoch, this is really spelled out and elaborated.

It becomes the sevens. Beyond chapter 69, we just simply have some other of these figures that do show up with regard to biblical pre-flood figures, Methuselah, somebody called Nir, and then the suggestion that our Melchizedek figure, who, of course, is a mysterious figure anyway, was born before the flood. But that's a part of 2nd Enoch we're not going to address.

Our focus is going to be on the seven levels of heaven, as they're described in 2 Enoch. I know I've said this before, but I'm just going to say it again. Keep in mind that as we talk about these levels of heaven, and for lack of a better way of talking about them, talk about the contents of them, this is the way our 1st century culture was construing these things.

That's how they talked about them. They basically were taking the ineffable and trying to put words to it. So, as they saw the first level of heaven, the first thing we keep in mind is the Hebrew word for heaven also means sky.

And so, their first level of heaven for them was what you see in the sky, what's up there in the firmament, if you will, so stars. And then of course, since it snowed and rained and the dew came from there, that's also where you have the repositories of

all those meteorological things. In their minds, and I keep emphasizing in their minds and representations, that was our first level.

Now it gets interesting because they are venturing into the realms that their pseudographic ideal figure can only go. And so above that first level of heaven, you have a second level. And here is where we have angels hanging and awaiting judgment.

Why are they awaiting judgment? Well, they're awaiting judgment because of what they did in conjunction with Genesis 6. These are the fallen angels. They're the ones who have been condemned to judgment. We see echoes of that, by the way, in the New Testament.

I'll come back to that. The third level of heaven, again, in the way they're thinking about it, they call it paradise. The third level is a Tree of Life.

It's a place between the incorruptible and the corruptible. So again, remember that in the mindset of these communities, particularly in cultures affected by some kind of Neoplatonic thinking, the closer you get to God, the more pure things are. The closer you get to earth, you know, polluted by the physical and by sin.

So here are third levels between corruptible and incorruptible. As they say, a place prepared for the righteous. Now I've also noted there's, as part of this description, a northern part region of this third level, that is called paradise, that does also have some punishment associated with it.

We will not spend a lot of time with that, but it's a very interesting feature of the quote-unquote geography of heaven. Fourth level. This is a long, long, long, long segment.

It also discusses how all these things that measure time are moving around in the heavenlies. So we might suggest that this is at least partially drawing on Genesis 1, because on day 4, Yom 4 of Genesis 1, we have the articulation of the sun, moon, stars, and constellations for measuring days, times, and seasons. Enoch is picking up on this.

Fifth level. Moving up again. Not only do you have fallen angels waiting judgment in level 2, but in level 5 you've got these watchers.

Remember, they were referred to in Enoch, first Enoch. These are the ones who led the angels astray. They're particularly culpable.

In the sixth level, there are the angels and the archangels who guard the presence of God, along with the seventh level, cherubim, seraphim, wheels, and thrones; often,

this is drawing on Isaiah 6 and on Ezekiel's visions as well. Now above that seventh level, and again, depending on whether you read version A or version B of 2 Enoch, but either right above that or in the tenth level, we actually have the Lord in his own or on his own throne. These are our levels of heaven as 2 Enoch is presenting them.

And I've summarized them a lot, I know. But as we think about them, so what do I want to do with this? I mean, so what? Let me suggest, oh, I'm sorry, I forgot to put this in here, but you know, let's just, let's just notice what Isaiah says about punishment of the heavenly host, since we have that certainly showing up in this text. In that day, and this, of course, is part of Isaiah's little apocalypse from chapters 24 to 27, the Lord will punish the army of the high place, the heavenly hosts.

In the heavens, the kings of the earth will be gathered together, and prisoners will be enclosed in a dungeon. And for many days, they will be punished. Again, this is probably another little sense in terms of dungeons or prisons and prisoners somewhere in heavenly realms.

So just hang on to that as we move a little bit forward and then draw together our understanding of level two and level five. Colossians 2 disarm the powers and authorities. Well, obviously, we want to do something with this.

So, the question obviously is, is there anything in the New Testament that perhaps is flashed out, elucidated by understanding what's being said? And I'm guessing you've got some things coming to your mind. So let me just refresh our memories a little bit. Paul in second Corinthians 12, saying lots of things in second Corinthians 12, but he says this, I know a man who was caught up to the third heaven.

I know this person was caught up in paradise and hurt inexpressible things, things that human beings are not permitted to tell. But notice Paul is using something that was part of that wider understanding of heavenly realms. He uses the third level, and he says paradise. And therefore, that terminology—again, it's not describing the geography of heaven, but Paul is using it to say, I'm beyond the place.

I was beyond the place because it's he, where I experienced these inexpressible things. But it gets even more interesting, doesn't it? Let's try this one. First Peter chapter three, for Christ died for sins once for all, put to death in the body, but made alive by the spirit through whom he also went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah.

And I just referenced or read that passage from Isaiah 24. Well, okay. You know, what do we want to do with this? But by the way, I'll just suggest this as a little bit of a first Peter backdrop.

Just prior to this, Peter has admonished his readers, his audience, to be able to give an answer to anyone who asks the reason for the hope that lies in you and do it with gentleness and respect. And isn't that interesting that after that admonition and the manner in which we're supposed to give a message for the hope that lies in us, he goes right to the example of Jesus Christ, who's preaching to the spirits in prison who disobeyed. Is he preaching redemption? He's preaching judgment, probably, but doing it as a model for us. It's almost inconceivable to figure out how to do that.

But I'm just putting that together for our purposes. What do we do with this in terms of levels of heaven? Well, now I'm going to walk way out on a limb and you don't have to like the limb, but we'll try it anyway. We do have the following.

When Jesus is on the cross, and he is flanked by two thieves, one on either side to one of them, he says, today you will be with me in paradise. And I'm not sure how literally we want to take this, but I sort of liked the idea that today you will be with me in paradise, paradise being the resting place for the righteous. And if indeed Peter and also Luke represent Jesus's words, but particularly Peter is thinking in terms of that wider cultural presentation of the heavens, then, and here I'm going to say very crudely, crassly, simplistically, how they might've thought about it.

Jesus breathes his last on the cross. He has said to the thief, today you're going to be with me in paradise, promising him that righteous residence there, the residence of the righteous. And then Jesus doesn't go to hell.

No, he goes to paradise. And on the way, okay, that's where I'm saying, I'm presenting this in extremely barbaric terms, but on the way, Peter's going to draw on this. He's going to pass those fallen angels awaiting judgment.

That's how Peter might be thinking about it. And therefore, you've got then perhaps a sense that as Jesus went to his rest for those days, he descended to the grave, not to hell. He descended to the grave.

And on the third day was raised again from the dead. But part of that whole picture in the mind, the mindset that Peter is writing to is that on the way he was probably preaching judgment. Well, what do we do with these things? Let's just make some observations.

Extra-biblical texts demonstrate authors knew their scriptures. I've been saying that all along and I will just reiterate it again. And here's the important part.

They're trying to figure out how to understand this for their day. And Peter, especially, is trying to figure out his context because he's dealing with something. How do you talk about a resurrection from the dead? How do you talk about where

Jesus went for that period of time? How do you talk about this judgment, Isaiah 24, on the heavenly hosts? He's got a cultural template.

And so, he's going to use everything he knows of the scriptures. This is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I'm just going to say that.

But he is going to use that and speak into his cultural understanding, especially as I note for you, he's dealing with the ineffable. So, as I pretty much already said this. New Testament writers draw on the richer way of interwoven texts current in the Judaism of their day.

And I have no idea where that extra J came from, but it's there. Here's just a, well, I want to be very careful here because, again, I could be trampling on some theological tender toes. But let's just regard this: where did Jesus spend those three days? The Hebrew word means grave.

So, our Apostles Creed is going to say descended to the grave, I would suggest. Interestingly enough, it's characteristically in Greek, translated by Hades. Our parable in Luke chapter 16 has the rich man in Hades and the Lazarus figure in Abraham's bosom.

The Hades, by the way, might be that northern area of the third level of heaven. Again, I'm talking about the popular conception here. Therefore, there would be some place of punishment.

At any rate, characteristics that have been translated by Hades could have been misrepresented as hell. Final sentence spoken with a great deal of caution might suggest that as we read particular renditions, and it depends on your English translation of the Apostles Creed, we might just want to say, as I reiterated a moment ago, he descended to the grave and then the third day he rose again. That might be a better representation if we're putting all this together.

But those are walking out on limbs, and I understand that. At this point, we will draw to a close, obviously, because it's the end of the slideshow, and pick up with another example next time, testamentary literature.

This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 15, First and Second Enoch.