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Consistent with the presentation of the biblical *gibborim* as “mighty warriors,” the Enoch writings found in the Book of Moses describe scenes of wars, bloodshed, and slaughter among the people. For example, in Moses 6:15 we read:

And the children of men were numerous upon all the face of the land. And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed; and a man’s hand was against his own brother, in administering death, because of secret works, seeking for power.

The *Book of Giants* account likewise begins with references to “slaughter, destruction, and moral corruption” that filled the earth. The mention of “secret works” and “administering death” in the Book of Moses recalls a similar description in the *Book of Giants*: “they knew the secrets... and they killed many....” Elsewhere the Qumran manuscripts refer to the spread of the “mystery of wickedness.” This recalls the deeds of the “Watchers” of Jewish tradition—semi-divine, semi-mythical beings who fell prey to sin.

**Mysteries of Wickedness among the “Watchers”**

In his summary of accounts of the kind of knowledge that the Watchers were said to have possessed, Hugh Nibley describes their era as a “time of great intellectual as well as material sophistication.” Nibley continues:

The leaders of the people devoted most of their wealth to all kinds of engineering projects for controlling and tempering nature. But the Lord altered the order of creation, making the sun rise in the west and set in the east, so that all their plans came to naught. The idea of controlling the environment independently of God was not so foolish as it sounds, says the Zohar, “for they knew all the arts ... and all the ruling chieftains [archons] in charge of the world, and on this knowledge they relied, until at length God disabused them by restoring the earth to its primitive state and covering it with water.” Rabbi Isaac reports: “In the days of Enoch even children were acquainted with these mysterious arts [the advanced sciences].’ Said R. Yesa: ‘If so, how could they be so blind as not to know that God intended to bring the Flood upon them and destroy them?’ R. Isaac replied: ‘They did know,’ but they thought they were smart enough to prevent it. “What they did not know was that God rules the world. ... God gave them a respite all the time that the righteous men Jered, Methuselah, and Enoch were alive; but when they departed from the world, God let punishment descend ..., ‘and they were blotted out from the earth’ (Genesis 7:23).”

Nibley infers that the knowledge of the Watchers also included information about sacred ordinances (or, perhaps, devilish imitations of them) that was not to be divulged to others. For example, an Ethiopian text states:
In the days of Cain and his sons, evil and deceitful practices increased. Those who gloried [in their bodies] before Adam are the wicked angels. Having received bodies, they learned a great sin. They therefore openly exposed all the work they had seen in heaven.

Likewise, a Greek fragment of 1 Enoch (Gizeh) presents:

the Great Angels returning from earth to report to God that they had found ‘Azael teaching all manner of unrighteousness upon the earth, and he has laid bare those mysteries of the age which belong to heaven, which are [now] known and practiced among men; and also Semiazas is with him, he to whom thou gavest authority [over] those who go along with him.

Moreover:

Clement of Alexandria attributed to Musaeus, the founder of the Greek Mysteries, an account of “how the angels lost their heavenly heritage through the telling of the secret things [mysteria] to women,” things, Clement observes, “which the other angels keep secret or quietly perform until the coming of the Lord.”

Islamic tradition teaches that the most important of these mysteria, taught without authorization to a woman who was their accomplice in sin,[21] was knowledge of the “Name of God” by means of which the Watchers were able to “ascend to Heaven.”[22] Commenting on such texts, Nibley observes:[23]

The ordinances are not secret, and yet they are, so to speak, automatically scrambled for those not authorized to have them. … This is the classical account of the Watchers, angels who came to call the human race to repentance, but who, being tempted by the daughters of men, fell and gave away the covenants and the knowledge they possessed. This was their undoing, and was always treated as the most monstrous of crimes, divulging the pure ordinances of heaven to people unworthy to receive them, who then proceeded to exercise them in unrighteousness while proclaiming their own righteousness on the grounds of possessing them.

Mahujah/Mehuja-el and the Mysteries of Wickedness

A tentative case can be made for the identification of the Book of the Giants Mahujah with the biblical Mehuja-el, who was a descendant of Cain and the grandfather of the wicked Lamech.[24] This case is only made stronger when we consider the additional material about Mehuja-el’s family line included in the Joseph Smith account. Note that in the Book of Moses, Mehuja-el’s grandson, like the other “sons of men,”[25] “entered into a covenant with Satan after the manner of Cain.”[26] Similarly, in 1 Enoch[27] we read that a group of conspirators, here depicted as fallen sons of God, “all swore together and bound one another with a curse.” Elsewhere in 1 Enoch we learn additional details about that oath:[28]
This is the number of Kasbe’el, the chief of the oath, which he showed to the holy ones when he was dwelling on high in glory, and its (or “his”) name is Beqa. This one told Michael that he should show him the secret name, so that they might mention it in the oath, so that those who showed the sons of men everything that was in secret might quake at the name and the oath.

The passages in 1 Enoch are similar to a section of the Book of Moses that describes a “secret combination” that had been in operation “from the days of Cain.” As to the deadly nature of the oath, we read in the Book of Moses: “Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die,” just as in 1 Enoch the conspirators “bound one another with a curse.”

In 1 Enoch, the conspirators agreed on their course of action by saying, “Come, let us choose for ourselves wives from the daughters of men.” Likewise, in the Book of Moses, Mehuja-el’s grandson became infamous because he “took unto himself ... wives” to whom he revealed the secrets of their wicked league (to the chagrin of his fellows). In 1 Enoch, as in the Book of Moses, we also read specifically of how “they all began to reveal mysteries to their wives and children.” We will revisit the consequences of the revelation of these disastrous mysteries in a future discussion of Moses 5.

In summary, the Book of Moses, 1 Enoch, and the Book of Giants reveal the same dreary, recurrent pattern of wickedness, a pattern that Enoch was required by God to disrupt.


Further Reading


References


Endnotes

[1] Speaking as if he were standing before the scene in the figure, John Bright (1811–1889), a Quaker, movingly addressed the English House of Commons in opposition to the Crimean War (N. Elliott, John Bright):

The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old … to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and lowly.

[12] See G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 8:1–3, p. 188.
[24] See J. M. Bradshaw, God’s Image 1, p. 96 n. M6-19. Because of differences in Hebrew spelling, some have questioned whether a connection can be made between
Mahijah/Mahujah (in the Book of Moses), Mahaway (in the Qumran Book of Giants), and Mehuja-el (in Genesis 4:18). See Essay #7. For a detailed response on this issue, see J. M. Bradshaw et al., Where Did the Names “Mahaway” and “Mahujah” Come From?.

[30] Moses 5:29. For more on the uses of such oaths within and outside of scripture, see J. M. Bradshaw, God’s Image 1, Moses 5:29-b, c, d, pp. 377–378; J. M. Bradshaw et al., Investiture Panel, pp. 33–34.
[33] Moses 5:44. See J. M. Bradshaw, God’s Image 1, p. 392 n. 5:44-a: “The wording ‘took unto himself’ is paralleled in the description of the illicit relationships of the wicked husbands in the days of Noah (Moses 8:14, 21). A. T. Wright, Evil Spirits, pp. 135–136 observes that “there is no indication ... that a marriage actually took place, but rather [the phrase] could be translated and understood as ‘Lamech took to himself two women.’”
[35] Moses 5:53: “Lamech had spoken the secret unto his wives, and they rebelled against him, and declared these things abroad, and had not compassion.”
[36] G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 8:3, p. 188. For an extensive discussion of this topic, see R. Lesses, They Revealed.