The Date and Provenience of the Parables of Enoch
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Purpose
The purpose of this chapter is to explore the most likely date for the compositions of the Parables of Enoch. In the process, I shall introduce a new argument for dating this challenging work.¹ I shall also briefly reflect on the most likely provenience of this challenging and stimulating masterpiece.

Preliminary Observations
The Unity of 1En 37-71. Many experts in Second Temple Judaism have assumed that R. H. Charles, in 1893, correctly judged chapter 71 to be “most certainly a later addition” and that the “title ‘Son of Man’ is used in an absolutely different sense in this chapter.”² Years later, in the second edition of The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch, Charles changed his mind. He concluded that chapter 71 is not an addition: “This chapter seems to belong to the Parables, though in the first edition I thought otherwise.”³

During the last sessions of our meetings in Camaldoli, I pointed out that chapters 70 and 71 do present Enoch in an exalted position. All scholars present tended to agree. I then stressed that such an elevation was foreshadowed in chapters 37-69. All present also agreed, even the esteemed expert who had argued consistently that the last chapter was an addition.⁴

How tenable is that position? First, there is no manuscript evidence for an addition, and today we have over 120 Ethiopic manuscripts of the Parables of Enoch and each has chapters 70 and 71.⁵ Second, Charles saw reasons to abandon his first impression. Third, if there is foreshadowing of chapters 70 and 71 in chapters 37-69, then 70 and 71 may have been intended by the author when he supplied foreshadowing while composing chapters 37-69. Thus, I am persuaded that no convincing case has been made for chapters 70 or 71 to be a later addition to the Parables of Enoch.⁶

Who is the Son of Man? Is the figure some unknown celestial being who will be eventually revealed by God. Or, is God revealing that the Son of Man is Enoch?

Charles offered a translation that was the vade mecum of scholars from about 1913 until 1983. What was his translation in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English of 1913? Charles presented this translation: “This is the Son of Man who is born unto righteousness . . . . [Charles’ emphasis]”⁷

How could Charles obtain such a misleading translation? He did so by emending the text. Yet, almost a century later, with a considerable increase in manuscript evidence for 1 Enoch, no manuscript has been discovered that can support such a restoration.

Why did Charles’ advice darken counsel? It was because scholars were misled. They assumed that chapter 71 might be a later addition and that, in this chapter, Enoch is urged to look toward some figure who is announced to be that Son of Man. As noted from the beginning, it is clear that Charles changed his mind and perceived that chapter 71 belongs to the Parables of Enoch.
Is the document known as the Parables of Enoch a Christian Composition? Another savant of 1 Enoch also misled experts on Early Judaism and Christian Origins. For decades, J. T. Milik claimed to be able to demonstrate that the Aramaic fragments of Enoch found in the Qumran caves would prove that the Parables of Enoch was a Christian composition that considerably postdated the first century CE. Note Milik’s words: “In conclusion, it is around the year A.D. 270 or shortly afterwards that I would place the composition of the Book of Parables.” Today, many biblical scholars incorrectly assume that the Parables of Enoch is a Christian work; they also imagine that this consensus is shared. It is now clear that most experts of Second Temple Judaism conclude that the Parables of Enoch is Jewish. In 1977, during a congress of specialists on 1 Enoch, no one agreed with J.T. Milik’s well-known conclusion that the work is Christian.

Philology

One of the main problems in working on the Parables of Enoch is the fact that it is preserved only in Ethiopic and in late medieval copies. It seems obvious that this text derives from an earlier Aramaic text. Hence, one eye should be on the Ethiopic text, and another on the putative Aramaic original.

The Aramaic bar endum, “the Son of Man” (or the non-titular “the son of man”),\textsuperscript{10} and bar nashe, which also means “the Son of Man” (or the non-titular “the son of man”), possess virtually identical meanings in Aramaic documents and sometimes merely represent different dialects. No morphological nor grammatical key is provided to help translators or exegetes discern if the words are intended generically for the human, as a technical term, or as a title. We have no proof that the words should be capitalized, since capitalization does not appear in Aramaic. How should scholars discern what is intended by the implied author? What philological or contextual evidence helps the scholar to comprehend that an expression has become a \textit{terminus technicus}, and then a title? These are questions that should be kept in mind as we continue.

Seeking the Date of Composition for the Parables of Enoch

The Parables of Enoch reinterprets and expands on Daniel’s vision of “one like a Son of Man.” This document certainly reflects a significant development in the Jewish understanding of Daniel 7.\textsuperscript{11} The work is thus to be dated after 164 BCE, when Daniel reached its present form.

The Parables of Enoch constitutes the second vision of Enoch. The document is preserved in the Books of Enoch, which is a library of books attributed to Enoch by a group of Jews living in Palestine, most likely in Galilee (as we shall see). The earliest portions of this work, especially chapters 1-36 were composed about 300 BCE. This apparent, and new, consensus was announced recently.\textsuperscript{12} The date of the latest (or youngest) document in the Enoch corpus is clearly the Parables of Enoch. In the following pages, I shall summarize why a date for the Parables of Enoch during the time of Herod the Great (40-4 BCE) or the early decades of the first century CE is most plausible.

In 1En 37-71 (the Parables of Enoch), we find references to the Elect One, the Righteous One, the Messiah or the Anointed One, and the Son of Man (if that is the proper translation of the Ethiopic). All these terms or titles may be imagined to denote
the same figure, since their functions are virtually identical (Black, VanderKam, and Nicklesburg). In chapter 53, the Righteous One is clearly identified as the Elect One.

In 60:10, Enoch is a “son of man” who will know “the hidden things.” This verse uses the same terminology in Ge’ez applied elsewhere in the Parables of Enoch to “the Son of Man;” but in 60:10 the expression does not function as a title as it does apparently in 71:14. In 60:10, the term does not reveal a celestial Judge who has sufficient knowledge and enduring righteous; and Enoch is to know hidden things only “according (to the degree) to which it will be permitted.”

Unfortunately, unlike Aramaic and Greek, Ge’ez does not distinguish between “a son of man” and “the Son of Man.” Yet, the interpreter of the Parables of Enoch must make such distinctions.

In chapter 61, the Elect One is placed “on the throne of glory” by the “Lord of the Spirits,” which is a unique name for God. This name for God is found only in the Parables of Enoch, and it appears there over 100 times.

In chapter 62, the Elect One and “that Son of Man” is shown seated on the heavenly throne. All the mighty on the earth are called to acknowledge and salute the enthroned Elect One, “that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory” (6:5). At this point, in chapter 62, we first hear about the enthroned “Son of Man.”

The Son of Man was hidden “from the beginning.” He is thus introduced as sharing qualities with God, since both are said to be hidden. He is now revealed to the elect on earth. All, even mighty kings, will fall down and worship the Son of Man.

In the final days – the days of judgment – sinners will be ashamed before the Son of Man. In the third parable of Enoch, found in chapter 69, all judgment is given to the Son of Man. Eventually, the Son of Man seats himself on “the throne of glory.” He is thus either identified with the Elect One or revealed to be the Elect One. One may not be able to discern which meaning was intended by the implied author. It is certain, nevertheless that, after the composition of the Parables of Enoch, many Jews would imagine the Son of Man to be the Elect One.

With the exception of chapter 71, during the writing and compiling of the compositions now found in 1 Enoch, no person is clearly identified as the Son of Man. No convincing evidence is given that Enoch might be the Son of Man, even though his divine nature evolves through the centuries of speculation and reflection, and is clearly foreshadowed in chapters 37 to 69. Is there a discernible evolution of the portrayal of Enoch?

According to many Ethiopic manuscripts, in 70:1 Enoch is a human – a “son of man.” His name is raised up before the Lord of the Spirits.

In the present volume, L. T. Stuckenbruck illustrates that another manuscript reading for 1 Enoch 70:1 should come into focus: “Afterwards it happened that the living name of the Son of Man was exalted in the presence of the Lord of Spirits above all those who live on dry land (Eth. semu ḥeyāw la-we’etu waldas elan ḥeyaw m-ella yahādder dibayabs).” If this Ethiopic text is preferred, from the beginning of chapter 70 readers of the Parables of Enoch would gain the impression that Enoch is to be identified with the heavenly “Son of Man,” since Enoch speaks in the first person and declares that he is transcendent, seeing the first humans. Chapter 71:5 continues to clarify that Enoch is the one who speaks in the first person and is “in the heaven of heavens.” The conclusion seems to evolve: the “Son of Man” relates to Enoch himself. This title does
not focus on Enoch as a human being; he is someone being singled out or set apart for a special purpose. Perhaps, the early Jew who composed this masterpiece imagined that the human Enoch finally perceives his heavenly counterpart, his eternal self and his God-given task to serve as eschatological Judge.

What seems clear is that the elevation of Enoch continues and reaches its zenith in chapter 71. That is, the climax of the book of the Parables of Enoch comes in the final chapter. He is greeted by “that angel,” perhaps Michael, who has come to Enoch along with “that Head of Days,” Gabriel, Raphael, Phanuel, and countless numbers of other angels. Michael seems then to be the one who speaks to Enoch. Here are his words to him (1En 71:14):

You are the Son of Man who was born to righteousness,
and righteousness remains over you,
and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not leave you. [Knibb]

You are the Son of Man who is born for righteousness,
And righteousness abides upon you,
And the righteousness of the Chief of Days forsakes you not. [Black]

You, son of man, who art born in righteousness
and upon whom righteousness has dwelt,
the righteousness of the Antecedent of Time will not forsake you. [Isaac]

Tu sei il figlio dell’uomo nato per la giustizia
e la giustizia ha dimorato in te
e la giustizia del Capo dei Giorni non ti abbandonerà. [Fusella]

You are the Son of Man who is born to righteousness,
and righteousness has remained with you.
The righteousness of the Antecedent of Days
will not forsake you. [Olson]

You are that son of man who was born for righteousness,
and righteousness dwells on you,
and the righteousness of the Head of Days will not forsake you.
[Nickelsburg and VanderKam]

The recent translations placard the difficulty in discerning the presence of the definite noun in Ethiopic. However, all of them reveal that Enoch is the Son of Man (or that son of man). It is clear, according to this narrative, that Enoch receives a celestial status that is superior to the one he was accorded in the Hebrew Bible and previously in the Books of Enoch. Though foreshadowed in the earlier sections of 1 Enoch and even in the Parables of Enoch, in 1 Enoch 71 Enoch is now revealed to have a unique cosmic status. He is now revealed to be the heavenly Man, that Son of Man.

Most likely, 4 Ezra is also important for understanding the re-interpretation of Daniel 7. 4 Ezra 13 contains a reference to one like the figure of a man who comes out of
the sea. He is revealed to be the Messiah. The original Hebrew text may have mentioned “the Son of Man,” but only Latin (ille homo and vir) and Syriac (bar nasha and gabra) manuscripts preserve this pseudepigraphon. It is also difficult to use this text to comprehend Jesus’ time and message; it postdates 70 CE. It is judicious not to base conclusions regarding the meaning of pre-70 Son of Man traditions on 4 Ezra, but it is also wise to keep this text in perspective since it clearly preserves traditions that antedate 70.

We may now revisit the conclusion that 1En 37-71 is Jewish. There is no obvious “Christian” thought in them. Jesus is never mentioned, and there is no allusion to him. The Son of Man is certainly not Jesus. The Son of Man is revealed, in the final scene, to be none other than Enoch.

What date should be given, or imagined, for the Parables of Enoch? Do they antedate Jesus and the Evangelists? Five reasons support a dating of this work to the time of Herod and the Herodians: the insignificance of the fact that no fragment of this work has been identified among the hundreds of thousands of fragments found in the Qumran caves, the late composition of the document within 1 Enoch, the fact that it was not composed at Qumran, the reference to a Parthian invasion, and the curse on the landowners.

First, one cannot be certain that this document was absent or unknown at Qumran. One may only point out that no fragment of the Parables of Enoch has been identified among the Qumran fragments. This fact may be insignificant for numerous reasons. Many compositions are not found there, including Esther, 1 Maccabees, and the Psalms of Solomon. Some biblical or ancient Jewish documents are clearly preserved in extremely miniscule fragile fragments —some of these disintegrated before they were identified. Over one hundred fragments remain unidentified within the Qumran corpus (there are also fragments still unavailable to scholars [at least two of them belong to 1 Enoch and both are from chapters 1-36]).

Conceivably about 10 to 20% of what was placed in the Qumran Caves is available for us to study. Let me illustrate this point that has not been adequately perceived by scholars, including Qumranologists. The Bedouin reportedly found seven full manuscripts in Cave I, but later the archeologists recovered fragments from over 70 documents once hidden in this cave. From Cave II comes very little evidence of manuscripts; maybe there was more in this cave. Cave III, which was discovered by R. de Vaux, preserved a few documents, most notably the Copper Scroll. Cave IV is two caves because they were found at the same time and de Vaux numbered both “Cave IV;” he knew it would be impossible to distinguish the precise provenience of the many fragments. No full scrolls are traceable to Cave IV; all we have are hundreds of thousands of fragments from full scrolls. There may have been over 400 documents in those two caves called “Cave IV;” it is conceivable that we less than 2% of what had been placed there.20 Caves V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X, most of which had collapsed centuries before they were discovered, produced only minuscule fragments. We can only speculate as to how many manuscripts they once contained. From Cave XI comes some large scrolls, as from Cave I, but certainly no expert will state that we have all of what was hidden in that cave. Near Cave V are at least two “caves” that collapsed centuries ago; thus, we cannot now know what documents may have been placed in them. Obviously, if Josephus was allowed by Titus to take some scrolls to Rome (as he mentions in his Life), he and others
in the Roman army most likely took with them some scrolls that had been hidden in caves near Qumran which were then visible, and which were most likely easily accessible with stairs and wooden bridges.

Cumulatively, perhaps we possess only about 10 to 20% of the manuscripts that were in the Qumran caves before, or in, June 68 CE. Thus, the absence of identifiable fragments of the *Parables of Enoch* from Qumran is neither remarkable nor a viable reason for dating the composition.\(^{21}\)

For dating the *Parables of Enoch* to the Herodian period, far more disconcerting than the absence of identifiable fragments among the Qumran corpus is the absence of quotations of this document in the works of the early scholars of the church. How can one explain this fact? This question is not easy to answer.

The early scholars of the church most likely considered the *Parables of Enoch* unworthy of citation. For them, the elevation of Enoch as the Son of Man in the *Parables of Enoch* clashed with the Christian affirmation that ancient prophecy proved Jesus of Nazareth was not only divine but also the Messiah and the Son of Man. These early Christians most likely reasoned that if Enoch is the Son of Man and should be identified as the Messiah, then it should not be translated from Aramaic to Greek or explored and mined for Christian proclamation (*kerygma*) and teaching (*didache*).

Second, if the *Parables of Enoch* is the latest composition in the corpus defined by *1 Enoch* and was composed in Galilee, as now seems evident to many Enoch specialists (see the following), then the document might not have been known in Jerusalem or Judea before 68 CE and, thence, would not be expected to be present in the Qumran library.

Third, scholars agree that the *Parables of Enoch* were not composed at Qumran. It would have to be taken to Qumran by one who was both sympathetic to the ideas in the document and one who knew that its portrayal of Enoch would have been respected at Qumran. The Jews who followed the ideas in the *Rule of the Community* would not have been open to the claim that the Messiah is to be identified as the Son of Man; and, indeed, that an archangel revealed that the titles define only Enoch.\(^{22}\) Such a concept would have been abhorrent to those who composed and those who later believed the tenets in the *Pesharim*. The interpretations of Habakkuk included for the Qumranites a status for the Righteous Teacher that was superior to Enoch and not only to Habbakuk but also to the other prophets to whom God did not reveal “all the secrets.”\(^{23}\) To admire Enoch as “that Son of Man” would also clash with the Davidic and Levitical concepts of the Messiah regnant at Qumran. The origin of Wisdom at Qumran, moreover, is not to be reduced only to Enoch; recall that the *Parables of Enoch* identify themselves as “the vision of wisdom which Enoch … saw” (37:1).

Indeed, the manuscripts at Qumran that were not composed there would have been taken to Qumran by those who shared the main tenets of Qumran thought. The *Parables of Enoch* most likely would not have been a wise choice for someone coming to Qumran and seeking admission into the Yaḥad.

Why is that so? If the paleographical dating of the Qumran fragments of *1 Enoch* is to be taken seriously, then the *Books of Enoch* were important primarily for the early life of the Qumran Community. More importantly, the Qumranites would not have agreed with the author’s elevation of Enoch. Despite the diversity of thought at Qumran,
it seems *prima facie* evident that the Qumranites would not have agreed with the claim that involved celebrating Enoch above Moses or the Righteous Teacher.

Fourth, the invasion mentioned in chapter 56 seems to refer to the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE. Recall the passage in the *Parables of Enoch*: “the Parthians and Medes” will “come like lions from the lairs” and they will “trample upon the land of my chosen ones, and the land of my chosen ones will become before them a trampling-ground and a beaten track. But the city of my righteous ones (= Jerusalem) will be a hindrance to their horses” (56:6-7).

This Parthian invasion was lengthy and extensive, as we learn from Josephus in *Antiquities* 14. According to Josephus, Pacorus, the Parthian general and son of the Parthian king, assisted by Barzaphranes, the Parthian satrap, occupied Syria in 40 BCE. Meanwhile, Judea was in a civil war with two rivaling Hasmoneans: Antigonus II and Hyrcanus II. The Parthians marched against Judea, with Pacorus proceeding along the coast and Barzaphranes moving southward in the interior. Herod the Great and Phasael, his brother, were engaged in the battle. The Parthians, entered Jerusalem (*Ant* 14.344), put Hyrcanus and Phasael in chains, but failed to trick and catch Herod. He and his family fled to Masada, but the Parthians plundered Jerusalem and ravaged the countryside, even destroying Marisa (*Ant* 14.363-64). Eventually, the tide turned in favor of Herod.

Herod was declared “King of the Jews” by the Roman Senate in the same year (40 BCE). He now had to fight against the Hasmoneans and the Parthians whom the Romans under Pompey and Antony had never conquered. The Parthian invasion of 40 is now documented by recent excavations along the western littoral of the Dead Sea.

Chapter 56 is ambiguous. Most likely it mirrors from some distance of time or space the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE. This is the most likely scenario, in light of Josephus’ account and the archaeological excavations from Jericho to Ein Gedi.

Thus, the *Parables of Enoch* would postdate 40 BCE, but probably not by many years or decades, since as with the reference to Pompey in *Psalms of Solomon* 2, the crisis seems rather recent and still disturbing to the author, who seems to have remembered how the walls of Jerusalem had been “a hindrance to” the “horses” of the Parthians, who were famous for their skilled horsemanship. Thus, 1En 56 may indicate that the *Parables of Enoch* should be dated within a generation of the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE.

Fifth, let me introduce a final – and new – argument that may clinch the conclusion for dating the *Parables of Enoch*. Quite surprisingly, curses appear directed not only against kings and rulers, but also against landowners. Note these excerpts (italics mine):

Those “*who possess the earth*” are the sinners who will be judged and condemned [38:4].
The “mighty kings” will be destroyed [38:5].
After a discourse on the desired place to dwell, the author notes that the Chosen One will make the ground a blessing so that the “chosen ones” may finally dwell on it [45:5].
When the Son of Man appears he will destroy “the kings and the powerful from their resting-places” who along with “the strong” will be punished [46:4].
When the Son of Man appears “the kings of the earth and the strong who possess the dry ground … will not save themselves” [48:8].

At the time of judgment (presumably), “the kings and the powerful” will be thrown into a valley burning with fire [54:1-2; cf. 55:4].

The “kings and the mighty and those who dwell upon the earth” are the sinners and lawless ones who will be destroyed before the Lord of Spirit [62:2].

In that time of judgment, “all the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who possess the earth” or “the land” will receive pain [62:3-6].

At that time, “all the mighty kings, and the exalted, and those who rule the dry ground” will fall down and worship the Most High, setting their hopes now on the Son of Man [62:9].

“In those days the mighty kings who possess the dry ground” will beseech the angels of punishment but they descend into the torments of Sheol [63:1-10; cf. 63:12].

Among those condemned are kings and rulers. Well known are the curses of kings and rulers in the Hebrew Bible. Notably, a king or kings are cursed in 1 Kings 21:10, 13; Isaiah 8:21, and Ecclesiastes 10:20. And, a ruler or rulers are cursed in Exodus 22:28 (cf. Lev 4:22, Prov 28:15). Most scholars rightly conclude that the words “the kings of the earth” in the Parables of Enoch clearly denote the Roman emperors. Are others also included for condemnation and final judgment?

It is clear that the Enoch community also suffered under those who were wealthy and oppressive. This phenomenon is not new in the Parables of Enoch. Suffering under the rich is also present in earlier Enoch compositions.

What is new in the Parables of Enoch and unrepresented in the earlier Enoch compositions? According to the text of the Parables of Enoch, a new group is singled out for punishment. They are “the powerful” who “possess the land” or “dry ground.” The Ethiopic word for “dry ground” can mean the division of the cosmos into the waters and the earth (or dry ground), but every good translator of the Ethiopic knows that one must keep in mind that the Ethiopic itself is a translation, and the underlying Aramaic (or Hebrew) is not always accurately represented.

Is the Ethiopic word for “dry land” simply a mythological reference to the Flood? The most likely answer is probably “no.” Only to a certain extent does the expression “dry ground” reflect the Noah traditions that helped shape the final form of 1 Enoch; 28 far more important is the sociological context of the text. Thus, the Ethiopic term for “dry land” should not be seen only in terms of creation or Noah and the flood.

Sociologists have developed the insight that a text usually mirrors a social environment. Thus, those singled out for punishment are usually powerful people who have caused the author of a text, his group, and related communities to suffer. Studying the Parables of Enoch with historical and sociological imagination includes pondering who are the strong who control the dry land and cause Jews to suffer.

What is meant by the “dry ground” and who possesses or rules over it (48:8 and 63:1-10)? Before the efforts of settlers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to drain the swamps and marshes, Palestine was defined by two types of land: the dry land and the swamps and marshes. Thus, “the dry ground” in the Parables of Enoch most likely refers to the cultivatable land near wet areas or swamps.
Where were swamps located in Palestine before 70 CE? They defined the low country near the coast, the vast areas west of the Kinneret, and especially the land in the Hulah Valley. The latter was one inhospitable swamp that covered over 30 miles from Banias to Capernaum. One cannot imagine swamps today, when one looks down on the fertile valley below Rosh Pinna. The verdant area of Yesud HaMa’ala, north of Hazor and the Dishon stream, was a threatening swamp until about one hundred years ago.

The dry ground was characterized by vineyards and farms which produced primarily grapes, wheat, and barley. The author of the Parables of Enoch laments that he and other Jews labor on such dry land, while the strong, the sinners, eat of the produce of such land. The ground left to Jews would be the swamps – or non-dry ground. These undesirable portions of the so-called Holy Land produced only snakes and insects. If one drained the swamp, it became dry ground and would be owned by the strong and mighty who “possess the dry ground” (48:8), who are also those who “rule the dry ground” (63:1-10). To the author, these are sinners and lawless ones, who will soon be judged and punished by the Son of Man.

Note another translation of the ones who will be punished; they are “the mighty landowners” (48:8). Perhaps with an intentional paronomasia, the author states that the landowners will be “like grass in the fire” so that they shall burn before the elect ones (48:9). Who are the ones who have caused the righteous to suffer? They seem to be the infidels who have taken the land. The “sinners” are the oppressors, and those who “eat all the produce of crime” (53:2). It becomes clear at this point that they who toil for the produce of the land are the Jews who till the dry ground that is no longer theirs.

According to chapter 62 alone, the evil ones are “the kings, the governors, the high officials, and the landlords” (or “those who possess the earth”). In fact, this refrain appears no less than three times in this chapter (62:1, 3, 6). What stands out as an addition to a well-known typos (the cursing of kings and rulers) is the mentioning of “landlords.” The formula appears again in 62:9, but this time the “landlords” are replaced by “those who rule the earth” (62:9). Who then are the “landlords” (Isaac), “those who possess the earth” (Knibb, Nickelsburg, VanderKam), or “those who occupy the earth” (Olson)? It is clear that the author is thinking about those who would be punished in the eschatological judgment, since all of 1En 62 is about the final judgment.

Such expectations not only fortify the hope of the oppressed, they also often mirror reality, especially disturbing conditions. Hence, we should explore further and seek to discern the author’s vision. What is it?

The author dreams about being relieved of oppression, to be able to rise, to eat, and to rest with the Son of Man (62:14). The oppressors, the sinners, are the landowners who have taken food away from those who were promised the Land, the Jews. Soon, these Jews, mirrored in the Parables of Enoch, will be able finally to rise, eat, and rest (62:14). We can imagine that many Jews in this Enoch community are obviously exhausted, hungry, and so oppressed they can find no rest. The historian who is influenced by sociological research is trained to balance data and distinguish the conceivable from the probable. Who are the ones who rule the dry ground?

The answer becomes clearer in the next chapter. Note how Chapter 63 ends: “And thus says the Lord of Spirits: ‘This is the law and the judgment for the mighty and the kings and the exalted, and for those who possess the dry ground, before the Lord of Spirits’” (63:12; Knibb). The emphasis falls on the last named: “the landlords” or “those
who possess the dry ground.” The Jews of the Enoch community have lost their land to others; they can no longer be landlords. Who are those who possess the dry land and how does such identification help us date this document?

We have seen that those cursed are landowners. Who are those who are repeatedly singled out for judgment and condemnation? Who are the powerful or the strong that possess the “dry ground”? Who are “those who rule the dry ground”? Those who own the dry land are clearly condemned by those who desire the dry land and have lost it.

What sociological crisis explains this curse on landowners or those who possess the dry ground? The most plausible explanation is the disenfranchisement experienced by many wealthy Palestinian Jews. Among these are the wealthy Hasmoneans. During the time of Herod the Great primarily, but also during the rule of his sons and grandsons, Palestinian Jews were losing their farms and becoming tenant farmers.

Herod the Great seized the estates of the Hasmoneans, and taxed the Jews heavily to support his massive building projects. Along with this taxation from the Herodians and the increase in money demanded by the sacerdotal aristocracy in Jerusalem, many Jews lost their farms or estates. They lost all the dry land, the cultivatable land. The tax collectors and their collaborating investigators raised the land tax (tributum) and demanded excessive additional payments so that Jews were becoming landless. That is to say, many of the Jews lost their land to Herod and his aristocrats; not only the small landholders, but also many of the estate owners, lost their land to Herod and his hierarchy (Ant 17.304-14).

Most of these new landowners were not Jews, and lived away from the land they owned; they even lived outside the Land, as is evident in Jesus’ parable of the Wicked Tenant Farmers. The demotion of Jews from landowners to tenant farmers was exceptional during Herod’s reign. This crisis may also add historical insight into the story or legend that Hillel established the prozbol so Jews would not become bankrupt. Through taxation and intrigue, Herod and his hierarchy eventually controlled virtually two-thirds of the fertile land when he died.

Causes other than taxation undermined the ability of Jews to make a profit from farming. For example, the great famine of 25 BCE, about 12 years after Herod finally defeated his main rivals at the Arbel, stunned many farmers so they could not afford to pay their debts. They lost their land, becoming either laborers or tenant farmers on what had been their ancestor’s land.

During Herod’s regime, the Roman quislings acquired vast amounts of land from Jews. How Herod exacerbated the land tax on Palestinian Jews is too well known to document here. Herod’s taxation system was sometimes so severe that he had to remit portions of the taxes (Ant 15.365, 16.64). Complaints against severe taxation undermined and ended Archelaus’ reign, and Jewish delegates complained to Caesar that the taxation had led to the “loss of their property,” which primarily meant their homes and farmland.

It is obvious how the loss of land would impact any farmer, especially a Jew who believed that his farm or estate was part of the Land he inherited through God’s promise to Abraham. The loss of one’s own land would be unbearable when a Jew knew he could no longer control the land on which he had buried his ancestors, including, conceivably, his father and mother. Without any doubt, most scholars would perceive that such
shocking developments would have left an impact on a text composed by a Palestinian Jew during the crisis.

This catastrophic event – the loss of Jewish land and property to Herod and other Roman quislings – appears, in my judgment, to be mirrored in the Parables of Enoch. Thus, we perceive the reason for the appearance of a new typos – cursing the strong who steal the dry land from Jewish farmers. Therefore, we have discerned another reason why the work called the Parables of Enoch was most likely composed sometime shortly after 37 BCE and conceivably, up until the time of Jesus’ ministry.

Archaeological excavations strengthen the conclusion we obtained by focusing on texts. The recent excavations help us understand that two-thirds of the desirable land (the dry land) was lost to the Herodian dynasty from the end of the first century BCE to the first two decades of the first century CE. The appearance of large sumptuous manor houses and palatial abodes witness to a new development in the Herodian period. Extreme wealth, as in imperial Rome, is evident in ancient Palestine. Elegant glass wine pourers and beautifully crafted wine glasses have been discovered in Sebaste. Gold and silver jewelry appears in many places, including Jerusalem. Bronze lion-faced decorations for wooden chests have been found not only in Pompeii and Herculaneum, but in Jerusalem. The concentration and monopolization of vast wealth by a few is witnessed in a poignant and palpable fashion throughout ancient Palestine, from the Herodian palaces in Dan to the extravagances southward, especially at Ramat Hannadiv north of Caesarea Maritima, the coastal city of Caesarea, the Upper City of Herodian Jerusalem, and Herodian Jericho.

Almost all of the new landlords were Romans and others who were considered pagans by Jews. When the Jewish author called them “the powerful” (46:4, 54-55), “the strong” (48:8), and “the mighty” (62:2), he revealed his feelings of impotence in a land that had been promised to him as a descendant of Abraham.

The author of the Parables of Enoch represents a Jewish community that yearns for another place, because of “those who rule the dry ground” (62:9 [Knibb]). The author hopes that “the Chosen One” will make the ground a blessing so that the “chosen ones” may finally dwell on it (45:5). While the Qumran Community and others yearned for the restoration of the Land promised to Abraham, the Enoch Group suffers the loss of farming land, yearns for another place, and curses those who have stolen the good land for farms and vineyards.

Summary. The social conditions mirrored in the Parables of Enoch have become more clarified. It reflects many decades of Roman occupation. It probably best represents the period during the peak of King Herod’s reign (20-4 BCE) when more and more non-Jews were becoming landowners. What does that make Palestinian Jews? They are relegated to be tenant farmers.

The “kings of the earth” in the Parables of Enoch are clearly the Roman emperors; but some Jews may have included King Herod in that group, since he was judged to be non-Jewish and perceived to be disturbingly pro-Roman. Most scholars will have little difficulty in perceiving that the Parables of Enoch is an anti-Herodian polemic. Herod the Great and his elite group have over taxed the Jewish landowners and demoted them to tenant farmers.

The loss of land (and the Promised Land might be in the mind of the author, and certainly some Palestinian readers of 1En 37-71) would be monumentally significant for
Jews who knew not only the promise to Abraham but also realized that their parents and forefathers were buried on the land, or vineyard, that they had once owned. This resulting hatred and malice would have burned its way into our literature; most likely that sociological context shapes our text of the Parables of Enoch.

**Provenience of the Parables of Enoch**

The cumulative result of recent research is monumental. The Parables of Enoch do not depend on the Gospels (as Milik claimed). Rather, the Evangelists either depend on this earlier Jewish apocalyptic work, or are influenced by the traditions that are preserved in it. If the Gospels preserve echoes of Jesus’ own words, and at times accurately preserve them, then “the Son of Man” is most likely an expression known to some Galilean Jews prior to Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.

This conclusion seems to follow from the probability that the provenience and origin of the Books of Enoch is most likely in Galilee. For example, the Watchers do not descend on a spot in Judea. They descend on Mt. Hermon in Upper Galilee. Moreover, the best location for those who live near swamps – non dry ground – and lament the loss of dry ground to the Herodians and their henchmen, is the Hulah Valley, the large swampy area from Dan or Banias to Bethsaida or Capernaum.37

**The Parables of Enoch and the Jesus Traditions**

*Prospect.* If the Parables of Enoch is not only Jewish, but re-presents the thought of some intellectually influential Jewish groups in Galilee, then we should revisit some allegedly closed debates among New Testament scholars. There seem to be reasons now to postulate that, since some Jews were developing the concept of “the Son of Man,” Jesus could have used the expression to denote a heavenly figure. This hypothesis seems more likely than ten years ago, thanks to intensive work on the Books of Enoch within the Enoch Seminar and spectacular discoveries in Galilee that date from Jesus’ time.

Interpretation of Jesus’ sayings is the crucial issue and problem. While the Evangelists used Son of Man as a title, we cannot discern if Jesus used the expression as a technical term or as a title. He may have chosen bar nasha (“Son of Man”) because it was a vague concept, and not a title. Thus, Jesus may have imagined that God was free to shape the Son of Man concept and define it. Hence, the term became a recognizable title only as Jesus’ life was revealed to him and to those who witnessed to him.

In the Parables of Enoch the Son of Man is a celestial judge. It is significant that in the words attributed to Jesus, the Son of Man is assumed to be the judge at the end of times (cf. Mk 8:38, 13:24-27; esp. Jn 5:27). Is some relationship between the Jesus traditions and the Enoch traditions or texts revealed by this observation and perception?

As we seek to discern this possible link between the Parables of Enoch and the Gospels, it is helpful (perhaps imperative) to recognize the appearance of “the Son of God” and “Son of the Most High” at Qumran. In A Daniel Apocryphon (Aramaic Apocalypse 4Q246) a heavenly figure is introduced as “the Son of God” (ราม דני אל) “and the Son of the Most High” (ราม דני ה усп). Like the Son of Man in the Books of Enoch, the eschatological mediator is primarily the judge: “He will jud[ge][ת] the land in truth and all will make peace.” His kingdom will be “an eternal rule (שלטן עלם).” But, this figure is militant figure (“he will wage war”) and he is not called “the Son of Man.” The
parallels to those with the Son of Man in the Gospels are not as impressive as those provided by the *Parables of Enoch*.

Clearly pertinent for comprehending the unique thoughts in the *Parables of Enoch*, but less important than *A Daniel Apocryphon*, is the *Birth of Noah ar* (4Q534 ar). This document refers to “the Elect of God (חזרת אלהים).” He knows “the secrets of humankind” and “the secrets of all living things.” He is exceptional: “His wisdom will reach to all nations.” No one will be able to oppose him.

This text refers to a celestial and eschatological figure, perhaps Noah. The connections with the story of Jesus are significant, but in the extant fragments there is no evidence that he is either the Son of Man (although he seems to obtain enlightenment by reading “the three books” of Enoch) or that he will be Judge.

The Evangelists certainly portray Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Both refer to Jesus’ divine and heavenly status. The Son of Man sayings in the gospels frequently reveal the belief that Jesus, as the Son of Man, will serve as the cosmic judge at the Day of Judgment. To what extent are Jesus’ traditions shaped here by Enoch traditions? Are the influences only on the later Evangelists? [39]

The biblical tradition is that only God is Judge. Recall the Psalter memorized by all erudite Jews:

\[
\text{God stands in the divine assembly;}
\text{among the divine beings He pronounces judgment.}
\text{How long will you judge perversely,}
\text{showing favor to the wicked? Selah}
\text{Judge the wretched and the orphan,}
\text{vindicate the lowly and the poor,}
\text{rescue the wretched and the needy;}
\text{save them from the hand of the wicked. [Ps 82:1-4; TANAKH]}
\]

Strikingly, within the hundreds of Jewish documents that antedate 70 CE, only in the *Parables of Enoch* and only within Jesus’ teachings do we find references to the Son of Man as the eschatological Judge. How is that concurrence to be explained? [40]

Jesus is reputed to have said that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58; cf. GosThom Log. 86). Most likely, using forms known from Wisdom literature (which are present in the *Books of Enoch*), Jesus is reported to have claimed that he cannot find a dwelling on earth. Moreover, he is reputed to have referred to himself as the Son of Man. It is significant, therefore, to perceive what the author of the *Parables of Enoch* states about Wisdom. This Jew presented as revelation the claim that “Wisdom could not find a place in which she could dwell” (42:1). Is this parallel significant?

Scholars will assess such parallels between Jesus and the *Books of Enoch* differently. Some will see no relationship, many will appeal to common Jewish traditions, others will recognize some indirect influence, and perhaps a few will imagine that maybe Jesus knew this particular Enoch tradition and perhaps the written document. Is it not conceivable that Jesus discussed ideas, concepts, and terms with those in or related to the Enoch group?
**Conclusion**

Six reasons disclose the most probable date for the *Parables of Enoch*. First, it is insignificant that no fragment of this document has been identified among the fragments found in the Qumran caves. Second, the *Parables of Enoch* is clearly the latest composition within *1 Enoch*, and there are reasons to conclude it would not have had sufficient time to make its way to Qumran. Third, the document was not composed at Qumran and contains concepts and perceptions that would not have been acceptable at Qumran. Fourth, the reference to a Parthian invasion makes best sense in light of what is known, from Josephus and archaeological research, about the invasion of 40 BCE. Fifth, the multitudinous curses on the landowners and those who monopolize the “dry land” make best sense during the period of the land-grabbing by Herod and the Herodians. Six, the early Christians may have avoided the *Parables of Enoch* because it lauds Enoch as the celestial Son of Man and eschatological Judge. Such a claim undermines the kerygma. Cumulatively then, dating the *Parables of Enoch* to the time of Herod the Great and the Herodians has become conclusive.

The *Parables of Enoch* (1En 37-71) appears to be a Jewish work that antedates Jesus, and the author seems to imagine a connection among the Messiah, the Righteous One, and the Son of Man. The work most likely took shape in Galilee, not far from where Jesus centered his ministry. He, thus, could have been influenced by this writing or the traditions preserved in the *Parables of Enoch*. In this case, his own self-understanding may have been shaped by the relationship between the Son of Man and the Messiah that is found only in the *Parables of Enoch*. If those in the Enoch group were known as the great scholars who had special and secret knowledge, and if they lived in Galilee, then Jesus would most likely have had an opportunity to learn firsthand about their teachings through discussions and debates.

Some of the Bultmannians (notably H. Conzelmann) claimed that “the Son of Man” is a term and title that originates only in the post-Easter community. Conzelmann argued that all the Son of Man sayings in the words of Jesus are suspicious. They seem to be the creation of Jesus’ post-Easter followers. The Son of Man Christology is not linked to Jesus; it originated in “the church,” which – in my estimation – should be renamed (in order to avoid anachronisms) “the Early Palestinian Jesus Movement.” According to Conzelmann, in the early “church,” the term Son of Man first appeared as a title and celebrated the earthly life and celestial origin of Jesus of Nazareth. The title reveals nothing about Judaism or the historical Jesus. It ushers us into the world after Jesus when “Christianity” begins to separate from regnant Judaism.

Many specialists are now seeing more clearly that New Testament Christology flows from Jesus’ words and self-understanding. Conzelmann’s professor, R. Bultmann, stressed that Jesus is not the foundation of New Testament Theology. He is the presupposition of New Testament Theology.

These scholars, Bultmann and Conzelmann, were primarily trained in Greek and in the New Testament; they were not experts in Second Temple Judaism and they should not be judged in terms of improved data and methodologies. If the preceding reflections are valid, then speaking personally, I would recast Bultmann’s famous and influential dictum. He claimed that Jesus is the presupposition of New Testament theology. Far more likely, Jewish apocalyptic and eschatological reflections on the Messiah, the Son of
Man, God’s Rule (the Kingdom of God), and the coming Day of Judgment are the presuppositions of Jesus’ mind.

1 This chapter is an expanded and revised version of a work published in G. Boccaccini, et al., eds., in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007) pp. 450-68. Also, see my earlier “The Date of the Parables of Enoch (1En 37-71),” *Henoch* 20 (1998) 93-98.
4 The distinguished scholar who argued during the Enoch Symposium in Italy that 1En 70 and 71 are redactional is John Collins. He offered many insightful and almost persuasive arguments for his conclusion, and I admire his brilliance, knowledge, and graceful ways of disagreeing with me.
5 I am grateful to Professor Loren Stuckenbruck for this information; he has spent the past two years searching for additional copies of *Ethiopic Enoch* or the *Books of Enoch*.
6 G.W.E. Nickelsburg and J.C. VanderKam (actually Nickelsburg) argue that 70:1-2 provides the original conclusion to 37-69, while the rest is an addition. See their *1 Enoch 2* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012). If Enoch is already “the Son of Man” in these verses, as some manuscripts state, then the remaining section of the *Parables of Enoch* adds nothing surprising.
10 In Aramaic the construct state almost always indicates determination. To denote indetermination of the first element in a genitive construction, an Aramaic scribe tended to indicate a circumlocution. See F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963 [rev. ed.]) p. 25. In Aramaic, the emphatic or determined state is not simply identical to the meaning of the English noun with an article. In the Targumim and Midrashim, as in Syriac, the emphatic state has sometimes lost its definite meaning.
Not well known are two facts. The Bedouin do not know the caves by number. Also, they began to report that all fragments they still possessed were from Cave IV since these were deemed more valuable.

J.C. Greenfeld and M.E. Stone also rightly dismiss the argument that the absence of a book among the Qumran fragments is datum for dating a book. See Greenfeld and Stone, “The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes,” HTR 70 (1977) 51-66. To be modified in their argument, however, is the claim that the calendar would not be at home at Qumran. We now know that mixed calendars were known at Qumran.


Sacchi contends rightly that 1 Enoch 37-71 refers to an actual event, the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE, and that the Parables of Enoch should be dated shortly after that time. See Sacchi, “Qumran and the Dating of the Parables of Enoch,” in The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, edited by Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006) vol. 2, pp. 377-95.

For further thoughts, see Charlesworth, “Did Jesus Know the Traditions in the Parables of Enoch?” in the present volume.


See the magnificent publication by Y. Hirschfeld, Ramat Hanadiv Excavations (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2000). Looking south and west from Ḥorvat ‘Eleq helps one imagine the extreme wealth some Herodians enjoyed at the expense of others. I am grateful to Hirschfeld for insightful discussions at Ramat Hanadiv. The so-called exchequer of the Treasury under Herod the Great, Ptolemy, owned a village named Arus (War 2.69, Ant 17.289). In König Herodes, A. Schalit pointed out that Herod really had no exchequer for the area he ruled (p. 222).

For further reflections on the possible provenience of the Parables of Enoch, see Charlesworth’s other chapter: “Did Jesus Know the Traditions in the Parables of Enoch?”

See Charlesworth’s introduction, text, and translation in the Princeton DSS Project, in press.


I note that this conclusion was shared by almost every leading specialist on 1En or Second Temple Judaism. M. Knibb remains unconvinced of this early dating and prefers a date sometime in the second half of the first century CE.

