Enoch

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

According to Gen 4:26 and 5:6–11, Enosh (Heb. 'Enôš; LXX Evôc) lived 905 years and was the son of Seth and father of Kenan. He was the third generation of humankind. According to Gen 4:26, it was during Enosh's lifetime that people "began to invoke YHWH by name." Enosh is briefly mentioned in the genealogy of 1 Chr 1:1.

Two etymologies have been suggested for the name Enosh. The first, appearing as early as the time of Philo, has been "humanity" (Phil.) 7–8 [LCL] 6–9; also see HALOT 70; BDB: 60; the second, as early as the time of Jerome, has been "weak," "incurable," or "frail" (from Heb. 'ândâ; Jerome, Liber de nominibus Hebræis, De Genesi, also see Alk. enšūm [CAD 4:166–67]; Mass.: 345). Some suggest that the name Enosh is a double entendre, communicating the "frail and mortal" condition of "humanity" (e.g., Kell/Delitschz: 119).

The statement "it was then that [people] began to invoke YHWH by name" (Heb. 'az ḫāṭal ḫāṭr be-šem YHWH) has received much scholarly attention. It may refer to the "invocation" of YHWH's name (e.g., Cassuto: 247; Kell/Delitschz: 120), a more general YHWH worship (e.g., Gunkel: 54; Brongers: 12; see Gen 12:8; 13:4; 26:25; 21:33; etc.), or even an all-encompassing non-YHWH worship (e.g., Westermann: 340). The statement may seem at odds with both Gen 4:3–4, which describes an earlier occurrence of YHWH worship, and Exod 3 and 6, which equate the beginning of YHWH worship with Moses (see Sandmel: 29), though some scholars see no contradiction (e.g., Westermann: 339).

In 1828, Buttman argued that the Cainite and Sethite genealogies of Gen 4 and 5 were essentially duplicates of each other (170–72). Buttman suggested that Adam ("man") originally began the Cainite genealogy and Enosh ("man") began the Sethite one (see Hallo/Simpson: 32). Buttman's theory was bolstered by Robert Wilson, who argued that tribal genealogies are "fluid" by nature and can exist in multiple forms (158–66). Yet, Wilson is himself cautious about the Adam–Enosh interchange, noting that "there is no indication of this... in the present text" (162 n. 63).

II. Judaism

The passive verb הָהַל, following Enosh's naming in Gen 4:26b, has generated much exegetical interest and a variety of interpretations, largely due to its awkward syntax. What was begun (what kind of worship) and by whom (Enosh or his contemporaries)? Is this understood as an explanation of Enosh's name, as we see with the naming of Seth, his father, in Gen 4:25? The ancient versions and translations further complicate matters by either reflecting a slightly different Heb. text, or reading what was to become the MT differently, so as to render the passive verb of Gen 4:26b active, and taking Enosh as its subject. This is most significantly the case in the LXX’s rendering: “He hoped [as if Heb. הָהַל were הָהַל, aorist, from the Heb. root ה-ל] to invoke the name of the Lord God.” This becomes the basis of interpretation by Greek-writing Jews and early Christians, e.g., Philo of Alexandria’s interpretation of Enosh as exemplifying the virtue of hope. Other Second Temple period texts (e.g., Sirach and Jubilees) include Enosh among the earliest righteous descendants of Adam, without saying much about him in particular.

Rabbinic interpretations of Gen 4:26b, beginning with our earliest rabbinic (“tannaitic”) collections and Aram. translations ( targumim), take the half-verse to refer not so much to Enosh’s own behavior, as to that of the “generation of Enosh,” which is claimed to have introduced idolatry (“false/alien worship”) as a widespread practice, effectively the converse of the verse’s seemingly plain meaning (the origins of true divine worship). This is accomplished either by understanding the biblical words to contain an ellipsis: “Then was begun the calling [of false gods] by the name of the Lord”; or by understanding the passive verb הָהַל to mean “was profaned” (the same root, ה-ל): “Then was profaned the calling upon the name of the Lord.” Early rabbinic texts associate a mini-flood of one-third of the world with the generation of Enosh, understood as divine punishment for their idolatrous ways. While later rabbinic traditions occasionally attribute idolatrous practices to Enosh himself, rabbinic interpretation is rarely interested in Enosh the individual, but is frequently interested in his generation as marking the first of a series of steep declines in humankind’s behavior between Adam and Abraham.


Ensor, James

The Belgian painter James Sydney Edward Ensor (1860–1949) was known as an artist who used christological imagery. Modern artists, including Ensor, have more than once expressed the lack of public appraisal they had to endure as creative artists, together with their own feelings of alienation and suffering, by referring to the figure of Jesus Christ. In 1887, Ensor exhibited a group of enormous drawings in which Jesus figures, with the title Les aurores ou les sensibilités de la lumière (Hoozee/Heijbrook). In this exhibit, Ensor did not act as a biblical storyteller, but rather as a visionary, inspired by the chiaroscuro of the much-admired Rembrandt.

“They are not subjects, they are effects of light,” Ensor explained (Hoozee/Heijbrook: 61). The drawings caused a big scandal in Brussels and Ensor reacted with a huge canvas (256 x 378 cm) entitled Christ’s Entry into Brussels in 1889 (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Calif.; see → plate 13) (Swinbourne). His starting point was one of the “scandalous” drawings, La vie et Rayonnante: L’entrée à Jerusalem (Life and Radiating: Entry in Jerusalem). Ensor replaced Jerusalem with Brussels as an accusation against his Brussels public, and by implication put himself in the role of Jesus, who has to suffer.

In the middle of his big canvas he placed Jesus, recognizable by his halo, riding on a donkey surrounded by an enormous crowd. In front of him marches a fanfare as a sort of mocking bird. The crowd, representing the society as a whole, includes caricatured heads, some of which are wearing grotesque masques. They all march under the banner “Vive la Sociale,” meaning “Long live the Welfare State.”

Ensor expressed his feelings and those of other modern artists in his manifesto-like Entry as Gustave Courbet had done earlier in his huge allegorical portrait of his artistic life (1855; Musée d’Orsay, Paris). Courbet also alluded to Jesus in his visual citations. But in contrast to Courbet’s painting, Ensor used a burlesque style for his Entry, based on the traditional Flemish carnival parades, mixing past and present, Jesus figures here as the modern, misunderstood artist who has not yet entered the Welfare State, as the banner promises. Ensor kept the painting in his house until 1929 when it was exhibited for the first time.

James Ensor and his artist friends had established the Society of Les Vingt, a group of 20 modern artists who exhibited together and invited avant-garde artists from other countries, especially France, to join them. Founded in 1884 in Brussels, the Society was one of the most important initia-