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Abstract Review of *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapter 1-36; 81-108* (2001), by George W. E. Nickelsburg.

ENOCH TRANSLATED

John W. Welch

Several important volumes have been added recently to the Hermeneia series published by Fortress Press. One of these is George W. E. Nickelsburg's work on *1 Enoch*, a commentary on the book of *1 Enoch*, chapters 1–36 and 81–108. This book will be of considerable assistance to Latter-day Saint scholars and should spare them time and effort. Because no early Jewish or Christian nonbiblical texts have been of greater interest to Hugh Nibley and the Latter-day Saint academic community than those in the body of Enoch literature have been, it is with great excitement that I celebrate George Nickelsburg's superb work on Enoch. He has done us and all people interested in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha an enormous service, for which we should be deeply grateful.

This book comes highly recommended, and a glance at its table of contents shows its breadth. Nickelsburg begins with some interpretive and theological observations. He positions the text in its historical context; gives a short account of *1 Enoch*, including the chapters not covered

Review of George W. E. Nickelsburg. *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108*, ed. Klaus Baltzer. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001. xxxvii + 616 pp., with passage and name indexes. \$58.00.

in this commentary; describes the manuscripts; analyzes the text as a literary composition; places it in its apocalyptic setting and worldview; relates it to the treatment of the Enoch figure in other ancient settings; and identifies the main currents in the modern study of this fascinating text. For example, Nickelsburg gives a good survey of the publications of *1 Enoch* in the nineteenth century (pp. 109–11).¹ Latter-day Saint scholars will find all of this very interesting. Nickelsburg also notes Nibley's *Enoch the Prophet* (p. 82 n. 60),² although "a discussion of the Mormon tradition lies beyond the scope of this commentary."

Pending future treatment, of course, are the Enochic Book of Parables and Book of Luminaries, which he treats here only in an introductory fashion (pp. 7–8). Treating those segments separately is justifiable since they were possibly of independent origin. Several writings in antiquity were related to each other only by association with Enoch; some of them were brought together in the composite book of *1 Enoch*. This leaves open to considerable debate questions about the character of these texts and about their relationship to each other, to various Jewish sects, to interest groups, and to traditions, as well as to various kinds of religious writing (testamentary, apocalyptic, legal, wisdom, and others), to say nothing about issues regarding when and why *1 Enoch* took its final form and where its underlying traditions and sources came from. Nickelsburg provides an excellent point of entry into this field of research and ongoing discussion.

After 125 pages of introduction, Nickelsburg proceeds line by line, word by word through the text of *1 Enoch*. Each unit is beautifully translated, heavily annotated, and expertly explained. The careful reader will be rewarded at almost every turn with interesting parallels to scriptural texts, allusions to ancient Israelite concepts and practices, and expressions that are rich with spiritual significance. For example, this book covers Enoch's calling as a prophet (*1 Enoch* 14:8–16:4); a vision of the tree of life (24:2–25:7); a revelation of heavenly

1. On which, see Jed L. Woodworth, "Extra-Biblical Enoch Texts in Early American Culture," in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers 1997–99* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, 2000), 185–93.

2. Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1986).

tablets (81:1); a history of the world from the time of Adam down to the destruction of Jerusalem (85–89); and an overview of the history of Israel from 587 BC to the end of time (89–90), placing blame especially on the wicked “shepherds” and their subordinates, who handed over their sheep to wild beasts to devour them (89:65–67). On this last point, readers may think of 1 Nephi 21:1, a verse restored at the beginning of Isaiah 49: “Hearken, O ye house of Israel, all ye that are broken off and are driven out because of the wickedness of the pastors [shepherds] of my people.”

Nickelsburg carefully explains the meanings of the names of the twenty evil watchers who rebel against God (pp. 179–81). These names appear to have the following literal meanings:

1. “My name has seen,” i.e., God has seen the wicked
2. “Earth is power”
3. “Evening of God” or “burning ashes of God,” referring to “volcanic activities”
4. “Star of God”
5. “God is their light (?)” or “God is prudence (?)”
6. “Thunder of God”
7. “God is my judge”
8. “Shooting star of God”
9. “Lightning of God”
10. “God has made,” i.e., God’s creative activities
11. “The one of [Mount] Hermon”
12. “Rain of God”
13. “Cloud of God”
14. “Winter of God”
15. “Sun of God”
16. “Moon of God”
17. “Perfection of God”
18. “Mountain of God”
19. “Sea of God” or “Day of God”
20. “God will guide”

I found it interesting that this list names the leaders of the rebellious forces that all banded together and “swore together and bound

one another with a curse” (*1 Enoch* 6:5) to shake God’s creation according to their own will. These key figures are main powers in the Enochic heavenly panoply. Thus, it seems significant that when “the prophet” (Zenos) spoke of the Lord God visiting the house of Israel in the day of destruction that would accompany the cataclysmic death of the Son of God, the Book of Mormon text in 1 Nephi 19 includes most of these heavenly elements as the instruments that will implement the visitation of the Lord. In other words, the Book of Mormon text assumes that these rebellious forces are again (or perhaps were actually always) in line under the dominion of the Lord God of Israel. The Enochic elements directly or arguably present in this prophecy include:

1. “God surely shall visit” (1 Nephi 19:11)
2. “opening of the earth,” “power” (1 Nephi 19:11)
3. “vapor,” understandable as volcanic clouds (1 Nephi 19:11; compare 3 Nephi 8:20)
5. “righteousness” (1 Nephi 19:11)
6. “thunderings” (1 Nephi 19:11)
7. “they shall be scourged” (1 Nephi 19:13)
8. “fire” (1 Nephi 19:11)
9. “lightnings” (1 Nephi 19:11)
10. “God of nature” (1 Nephi 19:12)
12. “tempest” (1 Nephi 19:11)
13. “smoke” (1 Nephi 19:11)
14. “darkness” (1 Nephi 19:11)
17. “salvation of the Lord” (1 Nephi 19:17)
18. “mountains” (1 Nephi 19:11)
19. “isles of the sea” (1 Nephi 19:12, 16) or “at that day” (1 Nephi 19:11)
20. “I [will] gather in” (1 Nephi 19:16)

Absent here, for some reason, are references to the potentates related to the sun (#15), moon (#16), stars (#4), and Hermon (#11); but more than three-quarters of the twenty heavenly chiefs named in *1 Enoch* 6:7 seem to stand in the background of the ancient Israelite prophecies used by Nephi in 1 Nephi 19. This would indeed suggest some significant linkage between Nephi’s explanation of the “sign”

that should be given “unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea” (1 Nephi 19:10) and these beings in the Enochic heavenly host, whose main activity, as is clear from *1 Enoch* 8:3, also involved the dispensing of “signs.” Although in *1 Enoch* these rebellious watchers acted in defiance of the plan of God and outside the scope of their authority, both the cosmic view of *1 Enoch* and the worldview of Zenos and the prophets cited by Nephi would seem to see these principalities operating in or around the assembly of God with power to communicate signs from the heavenly sphere to mortals abroad on the earth.

The book ends with an extensive bibliography (pp. 561–71), citation index (pp. 573–608), and name register (pp. 609–16), but no subject index. Mining this text for a comprehensive list of its topics and passages of interest to Latter-day Saints remains to be accomplished. Nickelsburg has provided Latter-day Saint scholars with a remarkable tool. We welcome and appreciate his thorough work.