

Yx24 – Clerical Quackery 4 – The Problem of Evil

This is the 24th in the series of posts dealing with what I call “the God Lie” and the 4th in the subseries of posts dealing with “Clerical Quackery”. My goal for these first few posts dealing with Clerical Quackery continues to be to try to at least outline how the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism, etc.) incorporated Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Indian, Persian, and Greek ideas about life- and judgment-after-death into their “sacred scriptures”, i.e., into the Old Testament (OT), the New Testament (NT), the Koran (or Quran or Qur’an), the Book of Mormon, etc. In turn, ideas about life- and judgment-after-death (ideas derived from zero supporting data!) were incorporated into the various “holy books” in an attempt, in large measure, to solve the problem of evil, which in its simplest formulation is: **Why do bad things happen to good people?**

For monotheists [i.e., those who assume the existence of only one god (where *theos* is the Greek word for ‘god’), such as religious Jews and others who follow Zarathustra’s original ideas] the problem of evil can be rephrased as: **If God is all powerful (omnipotent), all knowing (omniscient) and all good (omnibenevolent), then why is there so much evil in the world?** As Robert Ingersoll wrote in 1872 in *The Gods*:

A very pious friend of mine, having heard that I had said the world was full of imperfections, asked me if the report was true. Upon being informed that it was, he expressed great surprise that any one could be guilty of such presumption. He said that, in his judgment, it was impossible to point out an imperfection. “Be kind enough,” said he, “to name even one improvement that you could make, if you had the power.” “Well,” said I, “I would make good health catching, instead of disease.” The truth is, it is impossible to harmonize all the ills, and pains, and agonies of this world with the idea that we were created by, and are watched over and protected by an infinitely wise, powerful and beneficent God, who is superior to and independent of nature.

For duotheists (or ditheists or bitheists), particularly those (such as subsequent Zoroastrians, Christians, and Muslims) who assume the existence of a good supernatural being (Ahura Mazda, God, or Allah) and a bad supernatural being (Ahriman, Satan, or Shaitan), the problem of evil can be rephrased as: **If the good god is supreme, why doesn’t He eliminate the bad god?** Thus, on the one hand, if He doesn’t know about the bad god, then He’s not omniscient, and on the other hand, if He does know about the bad god and doesn’t stop him, then either He’s impotent or malevolent!

For polytheists, so many gods are assumed to exist that it's simple to "solve" the problem of evil: just assign responsibilities for specific troubles and evils to any of thousands of gods!¹ Hindus, however, choose a different "solution": they claim that bad things happens to people as a result of their behavior(s) in this and previous incarnations (viz., it's *karma*). The Hindu "solution" may seem satisfactory if good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people, but unfortunately, it doesn't provide insight when bad things happen to good people – because they were allegedly bad (in unknown ways) during previous, unknown lives!

HUMANIST SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

For atheists (or, better,² for scientific humanists or Humanists), the question of why bad things happen to good people is answered, of course, without reference to any god (or gods). We start with the realizations that, thousands of years ago, people couldn't see how humans could have evolved from simpler life forms, how life could have started (for example) *via* auto-catalytic or cross-catalytic chemical reactions of self-replicating molecules, and how the universe could have been created (for example) by a symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in an original void.

Next, given that understanding of such processes is developing, we adopt the general principle that, if natural processes can account (or potentially account) for the origins and developments of humans, all life, and the universe, then unsubstantiated assumptions about supernatural processes should be discarded. Therefore, given the complete lack of even the tiniest shred of evidence supporting the existence of any supernatural processes (and associated gods), we dismiss all ideas about gods as understandable but ignorant speculations.

As Robert Ingersoll wrote in 1890 in *Liberty in Literature*:

To the common man the great problems are easy. He has no trouble in accounting for the universe. He can tell you the origin and destiny of man and the why and wherefore of things. As a rule, he is a believer in special providence, and is egotistic enough to suppose that everything that happens in the universe happens in reference to him.

¹ See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_deities.

² See my post <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/01/dont-let-theists-negate-you-negate-them.html>.

Upon discarding all supernatural ideas as ignorant speculations, scientific humanists then take the next obvious step toward solving the problem of evil, namely, to separate it into two components: 1) evil caused by people and 2) evil (or harm) caused by natural events.

In the case of evil caused by people, we recognize a host of causes, many derived from ignorance (including lack of foresight, lack of empathy, inability to appreciate benefits of cooperation, etc.), poor education (including indoctrination in tribalism, religion, racism, etc.), bad parenting (including physical, emotional, sexual, and mental abuse of children), and despondency derived from intolerable living conditions (famine, violence, injustices, etc.), many of which in turn are derived from clerical ignorance.

In the case of harm caused by nature, we admit (in the face of a huge amount of reliable data) that “stuff happens” or, stated in mathematical terms: whereas life and most other natural processes are nonlinear and stochastic, there are finite (non-zero) probabilities that events undesirable to life will occur (such as being blinded by bird dung, having all your possessions destroyed in a flood, contracting disease, etc.). As a result, “stuff happens” (by chance, by not taking adequate precautions, etc.) that frustrates life’s prime purpose, which is to thrive.

RELIGIOUS ANXIETIES ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

In contrast to the case for scientific humanists, for religious people (in general) and for clerics (in particular) the problem of evil has been and continues to be a source of substantial anxiety. In fact, trying to solve the problem of evil has caused the demise of some religions and the breakup of others into multiple competing sects.

For example, in this and the next post, I’ll try to at least outline how adopting different (silly) “solutions” to the problem of evil led to the breakup of the original Hebrew priesthood into various competing sects, including the Sadducees (more-or-less the “hang-ons” or the “cling-ons” of the original Hebrew priesthood), the Pharisees (who adopted some aspects of the Persian or Zoroastrian “solution” to the problem of evil), and still later, the Essenes, Christians, Muslims, etc. (who adopted essentially all of the Persian “solution” plus added a few refinements that were unfortunately promoted by mystic Greek philosophers, especially Pythagoras and Plato).

* Go to other chapters *via*

Actually, some of the many resulting rifts in the Abrahamic religions can be traced back to the Hebrew clerics' concoctions associated with the earliest myths in the OT's *Book of Genesis* plus their adoption of selected parts of Zarathustra's ideas (briefly reviewed in the previous post). Thus, as a scanty overview:

- As I already started to review in Chapter **Yx3**, the original Hebrew priests adopted the “solution” to the problem of evil that had been promoted for at least the prior 2,000 years by Mesopotamian priests, which (in essence) was: people experience evil because of “sin” [i.e., the people had done something not approved by God (or the gods) – aka the clerics!]. As a result (so the clerics claimed), the people were punished for their sins, and to placate God (and the clerics!), the people should provide the priests with “sin offerings”.

For example, following the financial success of the Mesopotamian priests, the Hebrew priests concocted (out of thin air!) the story in *Genesis 2 & 3* that “the original sin” of the first humans (Adam and Eve) was to seek knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ – and that everyone was guilty by (tribal) association. [And I admit that, given that clerics claimed authority to define ‘good’ and ‘evil’ as their “territory” (or more accurately, their “bread and butter” – and wine, and the choicest foods, fine clothing, gold, silver, and other perks), it's easy to understand why clerics were opposed to people's learning how to define ‘good’ and ‘evil’ by themselves, since it infringed on the clerics' con game!]

- As I plan to outline later in this post, one of the fundamental concoctions of clerics of the Essenes branch of Judaism (as recorded in their *Book of Enoch*) was to assume that God allegedly flooded the Earth (saving only Enoch's great-grandson, Noah, and his family), because the sons of God mentioned in *Genesis* were claimed to be fallen (Zoroastrian) angels, who fell for the sexual attractions of earthly women. [At least that much of their concoction I can understand!]
- As I plan to sketch in later posts, one of the fundamental concoctions of Christian clerics (as recorded in the NT) was to assume that the Zoroastrian “savior” was Jesus (also God's son), whom God allegedly had killed as a “sin offering” for humanity's sin of being related to Adam and Eve, who allegedly sinned by eating fruit from the tree of knowledge (of good and evil), against God's orders. [Even though, without knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve couldn't have known that it was “good” to obey God's orders!]
- And as I sketched in Chapter **Yx15**, one of the fundamental concoctions of Muslim clerics (as given in the Koran) was to assume that the Zoroastrian devil (whom they named Shaitan or Iblis, the latter name possibly derived from the Greek word *diabolis*) initiated his devilish ways (controlling evil) by refusing to “**make obeisance**” to Adam, after Adam managed to recite the names of the animals,

* Go to other chapters *via*

allegedly dictated to him by God (or Allah). [The principles were apparently not only that recitation (as opposed to thinking) was good but also that everyone should pay homage to the first person who recited, for example, that the name for a cow was ‘cow’ (although, come to think of it, wouldn’t it have been better to have called a cow a ‘moo’?) and the name for a duck was ‘duck’ (although, come to think of it, why not call ducks ‘quacks’ – rather than clerics?!).]

But, snide remarks aside [yet, while happily paying homage to Emerson’s perceptive assessment, “[The religion of one age is the literary entertainment of the next](#)”], many ancient people obviously addressed the problem of evil, including the Persian philosopher Zarathustra, subsequent Zoroastrian priests, and the unknown authors of the Hebrew books *Isaiah*, *Job*, *Tobit*, *Enoch*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Daniel*. In this post and the next, my goals are to cursorily review some of the ideas in those books (delaying, until the next post, most of my comments about *Ecclesiastes* and *Daniel*) and to suggest how ideas about life- and judgment-after-death thereby seeped into Judaism. Accomplishing that goal is, however, vastly more complicated than might be expected, because similar to all clerics before and since, the ancient Hebrew clerics engaged in so much skullduggery.

SOME SKULLDUGGERY OF ANCIENT HEBREW CLERICS

Three examples are the following.

- First, during the period after returning from their Babylonian exile, the ruling Jewish clerics (later called the Sadducees) adopted only selected writing (such as the books of *Isaiah*, *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Daniel*) as “sacred scripture”, labeling other writings (such as the *Book of Tobit*) as *apocryphal* literature (with ‘apocrypha’ from Greek *apokruptein* meaning ‘hide away’), while not only disregarding but even banning other literature (such as the *Book of Enoch*).
- Second, the Jewish clerics apparently felt no compunction about modifying selected texts (e.g., *Isaiah* & *Job*) as they saw fit; that is, when their ideas differed from ideas described by the original authors, the clerics would apparently just insert their ideas into the OT, attributing their thoughts to the original authors, who in some cases lived centuries earlier!
- Third, in other cases, the Jewish clerics (like essentially all clerics before and since) perpetrated even more flagrant fraud, e.g., the *Book of Daniel* wasn’t written when claimed by the author(s) but about four centuries later and the *Book of Enoch* wasn’t written when claimed by the author(s) but roughly two thousand years later!

Below, I’ll provide some details.

* Go to other chapters *via*

Skullduggery in Concocting *Genesis*

One illustration of such skullduggery is already available in *Genesis*. I expect that, first, early Hebrew priests had their “perfectly good” myth of Adam and Eve given in *Genesis 2 & 3* – where by “perfectly good”, I mean that, at the time, it was probably just as good as any other wild speculation concocted out of thin air to “explain” the origin of humans.

Subsequently, what seems to have happened is the following. Upon learning from their Persian masters about Zarathustra’s omnipotent, omniscient... creator of the universe and the ideas of subsequent Zoroastrian priests (called Magi, from which the English word ‘magic’ is derived) that their God (Ahura Mazda) allegedly created everything in six (or seven) periods, then later Jewish priests (probably Ezra and Co-Conspirators, whom I’ve been identifying in these posts as Ezra & C-C), apparently just slapped the new creation myth in front of *Genesis 2 & 3*, as *Genesis 1*, without taking the trouble to eliminate inconsistencies between the two myths!

Some of the inconsistencies were summarized by Anglican Church Bishop John William Colenso (as given in a 1933 article³ by John G. Jackson):

The following are the most noticeable points of differences between the two cosmogonies:

1. In the first the earth emerges from the waters and is, therefore SATURATED WITH MOISTURE. In the second, the whole face of the ground REQUIRES TO BE MOISTENED.
2. In the first, the birds and the beasts are created BEFORE MAN. In the second, man is created BEFORE THE BIRDS AND THE BEASTS.
3. In the first, all fowls that fly are made out of the WATERS. In the second, the fowls of the air are made out of the GROUND.
4. In the first, man is created in the image of God. In the second, man is made of the DUST OF THE GROUND and merely animated with the breath of life; and it is only after his eating the forbidden fruit that the Lord said, “Behold, the man has become AS ONE OF US, to know good and evil.”
5. In the first, man is made lord of the WHOLE EARTH. In the second, he is merely placed in the Garden of Eden, TO DRESS IT AND TO KEEP IT.

³ Available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/4803046/The-African-Origin-of-the-garden-of-eden>.

6. In the first the man and the woman are CREATED TOGETHER as the closing and completing work of the whole creation; created also, as is evidently implied in the same kind of way, to be the complement of one another, and thus created, they are blessed TOGETHER. In the second, the beasts and birds are created BETWEEN the man and the woman. First, the man is made of the dust of the ground; he is placed by HIMSELF in the garden, charged with a solemn command, and threatened with a curse if he breaks it; THEN THE BEASTS AND BIRDS ARE MADE, and the man gives names to them; lastly, after all this, THE WOMAN IS MADE OUT OF ONE OF HIS RIBS, but merely as a helpmate for the man.

From there, the OT gets worse – much worse. Not that the advocated policies (reviewed in **Part 3x** of this book) become much worse than the male chauvinism that's promoted in the OT's second genesis myth (and the resulting horrible treatment of women that was characteristic of the Hebrew tribe and is still prevalent among most Muslim tribes), but the logical incoherencies boggle the mind.

For example, as mentioned in the previous post, the early part of the OT (similar to other Mesopotamian myths) depicts death as just a dreary place (called Sheol) and restricts God's activity to judging people while they're alive. Further, the OT's second genesis myth even precludes the possibility of people having eternal life. Thus, God ordained that humans would never be permitted to live forever, allegedly saying (*Genesis 3, 22*):

“The man has become like one of us [immortals], knowing good and evil; what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruit from the tree of life also, eats it, and lives for ever?” So, the Lord God drove him [Adam] out of the Garden of Eden... He cast him out, and to the east of the garden of Eden, He stationed the cherubim and a sword whirling and flashing to guard the way to the tree of [eternal] life.

Now, given that God allegedly precluded humans from living forever (even guarding the way to eternal life with “the cherubim and a sword whirling and flashing”), it could be fascinating (if wild speculations of clerical quacks were of interest) to examine the mental gyrations that subsequent Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Mormon... clerics have used to “justify” the claim that God would change his mind and permit people to live forever, especially since at *Numbers 23, 19* we're told, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind”, and at *Malachi 3, 6*, God allegedly says: “I, the Lord, do not change.”

Unfortunately for me, however, I find that even identifying such logical inconsistencies to be, not “fascinating”, but an annoying waste of time. I therefore sorely wish I could just dump such nonsense and get on to more rational ideas. [Just think what an enormous amount of brainpower has been wasted reading and thinking about the asinine “holy books” of the world!] But I’ve set myself the burdensome task of going through this junk; therefore, I’ll try to finish what I started. In particular, for this post, I want to at least sketch how (and perhaps why) the silly ideas of life- and judgment-after-death crept into the OT – apparently against God’s will!

Skullduggery Slipping in the Life-after-Death Lie

As I mentioned in the previous post, the OT’s first instance of resurrection from the dead seems to be at *1 Samuel 28*, where the Witch of Endor raises the prophet Samuel, himself, from the dead. Earlier, Samuel allegedly said (*1 Samuel 2, 6*): “**The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.**” From that quotation, apparently we’re to conclude that the Lord works through witches!

Subsequently,⁴ the prophet Elijah allegedly resurrected a dead boy (*1 Kings 17, 17–24*) and the prophet Elisha did similar (*2 Kings 4, 32–37*). Thereby, not only witches but also “prophets” were apparently capable of bringing dead people back to life. And I therefore suppose that the fabricators of the New Testament (NT) decided that their fabricated Jesus should be able to do similar!

Such cases, however, deal with resurrecting the dead only temporarily, not necessarily to eternal life. Yet, there are a couple of suggestions of the possibility of eternal life in *Proverbs* and *Psalms*. For example, at *Psalms 49, 15* there is: “**God will ransom my life, he will take me from the power of Sheol...**” But it’s unknown when a specific *Proverb* or *Psalms* was added to the OT: surely no honest biblical scholar agrees with the Bible’s claims that they were written by Solomon and David, respectively. Similar suggestions of “resurrection” are given by the “major prophets” Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (and for Christians at least, Daniel), but again, it’s unknown when such suggestions were written or by whom. In fact, the books of these “major prophets” are such amazing illustrations of clerical quackery that I’ll devote the rest of this chapter to illustrating some of their skullduggery.

⁴ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection>.

QUACKERY DEALING WITH THE “MAJOR PROPHETS”

In my comments about quackery of the “major prophets”, I’ll try to brief; in contrast, as interested readers can easily find, an enormous amount has already been written. For a balanced overview, readers might profit from the article entitled “The Major Prophets”, available at the website⁵ of the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance. The article summarizes the viewpoints of both “[Conservative Theologians](#)” (CTs), who consider the Bible as “[inspired by god and inerrant](#)”, as well as “[Liberal Theologians](#)” (LTs), who “[analyze the Bible as a historical document to determine the identify of the author\(s\) and/or redactor\(s\) of the final text.](#)”

My skepticism, however, puts me beyond the LTs and into the camp with those who dismiss essentially the entire Bible as unmitigated clerical quackery. We in “the skeptics-camp” ask, for example: How could it be that the authors of the Bible display their incompetence in so many ways (e.g., claiming, without a shred of evidence to support their claims, that the universe and everything in it were created in six days, that the Earth was created a few thousand years ago, that the Earth is a flat plate, that the Sun goes around the Earth, that humans popped into existence without benefit of evolution, that illnesses are caused by evil spirits, etc.), and yet, we’re to take it “on faith” that the authors provide “reliable” information about what happens to people after they die? As kids are wont to say:

Gimme a break!

But temporarily setting additional derogatory, introductory comments aside, I’ll now start on

The Book of the “Prophet” Isaiah

I start with *Isaiah* not only because it seems to be a “turning point” of Judaism (changing Yahweh from the jealous, little, warrior, mountain god of the Hebrew tribe into Zarathustra’s universal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent... god of righteousness and justice) but also because of its foundational influence on Christianity. For example, it’s commonly stated (although I’ve never verified the statement) that *Isaiah* is quoted in the NT more than any other prophet, “[with more than 250 allusions to Isaiah’s prophecies.](#)”

⁵ At http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_otb4.htm.

For readers desiring additional information about *Isaiah*, Google should soon more than sate their interest. Thus, as illustrations, using the words “Isaiah” +”Old Testament” in a Google search gave me 1,830,000 hits, while “Isaiah” +”New Testament” gave me 1,730,000 hits. What an enormous waste of intellectual (and electromagnetic!) energy.

Anyway, Liberal Theologians (LTs) generally agree that *Isaiah* was written by multiple authors and editors (or redactors) during the course of at least two centuries, from the time of “the original” (or First- or Proto-) Isaiah, son of Amoz (who seems to have preached between 740 and 687 BCE),⁶ until roughly the time of Ezra, ~400 BCE. Some biblical scholars go further than the LTs’ admissions, however, to suggest that there were more than three authors [First-(or Proto-), Second- (or Deutro-), and Third- (or Trito-)] Isaiah.

For example, in his 1910 book (available at Google Books) *The Composition of the Book of Isaiah*, Robert Kennett concludes:

- (a) All of Chs. 3, 5, 6, 7, 20 and 31 [of *Isaiah*], and large portions of Chs. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 22 and 23, may be assigned to Isaiah, the son of Amoz;
- (b) All of Chs. 13, 40 and 47, and large portions of Chs. 14, 21, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 48 may be assigned to the time of Cyrus [the Great];
- (c) All of Chs. 15, 36, 37 and 39, and portions of Chs. 16 and 38, may be assigned to the period between Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, but cannot be dated precisely;
- (d) The passage 23:1–14 may be assigned to the time of Alexander the Great;
- (e) All of Chs. 11, 12, 19, 24–27, 29, 30, 32–35, 42, 49–66, and portions of Chs. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 23, 41, 44, 45 and 48 may be assigned to the 2nd century BCE (167–140 BCE).

Now, for those readers who might be thinking something similar to “**Who cares; what difference does it make when it was written?**”, a response is available that’s foundationally important for all the Abrahamic religions, namely: the time when the material was written is critical to the ruse promoted by all clerical quacks (especially in the OT’s *Isaiah* & *Daniel*, and in the NT, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, etc.) dealing with “prophecy”.

⁶ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah>.

The “Prophecy” Sham

As a general rule, and to be blunt: prophetic pronouncements of some event aren't worth a damn if they're made after the event occurs – a process that “those in the know” describe as *vaticinium ex eventu* (viz., “prophecy after the event”).⁷

The method that clerical quacks originally used to sell such “prophecies” (and were amazingly successful doing so, since more than a billion people now “believe” that the “prophecies” weren't faked!) was to promote the lie that the prophecies were recorded before the event occurred by claiming, for example, that the books of *Isaiah* and *Daniel* were written centuries before they actually were. The authors of the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of Mormon*, however, win the prize for audacity: there's no sensible doubt that both were written approximately 2,000 years after the time they're claimed to have been written!

There are, of course, many different kinds of prophecies. For example, if I prophesy that the Sun will rise tomorrow, probably not too many people will be impressed by my prophetic ability; if I prophesy that people will see the Sun rise tomorrow, then it's a “fail-safe prophecy” (since if people aren't here to see the Sun rise, there'll be no one to criticize my prophecy!), and if I prophesy that good people will be pleased to see the Sun rise tomorrow, then it's a “self-fulfilling prophecy”, since it defines “good people”.

Many other types of prophecies are named,⁷ including prophecies that are vague, open-ended, recycled, catch-all, shotgunning, statistically likely, unfalsifiable, counting hits and not misses, allegory, moving the goalposts, and the one that I find especially amusing: “the Texas sharpshooter”. It refers to the Texan who shoots first and then draws a bull's-eye around where the bullet hits!

Of those many possibilities, vagueness was apparently a favorite of early “prophets”. For example, at *Isaiah 17, 1*, we're told, “**Damascus shall be a city no longer, she shall be but a heap of ruins. Forever desolate, flocks shall have her for their own, and lie there undisturbed.**” Who knows, it may yet happen! Another is at *Isaiah 19, 5*, where we're told, “**The waters of the Nile shall drain away, the river shall be parched and run dry...**” And I

⁷ See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaticinium_ex_eventu.

agree: some day it probably will happen – maybe even before the Sun burns up all its hydrogen and becomes a Red Giant (in about five billion years).

But a more reliable and impressive option (than using vagueness) is to make “prophecies” about events that have already occurred. An example is the ruse given at *Isaiah 44*, 24–28 (which I expect was written by Ezra & C-C):

This is what the Lord, your protector, says [so (or so it’s claimed) Isaiah (son of Amoz) says] **the one who formed you in the womb:** “I am the Lord, who made everything, who alone stretched out the sky, who fashioned the earth all by myself, who frustrates the omens of the empty talkers and humiliates the omen readers, who overturns the counsel of the wise men and makes their advice seem foolish, who fulfills the oracles of his prophetic servants and brings to pass the announcements of his messengers, who says about Jerusalem, ‘She will be inhabited,’ and about the towns of Judah, ‘They will be rebuilt, her ruins I will raise up,’ who says to the deep sea, ‘Be dry! I will dry up your sea currents,’ who commissions Cyrus, the one I appointed as shepherd to carry out all my wishes and to decree concerning Jerusalem, ‘She will be rebuilt,’ and concerning the temple, ‘It will be reconstructed’.”

Thus, according to the above quotation (if the reader believes such silliness!), before the Assyrians overran Judah and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, Isaiah (son of Amoz) looked ~200 years into the future and saw not only that there would be a new empire that would defeat the Assyrians (namely, the Persian Empire, which had not yet been established in Isaiah’s time) but also that the new empire would be led by a fellow named Cyrus and that he (Cyrus the Great) would order that the towns of Judah be rebuilt and the temple in Jerusalem be reconstructed. And if the reader can buy that, boy do I have some great oceanfront property in North Dakota that I’m willing to sell for pennies on the dollar.

Ezra & C-C’s Apparent Concoction

The reason why the clerical quacks (led, I suspect, by Ezra & C-C) promoted such a ruse seems clear. Apparently what happened is that, upon becoming acquainted with the Persians’ all-powerful, all-knowing creator god (i.e., Zarathustra’s Ahura Mazda), the Hebrew’s own, jealous, warrior, mountain god (Yahweh) seemed pathetically feeble. So, I assume, Ezra & C-C proceeded to redefine their god, not only by revising (or “redacting”) the *Pentateuch* (e.g., by inserting the first chapter of *Genesis*, so their new, improved god created the world in the same six or seven periods as Ahura Mazda did) but also by claiming that, ~200 years earlier, God told Isaiah the following (copied from selected portions of *Isaiah 40* through *45*), to which (as per usual) I’ve added some notes in brackets.

* Go to other chapters *via*

“Keep silence before me [God], all you coasts and islands [I’m surprised that the coasts and islands were making so much noise!]; let the people come to meet me [The coasts and islands were impeding the people? Where is He? In the sea?!]. Let them come near, then let them speak; we will meet at the place of judgment, I and they. [It’s not clear if this means during or after life.] Tell me, who raised up that one from the east [i.e., Cyrus], one greeted by victory wherever he goes?... Whose work is this, I [God] ask, who has brought it to pass? Who has summoned the generations from the beginning? It is I, the Lord, I am the first, and to the last of them I am He. Coasts and islands saw it and were afraid; the world trembled from end to end... [Which, I suppose, is the clerics’ explanation for earthquakes!]

“Here is my servant [Cyrus], whom I [God] uphold; my chosen one in whom I delight; I have bestowed my spirit upon him, and he will make justice shine on the nations [Which is a characteristic of Ahura Mazda, not Yahweh!].... He will make justice shine on every race [certainly a change from the racist policies promoted elsewhere in the OT!], never faltering, never breaking down; he will plant justice on earth, while coasts and islands wait for his teaching.” [What’s with the “coasts and islands”?! Is it a translation error?]

Thus speaks the Lord who is God, he who created the skies and stretched them out, who fashioned the earth and all that grows in it, who gave breath to its people, the breath of life to all who walk upon it [again, very much Zarathustra’s universal god, not the tribal god of the Hebrews]: “I, the Lord, have called you [Cyrus] with righteous purpose [a Zoroastrian phrase] and taken you by the hand; I have formed you, and appointed you to be a light to all peoples, a beacon for the nations [no longer just for the Hebrews] to open eyes that are blind, to bring captives out of prison, out of the dungeons where they lie in darkness [again, Zoroastrian imagery]...”

Thus says the Lord, Israel’s king, the Lord of Hosts, his ransomer [and quite a braggart!]: “I am the first and I am the last [a direct quote from Zarathustra] and there is no god but me...” [If so, then why did you earlier say that you were a jealous god and that the Hebrews weren’t to put other gods before you?!]

Thus says the Lord to Cyrus his anointed [i.e., the messiah], Cyrus who he has taken by the hand to subdue nations before him and undo the might of kings... [although an impartial observer would probably say that Cyrus did it by himself, with no thanks to any god!]: “I have called you by name and given you your title... I alone have roused this man in righteousness [Zarathustra would challenge that clerical claim: Zarathustra maintained that ‘righteousness’ was an individual’s choice], and I will smooth his path before him... [how about giving Cyrus credit for his accomplishments?!] Those who defy him [Cyrus] are confounded and brought to shame, those who make idols perish in confusion. But Israel has been delivered by the Lord, delivered for all time to come; they shall not be confounded or put to shame for all eternity. [Which is a good indication of the incompetence of Ezra & C-C as “prophets”, unable to foresee the Greeks, Romans, Christians, Muslims, Nazis...]

“There is no god but me; there is no god other than I, victorious and able to save. Look to me and be saved [Saved from what? Apparently not saved from clerical quackery!]... you peoples from all corners of the earth [now a god for everyone!]; for I am God, there is no other. By my life I have sworn [Well, that’s cute, but given that He’s allegedly an immortal god, how can He die? Therefore, what value is to be placed on His swearing on His life?!], I have given a promise of victory, a promise that will not be broken, that to me every knee shall bend and by me every tongue shall swear...” [Unless, of course, people come to their senses, reject the speculations of dimwit clerics, refuse to be slaves, and swear by science that they’ll put an end to all such supernatural silliness!]

And if it weren’t sufficiently clear why the clerical quacks perpetrated such a ruse, they describe it themselves (allegedly quoting God) at *Isaiah* 45, 21, 46, 9, and 48, 3–6 (all of which, again, I expect was written by Ezra & C-C):

“Tell me! Present the evidence! Let them consult with one another! Who predicted this in the past? Who announced it beforehand? Was it not I, the Lord?

“Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me, who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred...

“I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass... I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them for you... You have heard; now look at all the evidence! ”

Thus (at least, so the clerics claim), the ability to “**reveal beforehand what has not yet occurred**” is “proof-positive” that the writer is reporting the words of God – not that the writer is describing events that had already occurred! But surely rational people ask: **How could anyone be taken in by such silliness?!** And worse, how could approximately a billion people in the world now believe such nonsense?

Actually, though, in concocting the powers of their fictitious god, the clerical quacks apparently got carried away. That is, whoever concocted the ruse (pretending that he was Isaiah son of Amoz and could predict future events) got ahead of himself, apparently attempting some one-upmanship on the Zoroastrian priests, in the form of: “**Our god’s better than your god!**”

In the process, whoever “redacted” *Isaiah* (whom I’ve been identifying as Ezra & C-C) plunged the revised Jewish religion into substantial trouble, by putting the following words into God’s mouth (*Isaiah* 45, 6):

“I am the Lord, there is no other; I make the light, *I create darkness, author alike of prosperity and trouble* [italics added]. I, the Lord, do all these things.”

With the claims that their god created “darkness” and was the author of “trouble”, Ezra & C-C plunged Judaism into darkness and trouble!

One trouble was that the quotation immediately above contradicts what’s written in *Genesis 1*, i.e., “In the beginning... with darkness [not created by God!] over the face of the abyss... God said ‘Let there be light’...” Maybe (as Alan Segal mentioned in his 2004 book *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Religion*), the first *Genesis* myth had not yet been written!

In any case, and much more significantly, the author(s) of the above-quoted portion of *Isaiah* thereby dumped on Yahweh the problem of evil, i.e., they explicitly proposed that God was “author alike of prosperity and trouble”, which caused first the Jewish clerics and then the Christian, Muslim, Mormon... clerics an enormous amount of trouble. Yet, the statement that “[God is] author alike of prosperity and trouble” may be the most accurate prophetic announcement that the clerics ever made – for themselves: certainly their god is the source of both their prosperity and their trouble!

Below and in the next post, I’ll try to at least sketch some of the Jewish clerics’ machinations and their apparent agony, trying to dig themselves out of their self-imposed darkness, attempting to solve the problems that Ezra & C-C caused by claiming that their god was the “author...of... trouble.” In the OT, the resulting agony is best described in the *Book of Job* and it’s at least mentioned in *Ecclesiastes*; in the Jewish apocryphal literature the problem of evil is addressed in the short story entitled *Tobit*; in totally renegade Jewish literature (excluded even from *Apocrypha*) the problem of evil was not only addressed but claimed to be solved (by copying Zarathustra’s ideas!) in the *Book of Enoch*; and eventually in the OT, essentially Zarathustra’s scheme was adopted in *Daniel*, which was written approximately 300 years after Ezra & C-C caused the problem! Below, I’ll provide at least a few comments on *Job*, *Tobit*, and *Enoch*; in the next post, I plan to comment on *Ecclesiastes* and *Daniel*; here, I’ll start with

The Book of Job

Job was written by nobody knows whom, or where, or when. My own not-very-informed guess is that *Job* was written during the third century BCE by a knowledgeable Jew living in Egypt or maybe Arabia, or by someone who had spent a substantial time living in other countries, from Greece to Persia. His knowledge of science (including what passed for science, such as astrology) was fairly good for the time (although by today's standards, it was, of course, pathetic) and he seems to have been fairly knowledgeable in law, politics, and the Jewish religion.

The fictional story in *Job* directly addresses the-until-recently unanswered question: “**Why do bad things happen to good people?**” Inconsistent with the correct answer (namely, people's inadequacies and nature's vicissitudes) and inconsistent with Zarathustra's incorrect answer (namely, something similar to: “**Because there's a cosmic battle between good and evil, which causes collateral damage!**”) but consistent with Ezra & C-C silly claim that Yahweh causes everything, the author of *Job* posits the bizarre scenario in which the fate of the main character, Job, was the result of a wager between God and one of his henchmen (or hench-angles), namely, Satan.

Thus, in response to God's praise of Job, Satan tells God that Job is “**pure and upright**” only because God protects him, to which God allegedly responded to Satan (*Job* 1, 12):

“All right then, everything he [Job] has is in your [Satan's] power.”

That, then (at least according to the author of *Job*), is how God controls evil: by farming out the dirty work to Satan! Thereby, however, if the author of *Job* was attempting to relieve God of responsibility for evil, he certainly failed, miserably: is there anything more evil than to offer a human's well being as a wager?!

Flip a coin; if it turns up Heads, the person thrives; if Tails, destroy him!

Such a god doesn't just control evil; he's the epitome of evil!

Incidentally (although it's relevant in helping to establish when the *Book of Job* might have been written), it's here in *Job* where Satan makes his first appearance in the OT – and he's identified, in effect, as just one of God's helpers/henchmen. Readers who disagree with that statement, e.g., those who mention that Satan appears in *Genesis* 3 as the snake (or serpent),

* Go to other chapters *via*

should note that the idea that the (talking!) snake in *Genesis* is other than a (wise) snake is a Christian concoction, apparently one of many “allegorical interpretations” of the OT promoted by Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50 CE), who made the mistake of concluding that the OT authors “couldn’t be that stupid”!

With Satan’s appearance in *Job*, we then see another influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism (besides the realignment of Yahweh from his old, Hebrew job as a warrior, mountain god to Zarathustra’s universal god of truth and justice). Actually, though, it wasn’t Zarathustra but later Zoroastrian priests who “deified” (“devil-ized”?) Satan. Thus, as described by Shahriar Shahriari:⁸

Even though [according to the data-less speculations of Zarathustra] there is only one God [*Ahura Mazda*, literally the “supremely wise creator”], our universe works on the basis of moral dualism. There is *Spenta Mainyu* (progressive mentality) and *Angra Mainyu* (evil or regressive mentality). [That is, the distinction is in our own ‘mentality’, not in characteristics of any god or gods!] Zarathushtra pleaded with us to think clearly before we choose, and asked us to choose the progressive choices to bring about beneficial consequences. He said that *Ahura Mazda* would not order us to choose either this or that... In other words, having given us the ability to choose, *Ahura Mazda* leaves us alone and allows us to make our choices. And if we choose good, we will bring about good, and if we choose evil, we will cause evil. This is how the moral universe operates [according to Zarathustra].

Stated differently (and as reviewed in the previous post), according to Zarathustra, people are to choose between the Spirit of Goodness [*Spenta Mainyu* represented by *Asha* (truth and righteousness)] and the Spirit of Evil [*Angra Mainyu* or “the Lie”]. Subsequently, by the time of Ezra & C-C, Zoroastrian priests had corrupted Zarathustra’s original ideas by introducing the idea of a Devil. Thus, as Shahriar Shahriari further explains:

Based on [Zarathustra’s] principle, we are the causes of all the good and all the evil that happens in our moral universe. Or simply stated, according to Zarathushtra, there is no Devil. However, some of the Post-Zarathushtra scripture [written by subsequent Zoroastrian priests] introduced the concept of the Devil, or *Ahriman*, which was effectively a personification of *Angra Mainyu* [originally, “evil or regressive mentality” – of people].

Incorporating the Zoroastrian priests’ concept of Ahriman (or Satan), the author of *Job* proposed a position partway between Ezra & C-C’s claim that

⁸ From <http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/overview.htm>.

God controls evil and the Zoroastrian priests' claim that the Devil does. The proposed resolution was: God controls Satan!

Below, I'll provide an outline of *Job*, although I certainly don't want to add to the vast, useless literature attempting to analyze the *Book of Job*. Nonetheless, it might be useful to comment on ideas in *Job* about death (particularly, about the lack of an "afterlife") and it might be useful to demonstrate in *Job* still other illustrations of clerical dishonesty – and ignorance!

An outline of the *Book of Job* is that, given free rein by God, Satan essentially destroyed Job's life (having his 10 children either taken prisoner or killed and devastating his fortune, his reputation, and his health), whereupon, Job complained about the injustice he had suffered, disagreed with three "friends" (who basically said, "You must have done something wrong to incur God's wrath"), leading Job to complain even about the injustices not only of his predicament but also of being unable to challenge his alleged accuser (God).

Courtesy the calamities caused by Satan (and therefore by God), Job's situation became so dire that he wished for release available in death – or even, not to have been born, e.g., starting at *Job* 3, 13:

For now [if I, Job, were dead] I would be lying down and would be quiet, I would be asleep and then at peace with kings and counselors of the earth who built for themselves places now desolate, or with princes who possessed gold, who filled their palaces with silver. Or why was I not buried like a stillborn infant, like infants who have never seen the light? There [in Sheol] the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners relax together; they do not hear the voice of the oppressor. Small and great are there, and the slave is free from his master...

In theory (at least according to the wild, speculative theory of Zarathustra reviewed in the previous post), restitution for Job's inappropriate trials and tribulations would be available in a rewarding afterlife, but the author of *Job* apparently wasn't prepared to buy into Zarathustra's full scheme, instead proposing that death was the end (*Job* 10, 20):

Are not my days few? Cease, then, and leave me alone, that I may find a little comfort, before I depart, never to return, to the land of darkness and the deepest shadow, to the land of utter darkness, like the deepest darkness, and the deepest shadow and disorder, where even the light is like darkness.

The nearest the author came to promoting a scheme about life-after-death was with a question and wondering at *Job 14*, 13–15:

O that you [God] would hide me [Job] in Sheol, and conceal me till your anger has passed! O that you would set me a time and then remember me! If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait until my release comes. You will call and I – I will answer you; you will long for the creature you have made.

If the *Book of Job* had ended at the end of *Chapter 31*, with Job’s defending himself against the accusations of his “friends” (that he must have done something wrong), then in my view, the author would have made a valuable contribution, showing that there was something seriously wrong with the idea that God controlled evil, since bad things obviously do happen to good people. And actually, I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s where the original *Book of Job* ended. I suspect, however, that the Jewish clerics didn’t want to include in their “holy book” such a damning indictment of their ideas, and therefore, that they concocted different conclusions for Job (*Chapters 32 through 42*), which contain pathetic attempts to resolve the (in their scheme, irresolvable) problem of evil

To see what I mean, consider first the long speech (which I suspect was a modification of the original *Book of Job*) in *Chapters 32 through 37*, by a younger man, Elihu, basically claiming that Job isn’t wise enough to understand God’s ways. The speech is a long-winded way of expressing the standard clerical cop-out: “**God works in mysterious ways.**” Surprisingly, the speech by Elihu includes a few lines that directly contradict the claim in *Isaiah* that God controls also evil. Specifically, Elihu states (*Job 34*, 10–12):

Far be it from God to do evil or the Almighty to play false! For he pays a man according to his work and sees that he gets what his conduct deserves. The truth is [cough, cough], **God does no wrong; the Almighty does not pervert justice.**

Second, in what I suspect is an additional modification of the original *Book of Job*, the clerical authors provide readers with a wonderful treat [and yes, I’m being sarcastic], namely, four full chapters of a “**Divine Speech**” in which God speaks directly to Job, starting with (*Job 38*, 2):

“Who is this whose ignorant words cloud my design in darkness? [Does He now have something against ‘darkness’; allegedly (according to *Isaiah*), He created it!] **Brace yourself and stand up like a man; I [God] will ask questions, and you will answer.**”

* Go to other chapters via

As I outlined in Chapter **Ix1**, the result is a ridiculous (even humorous) series of questions, allegedly from God, questions that we can now either answer directly (e.g., to dumb questions such as “**Have you visited the storehouse of the snow...**”, then an intelligent answer could be something similar to: “**Of course! Haven’t you ever flown in an aircraft?**”) or answer indirectly (e.g., to asinine questions such as “**On what do [Earth’s] supporting pillars rest?**”, we could respond: “**Good grief, God, don’t you know enough even to ask sensible questions?**”).

After all of which, according to (I suspect) the damnable clerics who mangled the end of the *Book of Job*, Job admits that he’s too ignorant to understand the ways of God, he “**despises**” himself and repents “**in dust and ashes**”, God forgives him [But who will forgive God?!] and re-establishes Job, complete with a new set of 10 children [Isn’t one set as good as any other set?!], including three replacement daughters who were so beautiful [Isn’t that the only important feature of females?] that “**their father granted them an inheritance alongside their brothers.**” [Just think: permitting mere women to possess inheritances! What perversion will they think of next?] But as the reader can probably discern from my sarcasm, I’ve had about all that I can tolerate of the *Book of Job*; therefore, I’ll now turn to

The Book of Tobit

As I already mentioned, *Tobit* is especially interesting, since it reveals another quirk of the clerical quacks: if they didn’t agree with some published ideas, then like all subsequent (and probably previous) ideologues, they tried to suppress such “subversive ideas”.

In the case of the Jewish clerics, they classified such ideas as *apocryphal* literature. Subsequently, however, some clerical hierarchies accepted *Tobit*. Thus, as described in a Wikipedia article:⁹

[*Tobit*] is a book of scripture that is part of the Catholic and Orthodox biblical canon, pronounced canonical by the Council of Carthage of 397 and confirmed for Roman Catholics by the Council of Trent (1546). It is listed in Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. [But] *Tobit* is regarded by Protestants as *apocryphal*. It has never been included within the [Jewish] *Tanakh* [i.e., the OT] as canonical by ancient Judaism. However, it is found in the Greek Old Testament (the *Septuagint*), and Aramaic and Hebrew fragments of the book were discovered in Cave IV at Qumran in 1952 [i.e., as one of the Dead Sea Scrolls].

⁹ At http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit.

*The Book of Tobit*¹⁰ (with the name derived from Hebrew *tobyiah* meaning “Yahweh is good”) is a short story, written by who knows whom, when, or where. The same Wikipedia article on Tobit states:

...neither the date nor location of composition is certain. The setting of the story is the eighth century BC, and uncritical readers have often assumed that it was written at that time.

Biblical scholars suggest that *Tobit* was written (relying heavily on some “pagan” folktales, including *The Grateful Dead* and *The Tale of Ahichar*) by a pious Jew (not necessarily a cleric) living in Palestine, possibly in the time period between c.200–170 BCE. In the story, bad things happen to two allegedly good people: Tobit and Sara (daughter of Tobit’s cousin and future wife of Tobit’s son, Tobias).

Tobit’s good deeds (“good”, at least, according to the clerics) included proper worshipping, paying tithes (wouldn’t ya know!), giving alms, and burying Jews that the king had killed (clerics rarely if ever describe as ‘good’ those acts that are truly beneficial to humanity, such as developing understanding of nature and applying that understanding to help humanity!). The bad things that happened to Tobit included having his fortune confiscated by the king (for having buried the dead without permission) and losing his sight as a result of infection from bird droppings in his eyes – talk about “stuff happening”!

Sara is described as “good and wise”, who “never polluted my name nor the name of my father”. The bad things that happened to her were that she had been married seven times, but all seven spouses “had died in the marriage chamber”, not because (as her father’s maids accused) she had “strangled them”, but allegedly because they were killed by “the evil spirit”, “the Devil”, or “Asmodeus” (or *Asmodai*, which is apparently derived from the Avestan (ancient Persian) word *aēšma-daēva*, where *aēšma* means ‘wrath’ and *daēva* signifies ‘demon’).¹¹

Similar to Job, both Tobit and Sara were so despondent that they prayed to God to release them in death, e.g., Tobit’s:

¹⁰ Available, e.g., at <http://www.ebible.org/bible/kjv/Tobit.htm>.

¹¹ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asmodeus>.

Now therefore [God] deal with me as seemeth best unto thee, and command my spirit to be taken from me, that I may be dissolved, and become earth...

God, however (at least according to the story) had other desires and plans – apparently not realizing that omnipotent gods can't have desires and plans, since what they desire must immediately occur!

Anyway, according to the story (*Tobit* 3, 16–17):

So the prayers of them both were heard before the majesty of the great God. And Raphael [one of God's angels, doncha know] was sent to heal them both, that is, to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes and to give Sara... for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit; because she [Sara] belonged to Tobias [Tobit's son] by right of inheritance [i.e., Tobias was a relative and therefore, according to Jewish custom at the time, he had "first dibs" on marrying her!].

I'll skip additional details about *Tobit* and end with four comments.

1. In *Tobit* (as in *Job*), there's no indication of reward after death; instead, the focus is on this life. As I'll outline in the next post, the idea of "just desserts" after death doesn't enter the OT until *Daniel* (not considered to be a "major prophet" in Judaism) and the *Book of Enoch* (not accepted by mainline-Judaism, but accepted by some Jewish sects, e.g., the Essenes).
2. *Tobit* contains the same sick philosophy as in *Job*: don't rely on yourself; rely on the Lord – who works in mysterious ways. In reality, the ones who profit from such an anti-human philosophy are the damnable clerics, "happy-ever-aftering", all the way to the bank to deposit the suckers' tithes. Yet, the ruling clerics did accept *Job* but not *Tobit* as "holy scripture", possibly because the Persian connection was more obscure in *Job* than in *Tobit*, in which Satan is given what is essentially the Persian name *Asmodeus*.
3. The people who heard or read *Tobit* were obviously superstitious, believing not only in God, the Devil, and at least one angel (Raphael) but also in other "miraculous" nonsense. Thus, following Raphael's direction, Tobias used the gall of fish (which had "leaped out of the river and would have devoured him") to anoint Tobit's eyes, to cure his blindness, and Tobias managed to avoid the fate of Sara's previous seven husbands by burning the heart and the liver of the same fish, because upon smelling the smoke (so we're told), the devil (who killed the prior husbands) "fled into the utmost parts of Egypt."
4. Whenever *Tobit* was written, Zoroastrian ideas about the devil and about the existence of angels were obviously widely accepted by the Jewish people (since otherwise, they wouldn't have paid any attention to the story). But meanwhile, there was obviously something in *Tobit* that the Jewish priests didn't like: maybe the idea

of the existence of angels, maybe that the Devil was called *Asmodeus* rather than Satan, maybe because Tobit's son had a nice little dog (!), maybe because the writing was in green ink rather than red ink... who knows?! Whatever the reason, the ruling Jewish priests (the Sadducees) didn't approve *Tobit* as "canonical" or "sacred" scripture, categorizing it as *Apocryphal*.

But as much as the Sadducees disliked *Tobit*, they apparently disliked even more the final book that I'll briefly review in this post, namely,

The Book of Enoch

As with *Job* and *Tobit*, it's unknown who wrote *Enoch*, where, or when. Surely only the most die-hard fundamentalists accept the idea (promoted in *Enoch*) that the book was written by Enoch, himself, i.e., the great-grandfather of Noah. As a Wikipedia article explains:¹²

Enoch... is a name occurring twice in the generations of Adam. In one reference, Enoch is described as a grandson of Adam *via* Cain, and as having had a city named after him. The second mention of the name describes Enoch as Adam's great-grandson, through Seth, not Cain, and also states that Enoch "walked with God, and was not, for God took him", thus avoiding death at the age of 365. Additionally, Enoch is described as the father of Methuselah and great-grandfather of Noah (*Genesis* 5, 22–29).

Actually, there are three books with the title *Enoch*.¹³ For this post's purposes, the book of interest is identified as *1 Enoch*, written in the second century BCE (or possibly earlier), whereas *2 Enoch* was written in the first century CE and *3 Enoch* was written in the fifth century CE.

1 Enoch consists of five major sections (or sub-books), probably written at different times by different authors; in addition, a sixth book of *1 Enoch*, the *Book of Giants*,¹⁴ was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (found during 1947–1956 at Qumran). Of the first five sub-books, the *Book of the Watchers* is most relevant to this post, since it most clearly shows Zoroastrian influences (which were all eventually melded into Judaism *via* the *Book of Daniel*, which I plan to review in the next post).

¹² At [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_\(ancestor_of_Noah\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_(ancestor_of_Noah)).

¹³ See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch_\(disambiguation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch_(disambiguation)).

¹⁴ See <http://www.piney.com/DSSBkGiants.html>.

Ideas in *I Enoch* appear to have resulted in the formation of at least one group of clerics who promoted Enocchic Judaism, the main features of which were:¹⁵

- The idea of the origin of the evil caused by the fallen angels, who came on the earth to unite with human women. These fallen angels are considered ultimately responsible for the spread of evil and impurity on the earth;
- The absence in *I Enoch* of formal parallels to the specific laws and commandment found in the Mosaic *Torah* and of references to issues like Shabbat observance or the rite of circumcision. The Sinaitic covenant and *Torah* are not of central importance in the *Book of Enoch*;
- The concept of “**End of Days**” as the time of final judgment that takes the place of promised earthly rewards;
- The rejection of the Second Temple’s sacrifices considered impure: according to *Enoch* 89, 73, the Jews, when returned from the exile, “**reared up that tower (the temple) and they began again to place a table before the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and not pure**”;
- A solar calendar in opposition to the moon-based calendar used in the Second Temple (a very important aspect for the determination of the dates of religious feasts);
- An interest in the angelic world that involves life after death.

Although such ideas were rejected by the ruling priests of the time (i.e., the Sadducees), the ideas were obviously accepted by clerics who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls (probably the Essenes), and most of the ideas were later adopted by the founders of Christianity, especially the ideas dealing with a Messiah (called “**Son of Man**”), “**with divine attributes, generated before the creation, who will act directly in the final judgment and sit on a throne of glory** (*I Enoch* 46, 1–4; 48, 2–7; 69, 26–29).”

Now, although I’ve spent far more time investigating the matter than I wish I had (since all of it is comparable in importance to the question of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin!), yet I admit that, in some respects, I became somewhat impressed by the author (or authors) of *I Enoch*: relying on knowledge of Zoroastrianism and of ancient Sumerian and Babylonian mythology, the author(s) both plugged a major hole in the OT and tried to

¹⁵ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch.

provide a solution to the problem of evil, a solution that is as good as any other, once the fatal error is made to assume that gods exist!

And if the reader thinks that such accomplishments might have been well received by other clerics, then be aware that fundamentalist clerics have never been interested in “truth” or “facts”. As Salman Rushdie recently said (who is still under a death *fatwa* proclaimed by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran for his “insults” to Muhammad contained in his book *The Satanic Verses*): “Fundamentalism isn’t about religion; it’s about power.”

As a result, the ruling Jewish clerics not only refused to accept *Enoch* as “sacred scripture” but even banned the book:¹⁶ it was never included in “the Jewish Bible” (the *Tanakh*), and in the second century CE, Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai “cursed those who believed it”. Similar responses eventually came from ruling Christian clerics: in the fourth century CE, Filastius “condemned it as heresy” and Chrysostom wrote: “it would be folly to accept such insane blasphemy...” As a result, *Enoch* was also excluded from the Catholic Bible – and the *Book of Enoch* essentially vanished from the world for approximately 1500 years (save for some of its lore that was maintained by the Freemasons, which eventually influenced Mormonism). What apparently upset the ruling clerics so much is *Enoch’s* blasphemous suggestion that some angels had “fallen”. I mean, everybody who is anyone knows that, when dancing on pins, angels don’t fall!

There is, moreover, another general principle about religious rulers (i.e., theocrats) worth noting: no matter how bizarre the data-less speculation, if it’s put together with a sufficient number of “praise the Lords” and similar, some saps will not only willingly but even eagerly believe it. In the case of *Enoch*, apparently what happened is that at least one renegade Jewish sect (probably the Essenes)¹⁷ bought into it. Possibly as a result of the Essenes acceptance of *Enoch* as “holy scripture” (rather than bizarre speculations similar to the rest of the Bible!), early Christians bought into *Enoch* with gusto,¹⁸ including the “big wigs” Justin Martyr (c.100–165), Clement of Alexandria (c.150–c.215), Tertullian (c.160–c.240), who called *Enoch* “Holy Scripture”, and Origen (c.185– c.254). In fact, *Enoch* is even quoted in the NT (at *Jude 1*, 14).

¹⁶ See <http://www.jacksonsnyder.com/arc/2008/enoch.htm>.

¹⁷ See, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea Scrolls.

¹⁸ See http://www.jesusbelievesinevolution.com/christians_accept_enoch.htm.

But as already noted, later Roman Christians ruled *Enoch* to be heresy. The Ethiopian Christians, however, didn't agree (after all, when did any Roman Catholic know how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?); therefore, the Ethiopian church continued to treat *Enoch* as "sacred scripture". Copies of the Ethiopian version of *Enoch* were retrieved in 1773, translated into English in 1821, and are now available on the internet.¹⁹

What (mildly interested readers might wonder) was all the fuss about? Well, I'd like to assure such readers that they don't want to know the details. In briefest outline, it appears that the established Jewish clerics didn't appreciate the description in *Enoch* of, not only the activities of so many angels, but also the speculations about life- and judgment-after-death. Later, Christian clerics absolutely refused to accept the suggestion in *Enoch* that some angels would have "fallen" (in more ways than one) and had sex with earthly women – I mean, think of how many women might then claim that an angel impregnated them!

But setting aside such silly clerical squabbles, perhaps some readers would be interested in why, in an earlier paragraph, I praised some accomplishments in *Enoch* (incorporating both Sumerian and Zoroastrian ideas, plugging a hole in the OT, and attempting to solve the problem of evil). Below, I'll briefly address those issues.

My briefest comment deals with the Sumerian connection and consists of only two points:

- 1) As far as I know, the only "sacred scripture" that mentions Gilgamesh is the otherwise-missing sixth book within *I Enoch* (found among the Dead Sea Scrolls), and
- 2) Readers might want to investigate the statement²⁰ that *I Enoch* seems to be a Hebrew version of the story of the Sumerian wise man Adapa, "who [similar to the Egyptian Thoth and the Grecian Hermes] is credited with [developing writing and] writing mankind's first book of astronomy and the calendar."

Now, although I have zero interest in the wild speculations of clerics, yet as I already mentioned, I'm somewhat impressed that the author(s) of *I Enoch*

¹⁹ See, e.g., <http://exodus2006.com/ENOCH.HTM>, which is the source of the quotations herein.

²⁰ From http://www.think-aboutit.com/Spiritual/apocryphical_book_of_enoch.htm.

managed to plug a gaping hole in the OT. The “gaping hole” appears way back at *Genesis 6* and deals with the reason for the (fictitious)²¹ worldwide flood, describing how God “sinned” (i.e., He admits that He made a mistake, which is what, at *Genesis 4, 6*, God stupidly defines to be a “sin”):

When humankind began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful. Thus they took wives for themselves from any they chose... The Nephilim were on the earth in those days (and also after this) when the sons of God were having sexual relations with the daughters of humankind, who gave birth to their children. They were the mighty heroes of old, the famous men. But the Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth. Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made humankind on the earth, and he was highly offended. So the Lord said, “I will wipe humankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – everything from humankind to animals, including creatures that move on the ground and birds of the air, for I regret that I have made them.”

Readers interested in the speculation of savages (and perhaps readers stimulated by a little voyeurism) might have desired more details about the reported sexual rampages of “the sons of God”. If so, you’re in luck, because the unknown author(s) of *Enoch* provided more details, e.g., at *1 Enoch 6–10*, we learn the “truth”:

And it came to pass, when the sons of men had increased, that in those days there were born to them fair and beautiful daughters. And the Angels, the sons of Heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another: “Come, let us choose for ourselves wives, from the children of men, and let us beget, for ourselves, children.” [What did they really want, sex or kids?]

And Semyaza [Satan], who was their leader, said to them: “I fear that you may not wish this deed to be done and that I alone will pay for this great sin.” [Which, sex or kids?] And they all answered him, and said: “Let us all swear an oath, and bind one-another with curses, so not to alter this plan, but to carry out this plan effectively.” Then they all swore together and all bound one another with curses to it.

And they were, in all, two hundred and they came down on Ardis, which is the summit of Mount Hermon. And they called the mountain Hermon because on it they swore and bound one another with curses... And they took wives for themselves and everyone chose for himself one each. [Why they each chose only one woman isn’t explained.] And they began to go into them and were promiscuous with them. And they taught them charms and spells, and they showed them the cutting of roots and trees.

²¹ For a review, see <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix03GenesisandFloodMyths.pdf>.

And they [presumably the women!] became pregnant and bore large giants. [Well, I trust that they were small when they were born!] And their height was three thousand cubits [about 2,000 ft – which leads one to wonder if their concrete legs were reinforced with steel or some exotic fiber!]. These devoured all the toil of men, until men were unable to sustain them. And the giants turned against them in order to devour men. And they began to sin [in an unstated manner] against birds, and against animals, and against reptiles, and against fish, and they devoured one another's flesh, and drank the blood from it.

Then the Earth complained about the lawless ones. [The Earth or the people?] And Azazel [one of the “fallen angels”] taught men to make swords, and daggers, and shields, and breastplates. And he showed them the things after these, and the art of making them; bracelets, and ornaments, and the art of making up the eyes, and of beautifying the eyelids, and the most precious stones, and all kinds of colored dyes. [What horrors!] And the world was changed. And there was great impiety, and much fornication, and they went astray, and all their ways became corrupt...

Thereby, *Enoch* attempts to blame the fallen angels for the evil in the world, but it doesn't wash. Instead, it reveals that God is a dud!

Look at it this way: either God knew that some of the angels would fall or He didn't. But on the one hand, if He didn't know that the angels would fall, then He isn't omniscient, and on the other hand, if He knew the angels would fall, then either he wanted them to fall (leading to major troubles, and therefore, He wasn't omnibenevolent) or He was powerless to stop them (i.e., He wasn't omnipotent). Of course, if He knew the angels would fall and had stopped them, then He would have been wrong about their falling (i.e., He wouldn't be omniscient). Poor God: logically, He can't exist!

But setting logic aside (as all clerics desire that we do), *Enoch* continues with the silly story:

And at the destruction of men they cried out; and their voices reached Heaven. And then Michael, Gabriel, Suriel and Uriel [good angels] looked down from Heaven and saw the mass of blood that was being shed on the earth and all the iniquity that was being done on the earth. And they said to one another: “Let the devastated Earth cry out with the sound of their cries, up to the Gate of Heaven...”

And they said to their Lord, the King: “Lord of Lords, God of Gods, King of Kings! Your glorious throne endures for all the generations of the world, and blessed and praised! You have made everything, and power over everything is yours. And everything is uncovered, and open, in front of you, and you see everything, and there is nothing that can be hidden from you. See then what Azazel has done, how he has

taught all iniquity on the earth and revealed the eternal secrets that are made in Heaven. And Semyaza [Satan] has made known spells, he to whom you gave authority to rule over those who are with him. And they went into the daughters of men together, lay with those women, became unclean [for doncha know, having sex with women makes even angels unclean], and revealed to them these sins. And the women bore giants, and thereby the whole Earth has been filled with blood and iniquity. And now behold the souls which have died cry out [so, dead souls are still alive!] and complain unto the Gate of Heaven, and their lament has ascended, and they cannot go out in the face of the iniquity which is being committed on the earth. And you know everything, before it happens, and you know this, and what concerns each of them. But you say nothing to us. What ought we to do with them, about this?"

And then the Most High, the Great and Holy One, spoke and sent Arsyalalyur [another good angel] to the son of Lamech [i.e., to Noah], and [God] said to him [Arsyalalyur]: "Say to him [Noah] in my name; hide yourself! And reveal to him the end, which is coming, because the whole earth will be destroyed. A deluge is about to come on all the earth; and all that is in it will be destroyed. And now teach him so that he may escape and his offspring may survive for the whole Earth."

Unfortunately for humanity, however, God screwed up again (or his angels or the writer of this silliness), because next we learn (*1 Enoch 10*, 3–16):

And further the Lord said to Raphael [another good angel, who also appears in *Tobit*]: "Bind Azazel [one of the fallen angels] by his hands and his feet and throw him into the darkness. [The 'darkness'? But that's good stuff – made by God!] And split open the desert, which is in Dudael, and throw him there. And throw on him jagged and sharp stones and cover him with darkness. And let him stay there forever. [Do you mean that angels can't even get out of a pile of rocks?!] And cover his face so that he may not see the light. [Don't you have the power to blind him?] And so that, on the Great Day of Judgment [Zarathustra's Day of Judgment!], he may be hurled into the fire. [Angels burn? What chemical reactions occur?] And restore the Earth which the [fallen] Angels have ruined. And announce the restoration of the Earth. For I shall restore the Earth so that not all the sons of men shall be destroyed because of the knowledge which the Watchers [i.e., the fallen angels] made known and taught to their sons [and we can't have people gaining knowledge!]... "

And the Lord said to Gabriel: "Proceed against the bastards, and the reprobates, and against the sons of the fornicators. And destroy the sons of the fornicators, and the sons of the Watchers, from amongst men. And send them out, and send them against one another, and let them destroy themselves in battle [Why not just wait until they drowned, with all the innocent people – and animals? Do you mean that angels burn but can't be drowned? Amazing!]; for they will not have length of days. And they will petition you, but the petitioners will gain nothing in respect of them, for they hope for eternal life, and that each of them will live life for five hundred years." [Hello? Is eternal life only for five hundred years?!]

And the Lord said to Michael: “Go, inform Semyaza [Satan, the chief devil], and the others with him, who have associated with the women to corrupt themselves with them in all their uncleanness. [Male chauvinist pigs!] When all their sons kill each other, and when they see the destruction of their loved ones [Are they really that bad? You’re saying that they loved their children.], bind them for seventy generations [each of unknown duration!], under the hills of the earth, until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the judgment, which is for all eternity, is accomplished. And in those days, they [who?] will lead them to the Abyss of Fire; in torment, and in prison they will be shut up for all eternity. And then Semyaza will be burnt, and from then on destroyed with them; together they will be bound until the end of all generations. And destroy all the souls of lust, and the sons of the Watchers [the fallen angles], for they have wronged men. Destroy all wrong from the face of the Earth and every evil work will cease.” [So, given the current state of the world, obviously somebody, or some angel, or God must have screwed up (again)!]

Someone taken in by such silliness might wonder: “If Satan is ‘bound’ (“under the hills of the earth”), then why is there still so much evil in the world?” Well, according to the author(s) of *Enoch*, God conveniently answered that question at *1 Enoch 15*, 6–12, where God says to “the Watchers” (i.e., to the angels, in this case, the fallen angels):

“But you, formerly, were spiritual, living an eternal, immortal life, for all the generations of the world. For this reason I did not arrange wives for you [Are all angels males?! That’s crazy: all angels that I know are females! If there are no female angels, then thanks anyway, I’ll pass on the Heaven bit. As Mark Twain said: “Go to Heaven for the climate; Hell for the company.”]; because the dwelling of the spiritual ones is in Heaven. [And as everybody who is anybody knows, “spiritual ones” (such as all Catholic priests?) aren’t interested in sex. Or shall we agree with Robert Ingersoll: “To me, the most obscene word in our language is celibacy”?] And now, the giants who were born from body and flesh will be called Evil Spirits on the Earth, and on the Earth will be their dwelling. [So, doncha know, the evil spirits on Earth are the remnants of the giants.]

“And evil spirits came out from their flesh, because from above they were created, from the Holy Watchers was their origin and first foundation. Evil spirits they will be on Earth and ‘Spirits of the Evil Ones’ they will be called. [Hello? Are you saying that, if something is created “above”, then it’ll be evil “on Earth”? Okay, I can buy that. So, that means: any interference on Earth by anything from above, such as any god (hint, hint), is evil? Hmm, interesting theory.] And the dwelling of the Spirits of Heaven is Heaven, but the dwelling of the spirits of the Earth, who were born on the Earth, is Earth. And the spirits of the giants do wrong, are corrupt, attack, fight, break on the Earth, and cause sorrow. And they eat no food, do not thirst, and are not observed. And these spirits will rise against the sons of men, and against the women, because they came out of them during the days of slaughter and destruction.”

Clear enough? Evil in the world is caused by the remnants of the giants, specifically, their evil spirits. And you know, there might even be some “truth” in such silliness: otherwise, how are we to explain why the most evil people in the world today are the world’s clerics? Oh sure, they’re the most ignorant people in the world, but notice, also, that they’re the ones most consumed by evil spirits!

Anyway, that silliness aside for now, the author(s) of *Enoch* next provides us with brilliant insights about what happens to dead people’s souls (*1 Enoch* 22, 1–13):

And from there, I [Enoch] went to another place, and he [the angel Uriel] showed me in the west a large and high mountain, and a hard rock, and four beautiful places. And inside, it was deep, wide, and very smooth. How smooth is that which rolls, and deep and dark to look at!

Then Raphael, one of the Holy Angels who was with me, answered me, and said to me: “These beautiful places are there so that the spirits, the souls of the dead, might be gathered into them. For them they were created; so that here they might gather the souls of the sons of men. And these places they made, where they will keep them until the Day of Judgment, and until their appointed time, and that appointed time will be long, until the great judgment comes upon them.” [So, apparently, they’re required to hang around for thousands of years. Boring! Apparently God never heard: “Justice delayed is justice denied.”]

And I saw the spirits of the sons of men who were dead and their voices reached Heaven and complained. Then I asked Raphael, the Angel who was with me, and said to him: “Whose is this spirit, whose voice thus reaches Heaven and complains?” And he answered me, and said to me, saying: “This spirit is the one that came out of Abel, whom Cain, his brother, killed. And he will complain about him until his offspring are destroyed from the face of the Earth, and from amongst the offspring of men, his offspring perish.” [Tribalism at its worst: blood revenge. Never mind that the “offspring” of Cain had nothing to do with the murder of Abel; they have the same blood; so, kill them!]

Then I asked about him, and about judgment on all, and I said: “Why is one separated from another?” And he answered me, and said to me: “These three places were made, in order that they might separate the spirits of the dead. And thus the souls of the righteous have been separated; this is the spring of water, and on it the light. Likewise, a place has been created for sinners, when they die, and are buried in the earth, and judgment has not come upon them during their life. And here their souls will be separated for this great torment, until the Great Day of Judgment and Punishment and Torment for those who curse, forever, and of vengeance on their souls. And there He will bind them forever. Verily, He is, from the beginning of the world. And thus a place has been separated for the souls of those who complain, and

give information about their destruction, about when they were killed, in the days of the sinners. Thus a place has been created, for the souls of men who are not righteous, but sinners, accomplished in wrongdoing, and with the wrongdoers will be their lot. But their souls will not be killed on the Day of Judgment, nor will they rise from here.”

Ain't it glorious to be provided such reliable information? And just think: some people don't believe that it's true! Boy, will they be in for a shock when they die.

But surely sane people ask, “How could anyone believe such nonsense?” That question seems especially poignant, given the silliness of the science contained in the same book. For example:

- *I Enoch 18, 2–4*: I [Enoch] saw the four winds which support the Earth and the sky. [The winds support the Earth and the sky?!] I saw how the winds stretch out the height of Heaven, and how they position themselves between Heaven and Earth; they are the Pillars of Heaven. [Winds are the Pillars of Heaven?!] I saw the winds which turn the sky and cause the disc of the Sun and all the stars to set. [The winds turn the sky?! Who would have thought?!]
- *Book of Noah 65, 7–8*: And further [people have learned] how silver is produced from the dust of the earth and how soft metal occurs on the earth. For lead and tin are not produced from the earth, like the former; there is a spring which produces them, and an Angel who stands in it, and that Angel distributes them. [Do tell!]
- *The First Parable 41, 4–5*: And there I saw closed storehouses from which the winds are distributed, and the storehouse of the hail, and the storehouse of the mist, and the storehouse of the clouds; and its cloud remained over the earth, from the beginning of the world. [Storehouses for wind, precipitation, and even for clouds? Golly, that's neat!] And I saw the Chambers of the Sun and the Moon, where they go out, and where they return. And their glorious return; and how one is more honored than the other is. And their magnificent course, and how they do not leave their course, neither adding nor subtracting from their course. And how they keep faith in one another, observing their oath. [Didn't you just know that the Sun and Moon had to swear oaths?!]
- *The First Parable 44, 1*: And other things I saw concerning lightning, how some of the stars rise and become lightning but cannot lose their form. [Stars become lightning! Wow! I wonder if that idea has been patented!]

If the clown who wrote such nonsense “thought” that the wind “turns the sky”, that lead and tin aren't natural, that precipitation is stored in some “storehouse”, that stars can become “lightning”, and so on, then why, pray tell, would anyone believe his description of what happens to “souls” when

people die? I mean, if some idiot promotes total nonsense about things for which evidence suggests they at least exist (e.g., the Sun and Moon, the stars, the wind, lightning, and so on), then why, pray tell, would anyone believe his descriptions of “**eternal souls**”, for which there’s zero evidence to suggest that they even exist? If a street-corner schizophrenic warns, “**The end is near**”, who (but another schizophrenic) pays attention to him? So, why pay attention to a scribal schizophrenic who proclaims that a Messiah (“**the Chosen One**”, “**the son of Man**”) is coming?

People who believe such things apparently believe even such nonsense as the following, from *1 Enoch 54*, 7–8:

And in those days, the punishment of the Lord of Spirits will go out, and all the storehouses of the waters which are above the sky and under the earth, will be opened. And all the waters will be joined with the waters that are above the sky. The water that is above the sky is male and the water that is under the Earth is female. [By golly, finally an explanation for why precipitation falls down on the Earth!]

A person would be bonkers to believe anything that anyone said who also said (*1 Enoch 72*, 5):

The wind blows the chariots on which it [the Sun] ascends, and the Sun goes down in the sky and returns through the north in order to reach the east... !

And thus one sees one of the pillars of all organized religions: ignorance. To see another pillar, consider the following (*1 Enoch 103*, 1–8), which is pure Zoroastrianism:

And now I swear to you, the righteous, by His Great Glory and His Honor, and by His Magnificent Sovereignty, and by His Majesty: I swear to you that I understand this mystery. [Does he understand it any better than he understand astronomy, chemistry, metallurgy, and meteorology?!] And I have read the Tablets of Heaven and seen the writing of the Holy Ones. And I found written and engraved in it, concerning them, that all good, and joy, and honor, have been made ready, and written down, for the spirits of those who died in righteousness. And much good will be given to you in recompense for your toil and that your lot will be more excellent than the lot of the living. And the spirits of you who have died in righteousness will live, and your spirits will rejoice and be glad, and the memory of them will remain in front of the Great One for all the generations of eternity. Therefore do not fear their abuse.

Woe to you, you sinners, when you die in your sin, and those who are like you say about you: “Blessed were the sinners, they saw their days. And now they have died in prosperity and wealth, distress and slaughter they did not see during their life, but they have died in glory, and judgment was not executed on them in their life.” Know

that their souls will be made to go down into Sheol, they will be wretched, and their distress will be great. And in darkness, and in chains, and in burning flames, your spirits will come to the Great Judgment. And the Great Judgment will last for all generations, forever. Woe to you for you will not have peace.

And thus one sees the twin pillars of all organized religions: ignorance and fear. As Robert Ingersoll wrote in 1877 in *The Ghosts*:

Fear paralyzes the brain. Progress is born of courage. Fear believes – courage doubts. Fear falls upon the earth and prays – courage stands erect and thinks. Fear retreats – courage advances. Fear is barbarism – courage is civilization. Fear believes in witchcraft, in devils and in ghosts. Fear is religion – courage is science.

As for the particular fear of eternal torture in Hell, I wish every Christian, Muslim, Mormon... in the world would adopt Ingersoll's summary:

This doctrine renders God the basest and most cruel being in the universe. Compared with him, the most frightful deities of the most barbarous and degraded tribes are miracles of goodness and mercy. There is nothing more degrading than to worship such a god. Lower than this the soul can never sink. If the doctrine of eternal damnation is true, let me share the fate of the unconverted; let me have my portion in hell, rather than in heaven with a god infamous enough to inflict eternal misery upon any of the sons of men.

In sum, whoever wrote *I Enoch* used the ignorance of supernaturalism and the fear of Zoroastrianism to plug the hole in the OT's tall tale about giants to claim that the problem of evil was solved. But of course it wasn't. In fact, the only known, sensible solution to the problem of evil starts by rejecting all data-less speculations about the supernatural, including the silly idea that any god exists or has ever existed. As Nâgarjunâ (c.150–250 CE) said (who was one of India's greatest philosophers and is frequently called "the second Buddha"):²²

The gods are all eternal scoundrels
 Incapable of dissolving the suffering of impermanence.
 Those who serve them and venerate them
 May even in this world sink into a sea of sorrow.
 We know the gods are false and have no concrete being;
 Therefore, the wise man believes them not.

²² From <http://www.buddhivihara.org/article18.htm>.

And to eliminate evil, no reasonable alternative appears to be available than to proceed as recommended by the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama, c.563–c.460 BCE):

Believe nothing... merely because you have been told it... or because it is traditional, or because you yourselves have imagined it. Do not believe what your teacher tells you merely out of respect for the teacher. But whatsoever, *after due examination and analysis* [italics added], you find to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings – that doctrine believe and cling to, and take it as your guide.

Such are the goals and procedures of scientific humanists. As Robert Ingersoll (“the magnificent”) wrote in 1895 in the Conclusion of *The Foundations of Faith*:

To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to pity the suffering, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in nature, to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world, to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words, to discard error, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night, to do the best that can be done and then to be resigned – this is the religion of reason, the creed of science. This satisfies the brain and heart.