

**BIBLICAL
FIGURES
OUTSIDE THE BIBLE**

**Edited by
Michael E. Stone
and
Theodore A. Bergren**

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THREE

ENOSH AND HIS GENERATION REVISITED

STEVEN D. FRAADE

Introduction

In recent years there has been a burgeoning of interest in the study of the interpretive practices of ancient Judaism and Christianity, particularly those relating to biblical personalities. This expansion of interest is due in part to the continued publication and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which reveal the prominent place of such biblical personalities (e.g., Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, and Daniel) not only in the traditions of the Dead Sea community itself, but also in the writings of other Jewish groups which are collected among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Similarly, the continued publication, translation, and study of the Nag Hammadi codices has heightened awareness of the interpretive place of biblical figures in the varieties of early Christianity.¹ Thus, we now have a significantly

1. So far as I can tell, having looked at recent concordances and scriptural indices, there are still no explicit references to Enosh the individual or to Gen 4:26 in the extant Dead Sea Scrolls. Note, however, that a recently published fragment (4Q369 1 i 1-7) is named by its editors (Attridge and Strugnell) "Prayer of Enosh" (*Qumran Cave 4. VIII*, 353-56), since it appears in a broken genealogy before a restored notice of Kenan (Enosh's son), presumably after what would have been a notice of Enosh. Unfortunately Enosh's name is not preserved, nor does the language directly derive from or allude to Gen 4:26. The broken text appears to be an address, presumably to God, concerning the judgment of some guilty party. The editors suggest that this is a prayer uttered by Enosh, intended as an elaboration of Gen 4:26b, taken to refer to Enosh having "called on the name of the Lord" (as in *Jub.* 4:12, on which see below). Similarly, notwithstanding the prominence of Seth and his descendants in some of the Nag Hammadi texts, Enosh does not appear therein. One of my reviewers, George Brooke (*JSS* 31, p. 260), points to a couple of textual gaps in Nag Hammadi codices where Enosh's name *might* have been included, but admits that

expanded corpus of texts, translations, and studies from which to consider the exegetical practices, particularly as they relate to biblical figures, of the early varieties of Judaism and Christianity.² More broadly, the study of the formative periods of Judaism (Second Temple and rabbinic) and Christianity (New Testament and patristic) has benefited from increased cross-fertilization between the two fields, as well as greater methodological sophistication under the influences of such academic disciplines as literary and historical criticism and the social sciences.

In 1980 I completed my dissertation on "Enosh and His Generation," subsequently revised and published as a monograph of the same title.³ The main focus of this monograph was on interpretive practices in Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism and in early Christianity. Because of the focus of this work, and due to the developments sketched above, it is fitting, in light of the fruits of the subsequent years of scholarship, to revisit "Enosh and His Generation." My approach in reconsidering my earlier evaluations will be both to extend their implications and to problematize some of the presuppositions upon which they rest.⁴

Much recent comparative study of the varieties of ancient Jewish and Christian scriptural interpretation has accentuated the shared body of exegetical traditions upon which they drew and the overall similarities in their hermeneutical approaches to scripture.⁵ In studying the variety of portrayals of Enosh and his times, all deriving from the single verse of Gen 4:26, I was struck by the

this is speculative. As Brooke points out, Gen 4:26 might be alluded to in the *Three Steles of Seth*, NHC VII,5: 119,20–21: "I [Seth] shall utter thy name."

2. This is not the place to give a bibliography of such work, but as an example, two recent publications on the traditions of Adam and Eve may be cited: Anderson and Stone, eds., *Synopsis*; and Stone, *History*. I know of no new studies of Enosh or of Gen 4:26 since my book was published. The only "new" text of which I am aware is the Armenian "History of the Forefathers: Adam and His Sons and Grandsons" (in Stone, ed., *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*), where Enosh is treated in secs. 33–45, referred to below. I thank Professor Stone for making this text available to me in advance of its publication.

3. "Enosh and His Generation: Scriptural Translation and Interpretation in Late Antiquity" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980); *Enosh and His Generation: Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Post-biblical Interpretation*, SBLMS 30 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984).

4. I have gained several insights from the reviews of my book, *Enosh and His Generation*, some of which are referred to below.

5. To *Enosh and His Generation*, 2, n. 2, add in particular Kugel, *Potiphar's House*, esp. pp. 266–68.

varieties of interpretation, stemming, subtly at first, from the earliest known usages of that verse, but becoming more pronounced with time. These differences can be traced in the first instance to a syntactical ambiguity in the Hebrew text's notice, immediately following its announcement of Enosh's birth as the son of Seth, that "Then it was begun (אוֹ הוּחַל) to call on/by the name of the Lord" (4:26b). Who so began: Enosh himself (the immediate antecedent in the verse), the people of his time in general (suggested by the indefinite passive verb), or the descendants of Seth (immediately following in Genesis 5), as opposed to those of Cain (previously narrated in 4:17–24)?

Prerabbinic Jewish Interpretations

Our earliest extrabiblical Hebrew reflection on Enosh is found in Ben Sira (Hebrew: 49:14–16), who includes Enosh in a selective list of antediluvian heroes (chaps. 44, 49), but says nothing specific about him.⁶ All we can surmise is that Enosh's inclusion reflects a positive understanding of Gen 4:26b as referring to Enosh the individual. Ben Sira's praise of Enosh, along with his praise of Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth, and Adam, does not come, as might be expected, in chronological sequence near the beginning of Sira's "Praise of the Ancestors." Rather, it comes penultimately, after his praise of the last biblical ancestor, Nehemiah, but before his concluding praise of his contemporary, the high priest Simon (ca. 200 B.C.E.). By this placement, the earliest righteous heroes immediately anticipate the latest, with Simon being directly preceded by Adam and Enosh, primeval, idealized "men," as their names denote in subsequent traditions. I stress this now since we can already see, albeit subtly, a pattern which will be repeated in later Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan exegeses: the earliest righteous humans, standing at the beginning of sacred history, foreshadow its consummation. Etiologies are traced from the vantage of teleological hindsight, for Ben Sira that

6. For a fuller treatment, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 12–16.

being defined by the preeminence of Simon, the high priest of his time (“greatest among his kindred, the glory of his people”).⁷

The book of *Jubilees* (19:23–25) similarly includes Enosh in a selective chain of seven righteous pre-Israelite men, listed in reverse chronological order from Shem to Adam.⁸ But unlike Ben Sira, *Jubilees* gives us the reason for Enosh’s inclusion: “He began to call on the name of the Lord on the Earth” (4:12).⁹

The early Jewish rendering of Gen 4:26 which was to have the greatest impact on the subsequent history of that verse’s interpretation, via Philo and the early church fathers, was that of the Septuagint. Like *Jubilees*, the Jewish Greek version takes the subject of Gen 4:26b to be Enosh the individual, but renders the verse’s verb very differently: “This one *hoped* to call (οὗτος ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι) upon the name of the Lord God.” This could reflect either the Greek translator’s understanding of a Hebrew consonantal *Vorlage* identical to the MT (אֵן הוֹחֵל) or his literal rendering of a variant Hebrew *Vorlage* (אֵן הוֹחֵל), which might in turn have originated as an “internal translation” of אֵן הוֹחֵל.¹⁰ Be that as it may, the Septuagint in solving one set of ambiguities has created another: What is the nature of Enosh’s hope, and might the middle form ἐπικαλεῖσθαι (“to call”) be construed as passive (“to be called”)?¹¹

The idea of Enosh as “hoper” is exploited especially by Philo

7. Sir 50:1, trans. Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 547. Thus, the heroic ancestral chain is bracketed by the originary “glory of Adam” (49:16) and the contemporary “glory of his people.”

8. In 2 *Enoch* 33:10–11, Enosh is similarly included in a list of Enoch’s six ancestors, beginning with Adam, who have transmitted to Enoch esoteric writings. In a fragment usually appended to 2 *Enoch*, Enosh is included among the priestly antecedents to Melchizedek. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 18–19.

9. Compare 4Q 369 (discussed in n. 1), understood by its editors as a prayer of Enosh. For fuller discussion of the *Jubilees* passage, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 16–18.

10. Reviewers (especially Brooke, review of *Enosh and His Generation*, 257) who criticized me for not having given serious enough consideration to the existence of a variant Hebrew *Vorlage* failed to recognize that even had such a variant existed, it might itself have been the product of an interpretive transmission of a Hebrew original identical to the MT. The question then becomes whether such an interpretation originated with the Greek translator or in an antecedent stage of Hebrew textual transmission. I claim simply that all of the variations reflected in ancient witnesses *could* have derived from the syntactical ambiguity in what would become the MT, אֵן הוֹחֵל, which is both a *hapax legomenon* and the *lectio difficilior*.

11. For a fuller discussion of the LXX version, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 5–11.

of Alexandria, who provides the earliest extensive discussion of Enosh.¹² Philo sets Enosh as the first of a triad, followed by Enoch and Noah, of virtuous ancestors.¹³ They, in turn, are followed by the triad Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of whom prepare for Moses, the apex of human virtue. Enosh is an exemplar of the virtue of hope, in particular “the hope and expectation in receiving good things from the one bountiful God.”¹⁴ Philo is the first to link his interpretation of Gen 4:26b to Enosh’s name, meaning “man” in Hebrew and Aramaic, but taken by Philo to denote ideal man: the true man sets his hope in God.¹⁵ Although Philo lauds Enosh as the “true man,” a model of virtue, standing at the head of a chain of virtuous biblical models, he also qualifies his praise: compared to the successive stages in the progression of human perfection, Enosh is “defective inasmuch as though he always desired the excellent, he has not yet been able to attain it, but resembles sailors eager to put into port, who yet remain at sea unable to reach their haven.”¹⁶ Enosh hoped to call on the name of God, but did not fully attain his goal. Enosh, like the other pre-Israelite righteous individuals, represents an important virtue, but compared to his Israelite successors and especially to Moses, the apogee of human spirituality, his is only a preliminary stage in the pursuit of virtue.

While Josephus does not say anything substantive about Enosh per se, he provides an understanding of Seth’s descendants in general that will be important for the subsequent history of interpretation.¹⁷ According to Josephus, the progeny of Seth were initially like him in virtue, in contrast to the descendants of Cain, who were violent and insolent.¹⁸ But after seven generations, the

12. For a fuller treatment, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 19–25.

13. *Abr.* 7–15.

14. *Quod det. pot.* 138 (trans. Colson, LCL 2.295).

15. *Quod det. pot.* 138–40; *Abr.* 9–11; *Quaest. in Gen.* 1.80.

16. *Abr.* 47 (trans. Colson, LCL 6.29). Philo plays on Enosh the hoper (ὁ ἐλπίζων) who is defective (ἐλλείψης). For a similarly mixed view of Enosh, based on word plays on his name and the verb ἤπισεν, see Eusebius, *Praep. evang.* 11.6, who may be dependent on Philo.

17. For a fuller treatment, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 25–27.

18. While Josephus does not draw this contrast explicitly, his positioning of his praise of Seth and his descendants (*Ant.* 1.68–71), immediately following his negative presentation of the Cainites (*Ant.* 1.60–66), makes the contrast unmistakable. Josephus never suggests, as is the case in later Christian exegesis, that the flood resulted from the mixing of the

Sethites “abandoned the customs of their fathers for a life of depravity. . . . They no longer rendered to God God’s due honors . . . but displayed by their actions a zeal for vice twofold greater than they had formerly shown for virtue, and drew upon themselves the enmity of God.”¹⁹ Josephus continues his retelling of the biblical narrative with the story of the “angels of God” who consort with the “daughters of men” to produce the “giants,” bringing on the flood. Thus, in paraphrasing biblical history, Josephus does not include Enosh in a chain of righteous people preparing for and foreshadowing some later righteous figure, as do other prerabbinic Jewish sources. Rather, he subsumes Seth’s immediate descendants under a scheme that describes their initial collective virtue followed by progressive depravity leading up to the flood.²⁰

Although the evidence for prerabbinic Jewish interpretation of Enosh is not as substantial as that for other antediluvians, several exegetical patterns can be discerned that will develop more clearly and fully, but very differently, in the subsequent literatures of Samaritanism, rabbinic Judaism, and early Christianity. (1) Enosh is a link in the chain of righteous biblical ancestors which continues through, or culminates in, such biblical figures as Abraham and Moses. (2) Enosh’s inclusion in such a chain, and his significance within it, derives from interpretation of his name and from the notice of his birth in Gen 4:26, he being the first, or “hoping” (following the LXX), “to call on the name of the Lord.” (3) Although such interpretations lay the groundwork for an idealization of the antediluvian Enosh (as the ideal “man”), they also plant the seeds of a more qualified, if not negative, view of Enosh and/or his contemporaries, whether in contrast to later, more righteous figures, or in the shadow of subsequent human degradation leading to the flood.

We shall see how each of these lines of interpretation is de-

descendants of Seth (the “sons of God” of Gen 6:2, 4) with those of Cain (the “daughters of men,” 6:2, 4).

19. *Ant.* 1.72 (trans. Thackeray, LCL 4.35).

20. Josephus’s account is also significant for its positive attribution of astrological discoveries to the Sethites (rather than to Enoch in particular, as in *Jub.* 4:17–19 and *1 Enoch* 72–82), and their recording of these discoveries on two pillars (later referred to as the “Stelae of Seth”) so as to survive destruction by fire or water. See *Ant.* 1.69–70.

veloped, usually with significant adaptation, by Samaritan, early Christian, and rabbinic interpreters. However, determining the lines of connection between the Jewish traditions of Second Temple times and those subsequent traditions is difficult. It cannot simply be assumed that along with a shared biblical text (albeit in different versions), a common pool of tradition, retrievable from the extant sources, lies at the heart of the variety of subsequent traditions. My methodological caution rests on several considerations, primary among which are these:

1. We have in each case a gap of at least two centuries between our latest Second Temple sources and our earliest Samaritan, rabbinic, and Christian sources. While these latter sources undoubtedly contain traditions that significantly antedate their present authorial or editorial settings, isolating such earlier traditions is, if not an impossible task, at least a hermeneutically circular one.

2. Although we know increasingly more about Judaism in Second Temple times, thanks largely to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts, our extant sources for that period remain highly selective, and therefore possibly unrepresentative of the whole. In the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is not always clear which texts are the products of the Dead Sea community, and thus are sectarian in character, and which derive from other varieties of Judaism, being reflective of traditions and practices more widely shared. Thus, in our particular case, how should we construe the fact that neither Enosh nor Gen 4:26 appears in the scrolls made public thus far? Did he hold no particular significance for this community? On the other hand, we might surmise that the importance attached to Enosh in some of the Second Temple sources surveyed above (especially Philo, but also *Jubilees* and Ben Sira) is exceptional, specific to the authors or communities responsible for them.

Furthermore, those Second Temple literary sources not preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls are extant mainly because of their transmission by later Christian churches, their selection for preservation reflecting the ideological and interpretive proclivities of those communities. This is not to say that such texts were necessarily Christianized in overt ways (as some were), but rather

that, had a different “mix” of texts been preserved, the complexion of Second Temple Jewish ideologies and practices that we construct from them might look very different.²¹

We will see that our earliest rabbinic texts already *assume* interpretations of Gen 4:26 that are nowhere evidenced in extant Second Temple sources. Either (a) these interpretations developed in the intervening years as responses to changed religious, political, or social circumstances attendant upon the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., or (b) they were already in circulation in Second Temple times, but are not preserved among the texts that the Dead Sea community chose to hide or that early Christian churches preserved and transmitted. To hope, as one reviewer did, that we might identify a shared “Jewish-Christian” tradition from which all the subsequent exegetical developments derive, may, given the nature of our extant sources, be wishful thinking.²²

Samaritan Interpretations

The Samaritan Pentateuch preserves Gen 4:26b as *אז החל*, presumably with a third-person singular subject (“Then he began”).²³ Therefore the Samaritan interpretive tradition, here represented by the *Samaritan Targum* and the fourth-century *Memar Marqah* (*Tibat Marqe*), identifies the subject of the phrase as Enosh.²⁴ Marqah frequently includes Enosh in select lists of righteous biblical ancestors, culminating sometimes, as we might expect, with Moses, but in other cases with Phinehas, Joshua, or Caleb. Enosh is distinguished for having called upon the name

21. This applies not simply to which texts were preserved, but also to which parts of which texts were preserved. For example, *1 Enoch* as we know it from the Ethiopic version and as we have it in the Aramaic fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls has different complexions depending on what parts of the Enochic cycle are preserved in each case. On the larger question of Christian transmission of the pseudepigrapha, see Kraft, “Pseudepigrapha in Christianity,” 55–86.

22. See Brooke, review of *Enosh and His Generation*, 259.

23. For fuller treatment of the Samaritan traditions, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 29–38. For present purposes, we need not dwell on the Mandaean figure of Anush, treated in *Enosh and His Generation*, 38–45.

24. One version of the *Samaritan Targum* renders the verb “to call” passively: “Then he began/was the first to be called by the name of the Lord.” See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 34, 37.

of the Lord. He is credited with being the founder of mankind, a play on his name Enosh (“man”). Of particular note are formulations in which Enosh foreshadows later biblical figures and events. For example, *אז* in Gen 4:26 is linked to the same word in Exod 15:1, suggesting that Moses’ Song at the Sea was a fulfillment of Enosh’s calling upon God’s name.²⁵ Similarly, Enosh and Abraham are said to foreshadow Moses by their calling upon the name of God, which had not been revealed to the unbelievers.²⁶ Since in Samaritan tradition, as we saw in Philo, Moses epitomizes the highest level of human piety, earlier biblical figures such as Enosh prepare for Moses, who in turn anticipates a future redeemer figure.

Christian Interpretations

Although Enosh is not mentioned in the NT, there is a wealth of interpretive materials about him and Gen 4:26 in the writings of Christian authors beginning in the early fourth century. Initially, this interpretation seems to follow patterns familiar from traditions we have already surveyed: Enosh is a link in the chain of righteous biblical ancestors, his particular merit, where specified, deriving from his name, or “hoping” (following the LXX), or his “calling upon the name of the Lord.” At first, these interpretations have little explicitly Christian content, except that their righteous chains now extend to and culminate in Jesus. With time, however, the interpretation of Enosh and his contemporaries takes on a distinctly Christian character, even as it continues to develop lines of interpretation familiar to us from earlier Jewish tradition.

Because of the chronological gap between the latest Second Temple sources and the earliest Christian writings that treat Enosh, it is difficult to determine whether these “Christian” traditions extend back to the origins of Christianity, presumably

25. *Memar Marqah* (ed. Macdonald) 2.6 / *Tibat Marqe* (ed. Ben-Hayyim) 70a. On Enosh as the founder of humankind, see *Memar Marqah* (ed. Macdonald) 1.9; 6.2 / *Tibat Marqe* (ed. Ben-Hayyim) 40b, 274a. For discussion, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 32–33, n. 16.

26. *Memar Marqah* 2.12 / *Tibat Marqe* 105a.

inherited from its Second Temple Jewish milieu, or whether they are of more recent vintage, having developed either independently within Christianity or through contact with post-Temple varieties of Judaism that have left no independent record. After we have surveyed contemporary rabbinic interpretations of Gen 4:26, which are strikingly different from their Christian counterparts, we will need to ask whether the two are responding to one another, or represent independent exegetical trajectories.

Let us begin with three of the earliest Christian commentators (third to fourth centuries) for whom Enosh has special significance. Although these commentators are reminiscent in some regards of Philo's interpretation of Enosh, they evidence the first traces of a distinctly Christian understanding.²⁷

Origen, like Philo, offers inconsistent and qualified praise of Enosh. In commenting on Rom 10:12, Origen places Enosh alongside Moses, Aaron, and Samuel as "mighty and outstanding ones" for having called upon the Lord *Jesus*, thereby foreshadowing the later Christian faithful.²⁸ Elsewhere, however, he says that Enosh, living in the shadow of Adam's sin, only hoped to call upon the Lord, feigning and delaying to do so.²⁹ Thus, on the one hand, Enosh, along with other righteous biblical figures, foreshadows later Christian faithful. On the other hand, he cannot be their equal since, having lived before both Moses and Jesus, he can only look forward to salvation. While Philo idealizes Enosh allegorically, Origen does so typologically. While Philo views Enosh as preparatory to the later patriarchs and Moses, Origen views all righteous figures of the Hebrew Bible as preparatory to Jesus and the Christian faithful.

By contrast, Eusebius Pamphili of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan offer unqualified praise of Enosh, but still in ways that are reminiscent of Philo.³⁰ For Eusebius, Enosh is the first and most

27. Prior to these commentators, Enosh is included in Christian lists of righteous biblical ancestors, but without anything specific being said about him. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 49–52.

28. *Commentary to Romans*, Book 8.3, with reference to Joel 2:32 (3:5); Ps 98 (99):6; Rom 10:14; 1 Cor 1:2.

29. *Commentary to Romans*, Book 5.1, commenting on Rom 5:12–14. For a fuller treatment of Origen, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 52–56.

30. For fuller treatments of these two, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 56–63.

important in the line of righteous ancestors, ten in all, culminating in Moses, his particular merit being in the virtuous hope (now wholly positive) with which he called upon God.³¹ Like Philo, Eusebius emphasizes the meaning of Enosh's name as denoting true (or ideal) man (ἀληθῆς ἄνθρωπος), so designated for his attainment of knowledge of God and his piety, in distinction from the animals and from common man, who is represented by Adam. Thus, Enosh's "calling" and "hoping" are combined positively, as they were not in Philo and Origen: by calling upon God, Enosh attains knowledge of God, whereas in hoping in God, he attains piety. In both regards, Enosh is a model to be emulated. According to Eusebius, Enosh is not only the first to call upon God in hope, but the "first of the beloved of God" (πρῶτος θεοφίλων). Eusebius's ideal allegorization of Enosh is not qualified by his preliminary place in the chain of righteous biblical figures, since for him the OT as a whole is preparatory to Jesus and the church. Enosh stands in the shadow neither of Adam's sin, nor of Abraham's or Moses' subsequent attainments, but on his own as a model of faith and piety.

Ambrose, like Eusebius, gives unqualified praise to Enosh among a select group of antediluvian righteous figures, interpreting his "hoping" in a wholly positive manner. Like Philo and Eusebius, he stresses Enosh's name as denoting ideal man. But he goes one step further in linking ideal man with the "image of God," an idea that will be developed by other Christian commentators: not all humans share equally in the divine image, only the righteous elite.³² Ambrose also goes further than his predecessors in interpreting Enosh's hope in and calling upon God's names in ascetic terms: as true man he withdrew himself from the "plea-

31. *Praep. evang.* 7.8.

32. *De Paradisos* 1.3.19–23. See also my treatment of Didymus the Blind in *Enosh and His Generation*, 68–70. This same connection between the ideal man and the image of God is drawn in the Armenian "History of the Forefathers" (see above, n. 2), sec. 34: "Enosh demonstrated the renewal of the corrupted image of humans in many ways. First, by his name, for Enosh means 'man' in the likeness of the archetype" (trans. M. E. Stone). Thus, the divine image implanted in Adam was corrupted by his sin, only to be restored with Enosh. Other Christian commentators associate the renewal of the divine image with Seth, which seems more natural based on Gen 4:25; 5:3. As we shall see, early rabbinic texts suggest that humans fully embodied the divine image from Adam through Enosh, in whose time it began to diminish.

tures of flesh," lifting his soul from his body and from the earth in longing for reunion with God.³³

We see, therefore, in these early Christian commentators an increasing tendency to spiritualize Enosh. By hoping in and calling upon the name of God, Enosh, as ideal man, becomes himself more godlike.

This tendency to stress the godlike qualities of Enosh receives a major boost when, beginning in the fourth century, Christian commentators understand the verb ἐπικαλεῖσθαι of LXX Gen 4:26b as passive in voice, thereby announcing that Enosh "hoped to be called by the name of the Lord God." Such an interpretation is first evidenced in a fragment of a commentary attributed to Eusebius of Emesa, who understands this verse to mean that Enosh hoped to be called "God" or "son of God." In recognition of their godlike righteousness, the descendants of Seth (through Enosh) were so called, this being the explanation of the term "sons of God" in Gen 6:2: they were not angels but righteous humans.³⁴ Gen 6:2-4, according to this reading, describes the first intermingling of the righteous descendants of Seth with the wicked descendants of Cain, reminiscent of Josephus's description of the degeneration of the Sethites in conjunction with this episode, resulting in the flood.³⁵ Enosh's role in all of this is unclear. Was he, in fact, called "God" or "son of God," or did he only hope to be so called? While Seth stands at the head of this righteous line, it would appear to be Enosh who is first associated with the attribution of divine epithets to righteous (godlike) humans. Subsequent Christian commentators will work out these

33. *De Isaac et Anima* 1.2.

34. This tradition and its attribution are found in a note to Origen's Hexapla. Early Christian exegetes certainly knew of interpretations of Gen 6:2 which regarded the "sons of God" as fallen angels; see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 65, n. 53. By understanding this phrase as referring to humans, exegetes could "demythologize" or "naturalize" the evil that led to the flood. For fuller treatment, see *Enosh and His Generation*, 63-68.

35. Although Josephus does not explicitly connect the degeneration of the Sethites with their sexual mingling with the Cainite women, it is easy to see how such an inference could be drawn. Our earliest source interpreting the "sons of God" of Gen 6:2 as referring to the descendants of Seth is a fragment attributed to the *Chronicles* of Julius Africanus (ca. 160-240 C.E.). However, Africanus makes no connection between this interpretation and Gen 4:26 or Enosh. He simply claims that the whole Sethite line, down to Jesus, can be referred to as "sons of God."

wrinkles in a variety of ways, but the basic terms of interpretation have now been set in place.

Some, like Didymus the Blind, follow the line, begun with Philo, of stressing Enosh's virtue and ideal character, while qualifying this approbation: Enosh only hoped to be called by the name of God.³⁶ But others, like John Chrysostom, stress Enosh's preeminence among the early biblical righteous figures, he being the first to be considered a godlike human and to be called by God's name. The association of these qualities of Enosh with Jesus and the Christian faithful, at the other end of sacred history, is particularly stressed by Augustine and Cyril of Alexandria, in whose writings the Christianization of Enosh achieves its fullest expression.³⁷

For Augustine, Enosh, in his hope to call on the name of the Lord God, prophetically foreshadows Christian faith in the resurrection of Jesus. Of all the antediluvian righteous, Enosh best typifies the Sethite line, from which the messiah descends, as representing the City of God on earth (the Earthly City being represented by the Cainites). Bearing the name "man," Enosh is nameless, meaning otherworldly and asexual, placing his faith in God's name, which he in turn bears as a "son of God" and "son of the resurrection" (cf. Luke 20:35-36). He thereby foreshadows Jesus and the Christian faithful who would similarly call and be called, inhabiting the City of God.³⁸

For Cyril of Alexandria, as for others before him, Enosh is called "God" by his contemporaries (reflecting a passive understanding of ἐπικαλεῖσθαι) in recognition of his righteousness and piety. However, for Cyril, this designation is a consequence not simply of human approbation, but of divine grace: by recognizing (calling upon, or hoping in) Jesus as *the* Son of God, pious humans can attain to the same level as Enosh. Enosh was, therefore, the first and paradigmatic "adopted Son (υἱοθεσία) of God," a status he shares with Jesus and later Christians. The "sons of God" of Gen 6:2 are so called not because of their own righteous-

36. *On Genesis*, at Gen 4:26. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 68-70.

37. *Homilies in Genesis* 20.4; 22.2-3; *Expositio in Psalmum* 49:1. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 70-75.

38. *De Civitate Dei* 15.17-18. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 75-80.

ness, but because of their genealogical descent from the godlike Enosh.³⁹

In the later Byzantine chronicles, Seth reemerges as the righteous paradigm of the Sethite line, while Enosh's role diminishes. The "sons of God" of Gen 6:2 earn this designation by virtue of the qualities they inherit from the godlike Seth. Enosh is venerated as one link in this chain of righteous Sethites, but it is through Seth's deeds, including his discovery of arts and the tools of civilization, that they derive their special status.⁴⁰ Gen 4:26b is now understood with Seth as its subject.⁴¹ In one Byzantine chronographer, however, we find a new interpretation of Enosh's name: Enosh as "man" prefigures Jesus as "son of (true) man."⁴²

A similar tendency, to focus less on Enosh and more on the righteous Sethites, in contrast to the evil Cainites, can be seen in Syriac Christian commentaries. Ephraem, for example, links Gen 4:26b to the Sethites as a group, who are called by the name of God and await their redemption through the resurrection of the NT Son of God.⁴³ The ninth-century Ishodad of Merv, in his commentary on Gen 4:26, collects a number of interpretations of Enosh's name and his "calling on the name of the Lord" which show the influence of earlier Greek interpretation, but are modified to fit the Peshitta version (which does not allow a passive understanding of the verb "to call"). Here Enosh's role is again more central. Because Enosh placed his hope and faith in God, he merited being called "of God," or a "son of God," meaning an "intimate of God," as did his righteous descendants.⁴⁴

While we have seen significant diversity in early Christian interpretations of Enosh and of Gen 4:26, several patterns emerge

that mark the increasingly pronounced Christian nature of these interpretations over time. Although Christian interpretations initially follow patterns evidenced in Second Temple Jewish sources, as well as in early Samaritan interpretations, by the fourth century they begin to assume a distinctive form and content. If their antecedents viewed Enosh at or near the beginning of a chain of righteous biblical persons culminating in a later figure such as Moses, Christian interpreters increasingly viewed the whole chain of OT heroes as preparing for Jesus, and eventually the Christian church. But unlike the Jewish model, the Christian paradigm views Jesus not simply as the most recent in a progression of increasingly pious humans, but as the end to which all the others point, standing opposite to, while succeeding, the OT chain as a whole. Enosh, in many cases appearing first in the OT chain by virtue of his being the first to call upon or place his hope in the Lord, stands directly opposite Jesus as the object of that calling or hope. Enosh's primacy, in some traditions, is certainly aided by his name, which already with Philo was understood to denote "true" or "ideal man," a replacement, in some sense, for Adam. As ideal man, Enosh is barely mortal, having been called by God's name in recognition of his superiority to common man. In this status he foreshadows and prepares for Jesus and the Christian faithful, even as his status as ideal or godlike man derives from his recognition of Jesus. As an adopted son of God, he stands outside of time as brother to Jesus and his followers.

We see here a significant development within Christian exegesis that distinguishes it from its Jewish and Samaritan antecedents: Enosh is not simply a link in the chain of righteous figures, but defines a group, the righteous Sethites, in opposition to the wicked Cainites, thereby prefiguring the Christians. Thus, as Christian commentators looked to antediluvian times for the etiology of both human piety and sinfulness, they did so with an eye to finding mirrored therein the culminating climax of and conflict between the two in their own times. As ideal "man" of otherworldly hope and expectation, Enosh stands allegorically outside of history. But, standing historically between God's failed creation of Adam and God's retributive triumph over evil through the flood, Enosh typologically points forward in history

39. *Glaphyra*, Book 2; *Contra Julianum*, Book 9. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 80–85, where a possible development in Cyril's interpretation is sketched.

40. Echoes of Josephus (see above, n. 20), whether direct or indirect, are strongest in these sources.

41. See *Paschal Chronicle*; George Syncellus, *Chronographia*; John Malalas, *Chronographia*. For discussion and parallels in other Byzantine chronographers, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 85–90.

42. George Syncellus, *Chronographia*, citing Africanus's *Natural History*. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 86–88. On the Byzantine chronicles' interpretation of early biblical history, see Adler, *Time Immemorial*.

43. *Commentary to Genesis*, at Gen 4:26; *De Nativitate* 1.48. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 92–97.

44. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 97–104.

to the Christian salvation. Allegorical (inherited from Judaism) and typological (distinctively Christian) interpretations of Enosh coalesce.

Rabbinic Interpretations

In contrast to the prerabbinic Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian traditions we have surveyed, Enosh plays only a minor role in the rabbinic interpretation of Gen 4:26 and its scriptural context. That verse is interpreted in two ways strikingly different from what we have seen elsewhere. First, rather than taking Gen 4:26b to refer to the deeds and character of Enosh, rabbinic interpreters universally understand it to refer to his contemporaries, what comes to be termed the "Generation of Enosh" (דור אנוש). Second, rather than understanding the verse positively to allude to the beginnings of divine worship or faith, rabbinic commentators take it to refer to the beginnings of idolatrous worship and its disastrous consequences. As noted earlier, both of these lines of interpretation are not only evidenced, but *presumed* in our earliest rabbinic texts of interpretation (mid-third century C.E. in their redacted forms). Thus, it is difficult to know their origins, especially whether they might go back to Second Temple times, and therefore have coexisted with Second Temple period interpretations of the verse as referring positively to Enosh, or whether they came into being only after 70 C.E., possibly in some relation to the emergence of Christianity in the decades thereafter.

The rabbinic targumim, with the exception of *Targum Onqelos*, translate Gen 4:26b as follows, with slight variations: "Then men began⁴⁵ to make idols for themselves,⁴⁶ calling them by the name of the Memra of the Lord"⁴⁷ (*Tg. Neofiti*). Thus, the indefinite passive construction הוּחַל ("was begun") is actively understood, with its subject being the people of Enosh's time. The direct object of the verb "to call" is now assumed to be

45. *Fragmentary Tg.*: "In his [Enosh's] days, then, men began..." *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan*: "That was the generation in whose days they began..."

46. *Fragmentary Tg.* and *Tg. Neofiti* margin: "worshiping foreign cults..." *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan*: "to go astray, making idols for themselves..."

47. *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan*: "calling their idols by the name of the Memra of the Lord."

not "the name of the Lord," but elliptical "idols," to whom are applied God's name in false worship. In this way, the verse is interpreted to refer to a double sin: the worship of false gods and the application of the true God's name in that worship. It is this twofold activity that defines "idolatry" in classical Jewish thought.⁴⁸ Thus, in its barest form, Gen 4:26 is translated with a slight expansion so as to denote the behavior of Enosh's contemporaries: "Then was begun [by men] the calling upon [false gods] by the name of the Lord."⁴⁹ *Targum Onqelos* reflects a somewhat similar, but converse translation of the verse: "Then, in his days, men refrained from praying in the name of the Lord." In keeping with its "literal" character, this translation renders the obscure Hebrew indefinite passive verb הוּחַל with the active Aramaic verb חָלַ, thereby staying closer to the Hebrew original than do the so-called Palestinian targumim.⁵⁰ From a rabbinic perspective, of course, ceasing to pray to God is equivalent to turning to the worship of false gods.⁵¹

This understanding of Gen 4:26b, as marking the origins of idolatrous worship by Enosh's contemporaries, is precisely the interpretation of that verse which is *presumed* in our earliest rabbinic midrashic sources which employ it: the *Mekilta of R. Ishmael* and the *Sipre to Deuteronomy*.⁵² As in several Christian sources that we surveyed, the interpretation of Gen 4:26 is occasioned by the question of why scripture refers to nondentities by divine epithets, now in relation to the "other gods" in the second commandment of the decalogue (Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7). We are told that such nongods were first called by God's name in the days of Enosh, according to Gen 4:26b (as targumically

48. See Faur, "Idea of Idolatry," 1-15; Faur and Rabinowitz, "Idolatry," 8.1227-37.

49. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 112-16.

50. For this sense of *Tg. Onqelos's* literalness, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 119.

51. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 116-19.

52. This need not presume that the targumic texts in their extant forms are chronologically anterior to our extant midrashic texts, or vice versa, but simply that the understanding of Gen 4:26b that the Palestinian targumim express was presumed by the creators of the midrashic traditions and their audience. For the midrashic texts, see *Mek. Bahodesh* 6; *Sipre Deut.* 43. These texts were probably edited in the mid-third century, but contain earlier traditions, in our case attributed to Palestinian sages of the second century C.E. For fuller presentation of these texts, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 119-31.

understood). The midrashim then describe the divine response to this idolatrous worship: God causes the ocean to flood one-third of the world. God's response fits humanity's deeds "measure for measure:" just as they do something *new* (emphasizing הוּחַל) in changing their relationship with God, so God does something *new* in altering the order of nature; just as they *call upon* false gods, God *calls upon* the waters to overflow their God-set boundaries to flood the earth as punishment. Human "might" is no match for God's. Thus the practice of idolatry, a cardinal sin, is traced back to the time of Enosh.

Just as the midrash presumes familiarity with Gen 4:26 as an announcement of the origins of idolatry, it appears to presume familiarity with the tradition of a flood in Enosh's time; no attempt is made here to derive this tradition from Gen 4:26. Rather, the emphasis is on demonstrating the appropriateness of the punishment to the sin: each element of the people's sin is mirrored in God's response. The flood in Enosh's time may be viewed as a prelude to the more total flooding in Noah's time, just as the sin of Enosh's contemporaries prepares for that of Noah's.⁵³

The Amoraic midrashim build upon their predecessors in several significant ways.⁵⁴ First, Enosh's contemporaries are now regularly referred to as the "Generation of Enosh" (דור אנוש), taking their place as the first of a series of pre-Israelite rebellious generations, followed by the "Generation of the Flood," the "Generation of the Separation" (the Tower of Babel), and the "People of Sodom." Each generation rebels against God by introducing some cardinal vice and each is accordingly pun-

53. As noted earlier, it is difficult to know how much to make of the fact that the tradition of a flood in Enosh's time, presumed in our earliest rabbinic texts, is not attested in prerabbinic sources. One could argue that this tradition was the creation of early rabbinic exegesis, but was well enough known, at least in rabbinic circles, by the time of the editing of the *Sipre* and *Mekilta*, not to require demonstration. But it is also possible that this tradition, together with the negative interpretation of Gen 4:26, did indeed circulate in Second Temple times, but simply was not preserved within extant sources from that period. For possible pagan, Greco-Roman analogues to a series of primeval floods, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 215–16.

54. For treatment of the individual Amoraic texts, only a few of which are referred to here, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 131–56. These collections, in their edited forms, span the third through fifth centuries, while the sages to whom traditions concerning Enosh and the Generation of Enosh are attributed lived in the third and fourth centuries in Palestine.

ished by God, with none learning from its predecessor.⁵⁵ This sequence, what I call the "degeneration of the generations," appears irreversible, until Abraham appears to arrest and reverse the universal downward spiral and to initiate an Israelite, upward spiral, culminating in the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai.⁵⁶

One way this pattern of decline and its reversal is expressed is through the idea of the "removal of the Shekinah." Beginning with Adam's sin, the Shekinah (divine indwelling) progressively removes itself from humanity's midst (seven stages in all), until with Abraham the process is reversed, and finally with Moses (the seventh patriarch) the Shekinah is restored among Israel at Mount Sinai.⁵⁷ Thus, God's establishment of a covenant with, and revelation to, one people is set against the backdrop of the failure of humankind as a whole, both before and after the flood in Noah's time, to refrain from such cardinal vices as idolatry, bloodshed, and sexual immorality as the minimal requirements for constituting a covenantal partner to God. Interestingly, this pattern is traced less to the individual sins of Adam or Cain than to the collective behavior of the Generation of Enosh, which, in its turning from divine to idolatrous worship, prepares for the other forms of depravity.

Our earliest Amoraic texts continue another pattern as well. Rather than concentrating on the nature of the sin of Enosh's contemporaries, they focus in greater detail on its consequences. The partial flood in Enosh's time is understood as having established the boundaries of the Mediterranean Sea.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, it is said that these flooding waters are the primeval waters contained by God at creation, in anticipation of such human rebellion.⁵⁹ Just as this topographical change is permanent, so are the accompa-

55. For the failure of each generation to learn from its predecessors, see *Gen. Rab.* 26.7; 38.2; *Pesiq. R.* supp. 1.

56. For this pattern, see *Gen. Rab.* 2.3; *Lev. Rab.* 23.3. In later sources, see *Pesiq. R.* 40, 42; *Tanhuma Wayyera*' 18; *Exod. Rab.* 15.7.

57. See *Gen. Rab.* 19.7, and discussion in Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 148–49. But one later source (discussed below) describes the removal of the Shekinah as having occurred at once in response to the idolatry of Enosh's contemporaries. See 3 *Enoch* (*Sepher Hekalot*) 5.3–13, with discussion in Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 163–66.

58. *Gen. Rab.* 23.7, discussed in Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 143–47.

59. See *Gen. Rab.* 5.1; *Lev. Rab.* 11.7.

nying anthropological changes. Humans, having previously been formed in the divine image, now become more beastlike (like centaurs), in both physique and behavior. The animals, over whom they initially were given dominion (Gen 1:26, 28; 9:2), now become their predators; the animals become punishing agents of God in response to humanity's turn to idolatry. By turning from the worship of God to the worship of God's creations, humanity loses its privileged, godlike position in the order of creation.⁶⁰ Whereas Philo and some Christian interpreters regarded Enosh, the ideal man, as marking the beginning of a chain of righteous, godlike humans, the midrashic tradition views him as marking an initial stage in humanity's decline from godlike to beastlike characters.

Post-Amoraic midrashic sources continue, for the most part, the lines of interpretation we have surveyed in earlier rabbinic literature. However, as we move into early medieval times, a few new tendencies emerge. For example, the rebellious nature of the idolatry of Enosh's generation is portrayed in more provocative terms: they sought to arouse God's anger by violating God's commandment to them, presumably to worship only God.⁶¹ Unlike their antecedents, later rabbinic texts describe in greater, even exaggerated detail the nature of the idolatrous worship initiated by the Generation of Enosh. One source, *3 Enoch* (*Sepher Hekalot*) 5:3–13, depicts how these people, having lived in the protective radiance of the Shekinah, gathered precious materials from all over the world from which to fashion idols of enormous size, which they spread throughout the world. They then caused the celestial bodies to descend to earth to attend before the idols as they had previously attended before God. These people accomplished these acts through magical arts learned from the fallen angels Uzza and Azza'el.⁶² As in Christian sources, we find here

60. *Gen. Rab.* 23.6 and parallels, discussed in Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 131–43. As noted there, these changes, presently associated with the Generation of Enosh and subsequent rebellious generations, are in other rabbinic sources connected to Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

61. *Pesiq. R.* 42, and *supp.* 1; *Yal. Shim'oni Bereshit* 47; *Ber. Rabbati* (ed. Albeck), p. 41. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 159–63.

62. For text and fuller discussion, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 163–66. For a similar description of the idolatrous behavior of the Generation of Enosh, see *Ber. Rab-*

a linking of Gen 4:26 with Gen 6:2–4. In Christian interpretations, however, it is Enosh and his descendants (the Sethite line) who are *positively* associated with the godlike yet human “sons of God” of Gen 6:2–4, whereas here it is the Generation of Enosh who are *negatively* associated with the corruption of humankind by the fallen angelic “sons of God” of the same verses.

Finally, in later midrashim we see a tendency to link exegetically the inherited tradition of the Generation of Enosh to the actual words of Gen 4:26, especially by wordplays. According to *3 Enoch*, the ministering angels question God's favoring of humankind with God's presence, in view of the behavior of the Generation of Enosh. Citing Ps 8:5, they exclaim: “What is man (אנוש) that you are mindful of him,” taking the verse to refer to Enosh, “the head of the idol worshipers.” In response, God removes the Shekinah from humankind's midst entirely.⁶³ Other medieval midrashic collections similarly link a negative interpretation of Enosh's name as an expression of weakness, sickness, or calamity to the degeneration and punishment of humankind in his days.⁶⁴ In two passages, Enosh's name, signifying weakness, is linked to a play on the verb הוחל as denoting the profanation (חלול) of God's name or worship.⁶⁵ Once again, this may be compared with Philo and Christian interpreters, for whom interpretation of Enosh's name is similarly linked to their construal of Gen 4:26b. They, however, interpret Enosh's name positively (“true man”), as they do Gen 4:26b, whereas the rabbinic commentaries view both negatively.

The tradition of tracing the origins of idolatry to Enosh's generation finds poetic, liturgical expression in several *piyyutim*. They set this tradition in the context of retelling Israelite sacred history,

bati (ed. Albeck), p. 41. For fuller treatment of that text, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 167–68.

63. Contrast this to the tradition mentioned earlier of the removal of the Shekinah in seven steps, beginning with Adam and continuing until Abraham. Here, as in *Gen. Rab.* 23.6, the idyllic state associated with the Garden of Eden continues until the Generation of Enosh, whereupon God's relation to humanity, and humanity's relation to nature, is radically transformed as a result of humankind's idolatry. In the Christian sources that we have examined, the relation between God and humans, corrupted by Adam and Eve, is at least partially repaired through Enosh, as a prelude to its total reparation through Jesus.

64. See *Ber. Rabbati* (ed. Albeck), pp. 31, 56.

65. *Midr. Haggadol*, at Gen 4:26; *Midr. Aggadab*, at Gen 4:26.

which serves as the backdrop to the atonement ritual performed by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. While the exegetical motifs — the people's sin of worshiping false gods by applying to them God's name, and God's response of calling upon the sea to overflow its boundaries — are not new, their narrative contextualization is. The rejection of God's dominion and commandments by the pre-Israelite generations sets the stage for God's establishing a covenant with Abraham, the maintenance of which is the work of Aaron's descendants, the priests, and the ultimate expression of which is the high priest's atonement rite in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. We may contrast this with Ben Sira's poetic paean to the high priest Simon, who culminates a chain of righteous ancestors going back to the antediluvians Adam, Seth, Enosh, and Enoch. These *piyyutim* also see the high priest as the culmination of Israelite sacred history, but one that stands now in sharp *contrast* to the progressive degeneration of the pre-Israelite generations.⁶⁶

Comparisons and Conclusions

Although early rabbinic and Christian exegetes share the scriptural text of Genesis (notwithstanding important differences between the versions from which they work),⁶⁷ inherit a common body of Second Temple Jewish tradition,⁶⁸ rely on similar methods of scriptural interpretation,⁶⁹ and see themselves as descendants of the same righteous biblical figures, they have arrived at

66. For the *piyyut* texts and fuller discussion, see Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 171–73.

67. The overall differences between rabbinic and early Christian interpretations of Enosh and Gen 4:26 cannot simply be traced to the differences between their respective scriptural versions, since those Christian interpreters who worked from the Old Latin and Syriac versions express interpretations similar to those who worked from the LXX, and these in turn take a different tack from Jewish interpreters, such as Philo, who worked from the LXX.

68. Note my earlier cautionary comments: it is impossible to know to what extent existing Second Temple texts are representative of what would have been available to either early rabbinic or early Christian exegetes.

69. For example, several exegetes have sought meaning in the abrupt juxtaposition of Gen 4:26 and 5:1, several have interpreted Gen 4:26b as an explanation of Enosh's naming in 4:26a, and many have interpreted Enosh's (or his generation's) actions through plays on his name and/or another word in the verse.

strikingly dissimilar interpretations of Gen 4:26 and the figure of Enosh.⁷⁰ Whereas Christian interpreters focus on Enosh as a paradigm of faith and piety, and eventually as a prototype of Jesus and his followers, rabbinic commentators show little interest in Enosh as an individual. Rather, their emphasis is on the moral and physical decline of his contemporaries, it being unclear whether, or to what extent, Enosh participated in that decline.⁷¹ Early Christian sources locate Enosh as a link, often the initial link, in a chain of righteous individuals who foreshadow and culminate in Jesus and the Christian faithful. By contrast, early rabbinic sources identify the Generation of Enosh as the first step in the progressive corruption of humankind until it is reversed, at least partially, by Abraham and his patriarchal and Israelite successors.

For Christian commentators, Enosh, as true and godlike man, effects a partial remedy to the primal sin of Adam and Eve. He typifies the line of Seth as “sons of God,” who are contrasted with the wicked line of Cain and whose intermixing with Cain's line (Gen 6:2–4) necessitated the flood in Noah's time. The flood is, in turn, a prefiguration of the final apocalyptic redemption of the faithful followers of Jesus. Thus, Jesus and his followers represent not only the extension of the Sethite line, but its fulfillment and ultimate triumph.

For the rabbis, the Generation of Enosh, like the successive pre-Israelite generations, corrupt the divine image through their actions, resulting in their alienation from God and nature. Humanity's decline is contrasted with, and reversed by, the upward trend initiated by Abraham and his Israelite descendants, with whom the divine-human covenant is finally established with the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Through study and observance of the Torah, Israel, and ultimately all of humanity, can

70. This is not to claim that either rabbinic or Christian interpretations are monolithic or mutually exclusive on specific points, but that the overall thrusts of the two bodies of interpretation point in decidedly different directions.

71. Only one rabbinic text of the Amoraic period identifies Enosh himself as an idolater: *b. Shabb.* 118b according to the Munich manuscript, but not the printed editions. See Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 153–54. *Gen. Rab.* 23:6 suggests that Enosh himself was still in the divine image, and that this ceased, or at least was compromised, only after his birth. See *Enosh and His Generation*, 133–34. See also *3 Enoch (Sepher Hekalot)* 5:3–13, treated above, where Enosh is said to have been the “head of the idol worshippers.”

be restored to its full potential as creations in the divine image, thereby bringing about the redemption of creation.

Thus, whereas in later Christian piety Enosh serves as a *paradigm*, in the rabbinic view the Generation of Enosh functions as a *foil* to the emergence of an Israelite covenantal history in which the rabbis view themselves as the latest link. The differences between these interpretive strategies cannot be explained exclusively either by a process of "reverse engineering," whereby one retraces the internal hermeneutical steps by which interpreters move from scriptural text to interpretation,⁷² or by seeking external, intercommunal polemics as the root cause of these diverging interpretive paths.⁷³ Likewise, as much as broader Greco-Roman cultural influences might have left their mark on the shape of the Jewish and Christian interpretations, these alone cannot explain the differences between the two, since rabbis and church fathers both were susceptible to the same forces.⁷⁴

Rather, as each interpretive community focused its etiologically attention on early biblical heroes and generations, it did so from the vantage point of its particular sense of teleology. As

72. For the application of this term to ancient scriptural interpretation see Kugel, *Potiphar's House*, 251–53. The extant traditions of interpretation are the products not solely of direct exegetical encounter with scriptural textual irritants but also of the continuing assessment and reformulation of received *traditions* of interpretation. In our case, we simply lack evidence for many of these intermediary stages of tradition transmission and transformation.

73. Consider the suggestion of Brooke, review of *Enosh and His Generation*, 260–61, that the rabbinic interpretations of Enosh and his generation can best be seen as an attempt to purge Judaism of Gnostic elements. Unfortunately, he is unable to adduce any texts to support this tantalizing explanation. See above, n. 1. For a broader discussion of scholarly tendencies to overplay either hermeneuticist or historicist explanations of scriptural interpretation, see my book, *From Tradition to Commentary*, 14–15. In the absence of interpretations that explicitly evidence intercommunal polemics, it is difficult to know when such polemics lie behind the interpretations of each community, especially since it is often unclear what the level of contact or familiarity might have been between interpretive communities. For example, in the case at hand I find no interpretations that necessitate rabbinic anti-Christian polemic or vice versa. The thrust of rabbinic interpretation is not to belittle Enosh or Seth, who are venerated in Christian tradition. Neither is the thrust of Christian exegesis to elevate Enosh's contemporaries overall. Notwithstanding common points of departure and shared methods of interpretation, the two traditions have entirely different preoccupations. This is not to deny the possibility of some degree of cross-influence. However, since each community's exegesis can be understood in relation to that community's broader interpretive praxis, not just the possibility but the probability of such polemic as a primary, generative motivation has to be established.

74. See in particular my explication of rabbinic exegesis in terms of widespread currents of chronological, cultural primitivism in Greco-Roman thought and literature: *Enosh and His Generation*, 208–11, 218–23.

much as each tradition of interpretation has to be understood in terms of its close reading of Gen 4:26, and the cultural context within which it operates, it also needs to be seen within a broader practice of scriptural reading and explication as an expression of each community's theological self-understanding within the sacred metanarrative of beginnings and endings. Early Christian and rabbinic traditions both trace, in one case positively and in the other negatively, the origins of their respective redemptive expectations to the universal, antediluvian period of biblical history, with Gen 4:26's notice about Enosh or the Generation of Enosh receiving close attention. For both traditions, the culmination of that redemptive process would be played out again on the canvas of universal history, but by very different redemptive media: for the one through Jesus; for the other through Torah.

Bibliography

An extensive bibliography relating to Enosh and his generation, as well as associated exegetical motifs, can be found in Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 248–62.

Previous studies specific to Enosh and the interpretation of Gen 4:26, exclusive of standard biblical commentaries, have been few and limited in scope:

Horst, F. "Die Notiz vom Anfang des Jahwekultes in Genesis 4,26." In *Libertas Christiana: Friedrich Delekat zum 65. Geburtstag*. Ed. E. Wolf and W. Matthias. Munich: C. Kaiser, 1957. Pp. 68–74.

Sandmel, S. "Genesis 4:26b." *HUCA* 32 (1961) 19–29.

Schäfer, P. "Der Götzendienst des Enosch: Zur Bildung und Entwicklung aggadischer Traditionen im nachbiblischen Judentum." In *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums*. AGJU 15. Leiden: Brill, 1978. Pp. 134–52.

von Mutius, H.-G. "Gen. 4,26, Philo von Byblos und die jüdische Haggada." *Biblische Notizen* 13 (1980) 46–48.

No ancient text or major section of a text is devoted solely to Enosh or attributed to him. A possible exception is a fragment from the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q369 1 i 1–7) that has been named by its editors (H. Attridge and J. Strugnell) "Prayer of Enosh," even though Enosh's name does not appear therein (see above, n. 1):

VanderKam, J. C., and J. T. Milik, eds. *Qumran Cave 4. VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1*. DJD 13. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994. Pp. 353–56.

For the most part, Enosh and Gen 4:26 are interpreted either in the context of running translation and commentary to the Book of Genesis, or in the context of treatment of related biblical passages or themes.

In order to locate such scattered treatments of a minor biblical figure such as Enosh, indexes to ancient literature, whether by names or scriptural verses, are particularly helpful. For Josephus and Philo, see the general index for the former and the scriptural and name indexes for the latter in the final volume of each in the LCL editions. For Western Christian literature see the indexes to *PL* and *PG*. Other indexes include:

- Biblia Patristica*. Vols. 1–6. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975–95. *Biblia Patristica Supplément*. Paris, 1982. For Philo. Ginzberg, L. *The Legends of the Jews*. 7 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909–38. Vol. 7 contains a detailed subject index. Hyman, H. *Toledot tanna'im we'amora'im*. Rev. ed. 3 vols. Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1979. Rabbinic literature according to verse citations. Ulrich, E. "An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1 (1994) 113–29; 2 (1995) 86–107.

To the extent that the ancient primary texts are now electronically readable and searchable, locating references to a figure such as Enosh is faster and more thorough.

For above-mentioned sources in which interpretations of Enosh, Gen 4:26, and/or their scriptural context occur most prominently, the following editions and translations may be consulted:

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