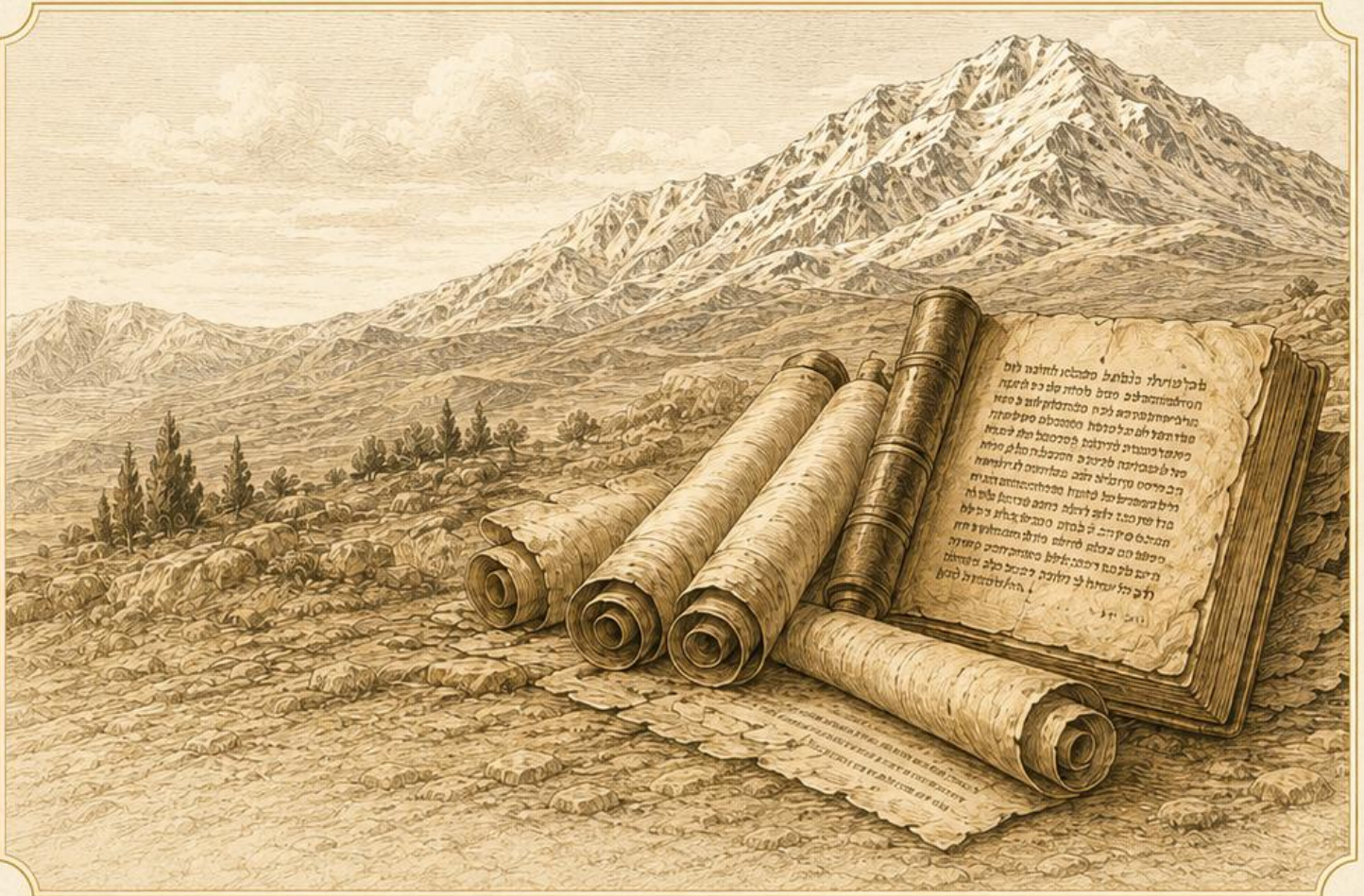


REASON TOGETHER STUDY

Mount Hermon

Enoch • Jubilees • The Book of Giants

GENESIS 6:1-8 • JUDE 14-15



REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

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SERMON TRANSCRIPT

What Do the Ancient Books Say Happened at Mount Hermon?

Genesis 6:1-8; Jude 6, 14-15; Matthew 16:13-20; Matthew 17:1-8 KJV

Reason Together Church

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Aloha,

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

I am very glad that you are here today.

Whether this is your first time with us, whether you have been here every week or whether you are joining us online from somewhere far away, thank you for taking the time to open the Word of God with us.

This is a place where sincere questions are welcome.

We do not have to be afraid of difficult subjects.

We do not have to pretend that every ancient question has an easy answer.

And we do not have to choose between respecting the Bible and examining evidence carefully.

Our invitation is the same every week.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Before we begin, let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You that truth does not fear examination.

Thank You that You have given us Scripture that is sufficient, trustworthy and true.

Give us humility as we examine writings that stand outside the Bible.

Keep us from dismissing useful information merely because it is not inspired Scripture.

Keep us from elevating human tradition merely because it is old, mysterious or exciting.

Teach us to distinguish what the Bible says from what another source says.

Teach us to distinguish evidence from inference and possibility from certainty.

And above everything else, help us to see Jesus Christ clearly.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Before we get into today's question, I want to take care of a few family matters.

We do not pass a plate here at Reason Together Church.

If you are our guest today, there is absolutely no expectation that you give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to continue giving faithfully through your home church.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home, there is a giving box in the back and there are other ways to give if the Lord leads you to do so.

There is no pressure and no compulsion.

The Bible says that God loveth a cheerful giver.

Giving is worship and it should come from a willing heart.

If you are visiting with us, we are especially honored that you are here.

We do have a guest card available.

We only ask for your first name and your email address.

That simply gives us a way to thank you for coming and to make ourselves available if you have a question after the service.

Our Keiki Kids Center is also available for families who would like to use it.

And after we finish today, please stop by the Reason Together Café.

The coffee is free.

And so are the refills on the conversations.

Now let me begin with a story.

An ancient book says that two hundred heavenly beings looked down upon human women and desired them.

The beings agreed to descend to the earth.

Their leader worried that some of them might lose their courage and leave him to bear the guilt alone.

So they made an oath together.

They bound themselves to carry out the plan.

And the book names the place where they gathered.

Mount Hermon.

According to this ancient account, they took human wives.

Their offspring became giants.

The beings taught humanity knowledge that the book presents as forbidden or corrupting.

Violence filled the earth.

Judgment came.

The heavenly offenders were bound.

The giant offspring were destroyed.

And the account goes on to explain the continuing presence of evil spirits in the world.

That story is not found in Genesis chapter 6.

It is found in the ancient Jewish work commonly called 1 Enoch.

And that gives us today's title:

What Do the Ancient Books Say Happened at Mount Hermon?

Our central question is:

When ancient writings tell us things about Mount Hermon that the Bible does not, what should we believe?

We are going to do something unusual today.

Normally we open the Bible first and then use history, archaeology or other writings to illuminate the setting.

Today I am intentionally going to let several ancient witnesses speak first.

We will hear what they claim.

We will notice where they agree and where they differ.

Then we will open the Bible and test every claim.

That order does not give the other books greater authority.

A witness may speak before the judge without becoming the judge.

So keep the labels attached.

The Bible says.

Enoch says.

Jubilees says.

A surviving fragment suggests.

Archaeology shows.

This is possible.

This is uncertain.

And sometimes the honest answer is:

We do not know.

Those categories matter.

A person may read something in an ancient book, hear it repeated in a video and later say:

“The Bible says.”

But the Bible never said it.

So let us begin with 1 Enoch, especially the portion commonly called the Book of the Watchers.

It presents material under the name of Enoch, the man in Genesis who walked with God.

The collection developed within ancient Judaism before and around the New Testament period.

It is not part of the Protestant canon.

It is not in our King James Bible.

That does not make it worthless.

It means we must use it for what it is rather than call it what it is not.

In 1 Enoch chapter 6, heavenly beings see the daughters of men and desire wives from among them.

A leader commonly called Semjaza fears the others may abandon the plan and leave him to bear the guilt alone.

The group therefore swears an oath and binds itself not to turn back.

Then the account gives a number and a location.

Two hundred descend upon the summit of Mount Hermon.

The book even connects the mountain's name with the oath or curse made there.

Genesis gives no number.

Genesis gives no leader's name.

Genesis gives no oath.

Genesis gives no mountain.

But Enoch does.

The following chapters expand the account.

The beings take wives.

The women bear giant offspring.

The giants consume human resources, turn violent and fill the earth with bloodshed.

The book also assigns different kinds of knowledge to different heavenly teachers.

It speaks of weapons, metalworking, enchantments, astrology and other arts disclosed in rebellion and used in ways that deepen corruption.

Then suffering humanity cries out.

Judgment is announced.

Noah is warned.

Azazel is bound.

Semjaza and his associates are sentenced.

The giants are destroyed.

The rebellious beings are held for future judgment.

Later, 1 Enoch explains continuing evil spirits as the spirits associated with the dead giant offspring.

That explanation remains influential.

You may hear someone say with complete confidence:

“Demons are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim.”

But keep the label attached.

That is an Enochic explanation.

The Bible never plainly states that demons are the spirits of dead Nephilim.

We may study the tradition.

We may ask whether it preserves something ancient.

But we cannot put the words into Genesis and then preach them as Scripture.

Notice also the moral center of Enoch's story.

Power does not excuse rebellion.

Knowledge does not excuse rebellion.

A heavenly origin does not place a creature beyond judgment.

Every creature remains accountable to the Creator.

That is what 1 Enoch says.

Now let us call a second ancient witness.

The Book of Jubilees.

Jubilees retells much of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus.

It follows the Biblical story while adding chronology, interpretation and details not found in Genesis.

Jubilees knows the Watcher tradition.

It speaks of heavenly beings, human women, giant offspring, corruption, the Flood and judgment.

But it does not tell the story in exactly the same way as 1 Enoch.

Jubilees chapter 4 says the Watchers descended to instruct the children of men and to do judgment and uprightness upon the earth.

That is a meaningful difference.

In 1 Enoch, the descent is connected from the beginning with the plan to take wives.

In Jubilees, the Watchers first appear with a teaching mission.

They later transgress.

They later take wives and become defiled.

So the two books share a broad tradition, but they do not give the same account of why the beings first came.

That should teach us something.

When two ancient sources agree, their agreement may show a shared tradition.

When they differ, the difference must not be hidden.

We cannot collect every detail from both books, blend them into one story and then announce that the combined story is history.

Jubilees chapter 5 moves closer to the Genesis account.

It says that angels of God saw the daughters of men, took wives and produced giant sons.

It connects growing lawlessness with the judgment of the Flood.

It also says the offending angels were bound in the depths of the earth and their sons were destroyed.

Then Jubilees chapter 10 discusses evil spirits troubling Noah's descendants after the Flood.

Noah prays for help.

The book introduces a figure called Mastema and describes most of the spirits being restrained while a portion remains active.

Once again, keep the label attached.

That is what Jubilees says.

Genesis does not tell that story.

The Bible never introduces Mastema by name.

Jubilees therefore gives us another ancient Jewish explanation for evil spirits after the Flood.

Does Jubilees prove that every detail in 1 Enoch is true?

No.

Does 1 Enoch prove that every detail in Jubilees is true?

No.

Together they do show that a detailed Watcher interpretation of Genesis 6 circulated widely in ancient Judaism.

That is an important historical conclusion.

Now call another witness.

The Book of Giants.

Fragments of an ancient Book of Giants were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

That physical evidence matters.

The Watcher and giant tradition was not invented by a modern author looking for a sensational topic.

Ancient Jewish communities copied and preserved it.

But the word fragments matters too.

We do not possess one complete, undamaged Book of Giants with every line in order.

The surviving pieces must be read, arranged and reconstructed carefully.

So when someone presents a long, smooth quotation from the Book of Giants, ask which fragments support it and how much restoration has been supplied.

The surviving material develops the world of the giant offspring.

The giants receive disturbing dreams.

Those dreams point toward coming judgment.

They fear destruction and seek understanding.

Enoch appears as an interpreter or messenger.

The once-mighty beings discover that they cannot escape the judgment of God.

The Book of Giants therefore confirms the existence and influence of the broader tradition.

It does not independently prove that exactly two hundred beings descended upon Mount Hermon.

It belongs to the same Enochic stream.

A repeated tradition may be ancient and influential without every detail being historically established.

There is one more ancient Jewish witness worth mentioning.

The Damascus Document, preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls and in later copies, uses the Watchers as a warning.

It says the Watchers of heaven fell because they followed the stubbornness of their own hearts.

It also recalls their giant children.

The writer is not merely satisfying curiosity about ancient beings.

He is warning his own community:

If powerful heavenly creatures were judged for self-will, do not imagine that you can rebel without consequence.

So by the time we have heard 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Book of Giants and the Damascus Document, one fact is clear.

The Watcher tradition was not confined to one modern teacher or one internet theory.

It circulated within ancient Judaism.

But widespread circulation still does not equal inspiration.

Now let us look at the mountain itself.

Mount Hermon is not imaginary.

Deuteronomy 3:9 says:

“Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir.”

Different peoples knew the mountain by different names.

It stood prominently in the northern landscape and marked territory familiar to Israel's neighbors.

The Bible also places Hermon within the wider story of Bashan.

Deuteronomy 3 records Israel's victory over Og king of Bashan and identifies Og with the remnant of the Rephaim.

The conquered territory extended toward Mount Hermon.

That means the Bible itself connects the broader region with Og, Bashan and the Rephaim.

That is genuinely interesting.

But do not take one more step than the text allows.

Deuteronomy does not say the Watchers descended there.

Geographical association can make a tradition worth investigating without proving every detail of the tradition.

Judges 3:3 gives us another Biblical name:

“Baal-hermon.”

So pagan worship connected with the region is not a modern invention.

The Biblical text itself preserves the name.

Archaeology adds another layer.

An ancient Greek inscription found on Mount Hermon and now held by the British Museum warns against entering a temple of Baal-Hermon without taking the required oath.

Put the two pieces beside one another.

First Enoch associates Hermon with an oath.

A much later inscription associates entry into a Baal-Hermon temple with an oath.

That correspondence is fascinating.

But correspondence is not proof.

The inscription does not say:

“This is the oath of the two hundred Watchers.”

It comes from a much later religious setting.

It shows that Hermon really was a sacred landscape where oath-taking had a place.

It does not prove that the events in 1 Enoch happened exactly as narrated.

That distinction is important enough to repeat:

Interesting correspondence is not the same as historical proof.

We have now heard the ancient books.

We have considered geography.

We have considered an inscription.

Now it is time to call the final witness.

Open your Bible.

Turn with me to Genesis chapter 6.

Listen carefully to what the text says and to what it does not say.

Genesis 6, beginning with verse 1:

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,”

“That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

“And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

That is the controlling text.

Genesis does say that the sons of God saw the daughters of men and took wives.

Genesis does say there were giants in the earth in those days and also after that.

Genesis does connect the period with mighty men of renown.

Genesis does say that human wickedness became great and judgment followed.

But Genesis does not call the beings Watchers.

It does not say there were two hundred.

It does not name Semjaza or Azazel.

It does not mention an oath.

It does not identify Mount Hermon.

It does not list forbidden arts.

It does not say how tall the giants were.

It does not say the spirits of dead giants became demons.

Those details come from somewhere else.

That does not automatically make every detail false.

It does mean we must not say:

“Genesis teaches...”

when only Enoch teaches it.

Proverbs 30:5 says:

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.”

Then verse 6 says:

“Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

We do the Bible no favor by decorating it with claims it never made.

The Word of God does not need our embellishment.

Now there is a serious question concerning the phrase “sons of God.”

Faithful interpreters have offered several views.

Some understand them as heavenly beings.

Some understand them as descendants of Seth intermarrying with the ungodly line of Cain.

Others have understood them as rulers who used power to take women.

The heavenly-being interpretation has deep roots and fits the use of “sons of God” for heavenly beings in passages such as Job.

Jude and 2 Peter also cause many readers to connect sinful angels with the Flood period.

But even accepting that interpretation would not automatically confirm every sentence in 1 Enoch.

A broad identification is not a blank check for later details.

And do not miss the moral center of Genesis while debating the identity of the sons of God.

Verse 5 says:

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.”

The chapter is not inviting us merely to construct a chart of supernatural beings.

It is showing us a world ruined by sin.

Boundaries are violated.

Power is abused.

Violence grows.

Human imagination becomes evil continually.

God grieves.

Judgment comes.

Then one of the most beautiful sentences in the chapter appears:

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

Before the ark is measured, grace is mentioned.

Before the door is shut, grace is present.

The Flood narrative is a judgment story, but it is also a grace story.

Now ask what the rest of the Old Testament says about Hermon.

It confirms that Hermon was a real mountain and a significant boundary.

It connects the wider region with Bashan, Og and the Rephaim.

It preserves the name Baal-Hermon.

But it never confirms the Watchers' descent.

And the Bible does something else that sensational treatments often overlook.

It refuses to portray Hermon as though the mountain itself belonged to evil.

Psalms 42 remembers God from the land of the Hermonites.

Psalms 89:12 says:

“The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.”

Who created Hermon?

God did.

Who ultimately owns Hermon?

God does.

Whatever false gods people worshipped there, the mountain itself belongs to the LORD.

Psalms 133:3 uses another image:

“As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

Hermon becomes an image of refreshing abundance.

The Bible’s picture is therefore broader than the dark legends.

Hermon can stand near pagan worship and still rejoice in the name of its Creator.

Human beings can corrupt a place.

They cannot transfer God’s ownership of creation to another god.

So the Old Testament gives us solid ground.

Hermon is real.

Baal-Hermon is real.

Bashan and Og are real.

The Rephaim are real.

The Watcher descent on Hermon is not stated.

Now let us turn to the New Testament, because this is where the comparison becomes especially interesting.

Turn to Jude verse 6.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

Notice the ideas.

Angels.

A proper estate or habitation.

Departure from that proper place.

Sin.

Confinement.

Future judgment.

Those ideas overlap strongly with the Watcher tradition.

Jude does not name Hermon.

He does not give the number two hundred.

He does not name Semjaza.

But his language shows that rebellious angels kept for judgment were part of the conceptual world in which he wrote.

Then Jude does something even more striking.

Verses 14 and 15 say:

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,”

“To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

That language closely corresponds to 1 Enoch 1:9.

So we must ask:

If Jude uses material associated with 1 Enoch, does that make the entire Book of Enoch Scripture?

No.

An inspired writer may use a true statement known from another source without declaring every line in that source inspired.

Paul quoted poets familiar to his audiences.

Those quotations did not turn every poem into Scripture.

Jude's use of Enochic material tells us that the tradition was known and useful to his argument.

It does not erase the boundary between Jude and 1 Enoch.

At the same time, we should not pretend the connection does not exist.

The honest conclusion is balanced.

Jude confirms that Enochic language about judgment was part of the ancient Jewish world.

Jude gives that particular statement a place in inspired Scripture.

Jude does not certify every detail found in every section of 1 Enoch.

Now turn to 2 Peter 2:4 and 5:

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;”

Peter places sinful angels, Noah and the Flood in the same movement of warning.

That again sounds familiar when set beside the Watcher tradition.

But Peter still does not mention Mount Hermon, two hundred beings, an oath or the named teachers of forbidden arts.

The New Testament reinforces the reality of angelic sin and judgment.

It does not confirm the entire expanded narrative.

Peter's conclusion in verse 9 is pastoral:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

That is not trivia.

God knows how to judge rebellion.

God also knows how to preserve those who trust Him.

First Peter 3:19 and 20 speaks of Christ preaching unto "the spirits in prison" which "were disobedient" in the days of Noah.

Interpreters differ over the identity of those spirits and the nature of Christ's proclamation.

The passage may belong in the same broad discussion.

But we should not use a difficult passage to manufacture certainty the text does not provide.

Now put the sources side by side.

Genesis gives us sons of God, daughters of men, giants, mighty men, escalating wickedness and the Flood.

First Enoch identifies the beings as Watchers, numbers them, names leaders, locates their descent on Hermon, describes an oath, expands their teachings and explains the origin of evil spirits.

Jubilees preserves a related story but gives the Watchers an initial mission connected with teaching righteousness before their later fall.

The Book of Giants preserves parts of the giant tradition in fragmentary form.

The Damascus Document uses the Watchers as a moral warning.

Jude speaks of angels leaving their proper habitation and uses Enochic judgment language.

Second Peter speaks of sinful angels kept for judgment and connects the warning with Noah.

There is real agreement.

There is also real difference.

The agreement suggests a shared ancient interpretive world.

The differences warn us not to combine every source into one seamless account and call the result "what the Bible says."

Let us sort our conclusions into three levels.

First, what can we proclaim with Biblical authority?

There was a profound transgression in the world before the Flood.

Genesis speaks of sons of God, daughters of men and giants.

Human wickedness became great.

God judged the ancient world.

Sinful angels were judged and are reserved for judgment.

Hermon was a real Biblical location.

The Hermon and Bashan region was associated with Og and the Rephaim.

Baal worship was connected with the region.

Hermon belongs to God.

Second, what can ancient sources help us understand?

They show that many ancient Jews interpreted Genesis 6 through a detailed Watcher tradition.

They show that Hermon became central to that tradition.

They help us hear language and assumptions familiar in the world of Jude and Peter.

They may preserve early traditions worth serious examination.

Third, what can we not prove from Scripture?

We cannot prove that exactly two hundred Watchers descended on Hermon.

We cannot preach the names Semjaza and Azazel as Genesis facts.

We cannot prove every assigned forbidden art.

We cannot prove that all demons are spirits of dead Nephilim.

We cannot use a later oath inscription as proof of the Enochic event.

And we cannot say the Bible names Hermon as the mountain of the Transfiguration.

Those things may be discussed.

Possibility may be acknowledged.

But possibility must not be preached as certainty.

That is not weakness.

That is honesty.

Faith does not require us to be certain about everything ancient writers claimed.

Faith requires us to trust what God has said.

Now how should a Christian read books like Enoch, Jubilees and the Book of Giants?

First, do not fear them.

Truth does not need darkness in order to survive.

You can read an ancient text, study its history and ask what it contributed to the world of the Bible.

Second, do not canonize it.

Ancient does not mean inspired.

Mysterious does not mean inspired.

Popular among an ancient community does not mean inspired.

Quoted by a Biblical writer does not make an entire source inspired.

Third, read it in context.

Genre matters.

Date matters.

Purpose matters.

Manuscript condition matters.

A fragment must be treated as a fragment.

Fourth, compare before you combine.

Do not take one detail from Enoch, one from Jubilees, one reconstruction from the Book of Giants and one modern theory, sew them together and call the result the original story.

Let agreements remain agreements.

Let differences remain differences.

Fifth, test every spiritual claim by Scripture.

Acts 17:11 says the Bereans:

“Received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

That is the Reason Together method.

Receive the claim fairly.

Search the Scriptures carefully.

Keep Scripture above every secondary source.

And remember the purpose.

The goal is not secret knowledge.

The goal is truth.

The goal is obedience.

The goal is to see Christ.

Now move forward many centuries.

Jesus takes His disciples north into the region of Caesarea Philippi near the base of Mount Hermon.

This landscape carried many layers of memory.

Bashan.

Rephaim.

Baal-Hermon.

Ancient sanctuaries.

Later worship connected with Pan.

Imperial power connected with Caesar.

And somewhere within the wider cultural world, stories of Watchers and giants.

Then Jesus asks the question that matters more than every legend surrounding the mountain.

Matthew 16:13 says:

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

They report several public opinions.

John the Baptist.

Elijah.

Jeremiah.

One of the prophets.

Then Jesus makes it personal:

“But whom say ye that I am?”

Peter answers:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Do you hear the force of that confession in this region?

Not Baal.

Not Pan.

Not Caesar.

Not one more spiritual power among many.

“The Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus answers:

“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

Then He says:

“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Some teachers connect “the gates of hell” directly with a nearby cave associated with pagan ideas about the underworld.

The setting may have made Jesus’ words especially vivid.

But Matthew does not tell us that Jesus pointed at a particular cave.

So we can explain the background without inventing a gesture the Gospel does not record.

The larger truth is clear.

Jesus does not stand at the edge of darkness and announce retreat.

He announces that He will build His church.

The gates of hell will not prevail.

Then Jesus begins to tell the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed and rise again.

Peter has confessed the right identity, but he resists the right mission.

He wants the Christ without the cross.

Jesus rebukes him and teaches that discipleship includes self-denial and cross-bearing.

Then, six days later, Matthew 17 begins:

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,”

“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.”

“Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

“And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.”

“And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.”

“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

The Gospel calls it “an high mountain” but does not give the mountain’s name.

Because Jesus had recently been in the Caesarea Philippi region, Mount Hermon is a strong geographical possibility.

It is still a possibility, not a certainty.

We should say exactly that.

But now listen to the movement.

At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks:

“Whom say ye that I am?”

Peter answers:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

On the mountain, the Father answers:

“This is my beloved Son.”

Jesus asks the question.

Peter confesses the answer.

The Father confirms the answer.

And He adds:

“Hear ye him.”

Ancient traditions told of heavenly beings descending upon Hermon in rebellion.

The Gospel shows the Son of God revealed in glory on a high mountain.

The rebellious beings of Enoch cross boundaries and bring corruption.

Jesus walks obediently toward the cross and brings redemption.

The Watchers are bound awaiting judgment.

Jesus possesses authority over judgment, death and the grave.

I am not claiming that Matthew wrote the Transfiguration as a direct answer to every Enochic detail.

The Gospel does not say that.

I am saying that once every ancient witness has spoken, God directs our attention to His Son.

Peter sees Moses.

Peter sees Elijah.

Peter sees Jesus.

He proposes three tabernacles.

But the Father does not present three equal authorities.

He says:

“Hear ye him.”

Then Moses is no longer visible.

Elijah is no longer visible.

The disciples lift their eyes and see:

“Jesus only.”

That is where this entire study must land.

We began with Watchers.

We examined giants.

We heard ancient traditions.

We looked at an oath and a mountain.

But none of those subjects is the center of our faith.

Jesus is.

Ancient books may help us understand the world surrounding the Bible.

They cannot take the place of the One to whom the Bible points.

When the voices compete, hear Him.

When the mystery fascinates you, look to Him.

When human tradition becomes louder than revelation, return to Him.

“Jesus only.”

Now let us bring this home.

Most of us will never preach a sermon on 1 Enoch.

Most of us will never translate a Dead Sea Scroll fragment.

But every one of us lives in a world overflowing with claims.

A video says it.

A popular teacher says it.

An ancient book says it.

A scientist says it.

A tradition says it.

How should a Christian respond?

Read carefully.

Ask what kind of source you are reading.

Ask when it was written.

Ask whether the text is complete or fragmentary.

Ask what it actually says rather than what someone says it says.

Compare it with other evidence.

Then test every spiritual claim by Scripture.

Do not fear information.

Truth is not threatened by investigation.

But do not canonize information either.

Old does not mean inspired.

Mysterious does not mean inspired.

Popular does not mean inspired.

Quoted does not mean that an entire book is inspired.

Use the ancient books as witnesses.

Let Scripture remain the judge.

And when Scripture speaks clearly, stand there.

There is also a personal warning in these stories.

The Watcher tradition is a story about creatures refusing God-given boundaries.

Genesis is a story of human wickedness becoming great.

Jude and Peter warn that privilege does not cancel accountability.

A heavenly creature can rebel.

A powerful ruler can rebel.

A respected religious person can rebel.

And so can I.

The most important question today is not:

Can I name the leaders in 1 Enoch?

The most important question is:

Have I listened to the Son of God?

The Father said:

“Hear ye him.”

Jesus says that we have sinned.

Romans 3:23 says:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

Sin is not merely ignorance.

It is rebellion against the God who made us.

Romans 6:23 says:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The ancient stories speak repeatedly of judgment.

The Bible tells us that judgment is real.

But the Bible also tells us that God has provided salvation.

Jesus Christ came into the world.

He lived without sin.

He went to the cross willingly.

First Corinthians 15:3 and 4 say:

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;”

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

Jesus did not come merely to give us better information about angels.

He came to save sinners.

Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Salvation is not earned by knowing ancient mysteries.

It is received by trusting Jesus Christ.

Perhaps you came today curious about Mount Hermon.

But the question God places before you is the question Jesus asked:

“Whom say ye that I am?”

Do you know Him merely as a teacher?

A religious figure?

A name from childhood?

Or do you know Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God and your Savior?

If you have never trusted Him, you may do so today.

You do not need special words.

You need an honest heart that turns to Christ in faith.

You may pray something like this:

Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner.

I know that I cannot save myself.

I believe that You died for my sins, that You were buried and that You rose again.

I turn from my sin and place my trust in You.

Forgive me.

Save me.

And help me follow You.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

A prayer does not save because the wording is perfect.

Jesus saves the person who trusts Him.

If you trusted Christ today or you want to talk about salvation, please speak with me before you leave.

If you are joining us online, please reach out to us.

We would be honored to pray with you, answer your questions and help you begin growing in the Word of God.

Let me give all of us five things to carry into the week.

First, keep the labels attached.

Say:

"The Bible says."

Say:

"An ancient source says."

Say:

"This is possible."

Say:

"I do not know."

Second, never be embarrassed by honest uncertainty.

Humility is not unbelief.

Third, do not let fascination with the supernatural replace obedience in the ordinary.

You may know every theory about Watchers and still refuse to forgive your neighbor.

Knowledge without obedience can become another form of pride.

Fourth, remember that places claimed by darkness still belong to God.

Hermon rejoices in His name.

Christ announces that the gates of hell will not prevail.

Fifth, hear Jesus.

The Father did not say:

“Master every mystery.”

He said:

“Hear ye him.”

Listen to Christ in the Word.

Trust Him.

Obey Him.

Follow Him toward the cross and into the life He gives.

Let's pray.

Father,

Thank You for giving us minds that can ask questions.

Thank You for preserving Your Word.

Thank You for the ancient witnesses and physical evidence that help us understand the world surrounding Scripture.

Give us courage to investigate difficult claims.

Give us humility to admit uncertainty.

Give us discipline to keep tradition separate from inspired revelation.

Protect us from sensationalism.

Protect us from fear.

Protect us from pride in secret knowledge.

Where Your Word speaks clearly, make us confident.

Where the evidence remains incomplete, make us honest.

And above all, fix our eyes upon Jesus.

Thank You that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Thank You that He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to You.

Thank You that He died, was buried and rose again.

For anyone here who has not yet trusted Him, draw that person to Yourself today.

For those of us who know Him, make us faithful witnesses who speak truth carefully, graciously and courageously.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Before you leave today, take one simple method with you.

When someone makes an extraordinary Biblical claim, ask four questions.

What does the Bible say?

What does the ancient source say?

What does the evidence establish?

What remains uncertain?

Then share this study as an invitation rather than a weapon.

Ask someone what they have heard about Mount Hermon.

Open Genesis 6 together.

Compare the sources honestly.

And let the conversation lead to the question Jesus asked:

“Whom say ye that I am?”

Please join us at the Reason Together Café.

Bring the question with you.

The coffee is free and there are free refills on the conversations.

Thank you for reasoning together with us today.

May the Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

And to our first-time guests especially, thank you for honoring us with your presence today.

Aloha Nui Loa.

ANCIENT SOURCE NOTES FOR PASTORAL REVIEW

These notes are for pastoral review and are not part of the spoken sermon transcript.

- 1 Enoch 6-16, especially 6:1-7, 7:1-6, 8:1-4 and 15:8-16: the Watchers, the number two hundred, the descent on Hermon, the oath, the giant offspring, forbidden teachings, judgment and the explanation of evil spirits. The sermon distinguishes every Enochic detail from what Genesis states.
- Jubilees 4:15, 5:1-11 and 10:1-14: the Watchers' initial teaching mission, their later transgression, giant offspring, confinement and the post-Flood account of troubling spirits. Jubilees overlaps with 1 Enoch but does not narrate every detail in the same way.
- Book of Giants fragments from Qumran, especially 4Q203 and 4Q530-532, with additional material associated with 6Q8: giant dreams, fear of judgment and Enoch as an interpreter or messenger. The surviving work is fragmentary and does not independently prove every Hermon detail in 1 Enoch.
- Damascus Document, commonly cited at CD II:17-21: the Watchers and their giant offspring are used as a moral warning concerning self-will, lust and judgment.
- British Museum collection object 1903,0422.1: Greek inscription found on Mount Hermon warning against entering the sanctuary of Baal-Hermon without the required oath. This is later evidence of oath-related cultic practice and is not proof of the pre-Flood Enochic event.
- Primary Biblical Hermon passages: Deuteronomy 3:8-13, especially 3:9 and 3:11; Joshua 11:17; Judges 3:3; 1 Chronicles 5:23; Psalm 42:6; Psalm 89:12; Psalm 133:3. Scripture presents Hermon as real geography, preserves Baal-Hermon and connects the wider region with Bashan and the Rephaim, but never states that the Watchers descended there.
- New Testament comparison: Jude 6 and Jude 14-15; 2 Peter 2:4-9; 1 Peter 3:18-20. Jude 14-15 closely corresponds to 1 Enoch 1:9, but use of a source does not grant canonical authority to the whole source.
- Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration: Matthew 16:13-28 and Matthew 17:1-8. Caesarea Philippi was located near Mount Hermon in a region associated with pagan worship. The Gospels call the Transfiguration site 'an high mountain' but do not name it. Hermon is a geographical candidate, not a Biblical certainty.
- Governing research boundary: ancient literature may illuminate historical beliefs and the conceptual world surrounding Scripture. It must never be blended into the Biblical text or preached with the authority reserved for inspired Scripture.

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

WHAT DO THE ANCIENT BOOKS SAY HAPPENED AT MOUNT HERMON?

When ancient writings tell us things about Mount Hermon that the Bible does not, what should we believe?

Genesis 6:1–8; Jude 6, 14–15; Matthew 16:13–20; 17:1–8 KJV

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. Matthew 17:8

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

Commentary in Brief

CENTRAL CONCLUSION The ancient Jewish books surrounding the Watcher tradition are historically valuable witnesses to how Genesis 6 was interpreted in the centuries before and around the New Testament era. They preserve details about Watchers, giants, judgment and, in 1 Enoch alone among the principal sources used here, a descent and oath on Mount Hermon. Scripture confirms some broad themes, especially angelic rebellion and judgment, but it does not confirm every Enochic detail. The proper Christian approach is therefore neither dismissal nor canonization: hear the ancient witnesses accurately, compare them honestly and allow Scripture to determine what may be proclaimed with Biblical authority.

This Commentary explains the historical, Biblical and pastoral reasoning behind the sermon “What Do the Ancient Books Say Happened at Mount Hermon?” The study intentionally gives ancient literature meaningful attention before turning to the Bible as the final standard. That order is a teaching device, not a statement of authority. The listener first hears the claims, then watches those claims tested.

The most important source distinction is simple. 1 Enoch explicitly places the Watchers on Mount Hermon and describes an oath there. Jubilees preserves a related Watcher tradition but does not independently give the same Hermon narrative. The Book of Giants develops the giant tradition in fragmentary Qumran texts. The Damascus Document remembers the Watchers and their offspring as examples of beings who fell through self-will and lust. These sources demonstrate that the tradition was widespread, but they do not form one perfectly uniform account.

Genesis 6 remains deliberately brief. It speaks of the sons of God, the daughters of men, giants, mighty men, growing wickedness, divine grief and coming judgment. It does not name Mount Hermon, does not give the number two hundred, does not name Semjaza or Azazel, does not describe an oath and does not say that the spirits of dead giants became demons. Those additional details must therefore be labeled according to their actual source.

The New Testament creates the most important comparison. Jude 6 speaks of angels who left their own habitation and are reserved for judgment. Jude 14–15 uses a prophecy attributed to Enoch that closely corresponds to 1 Enoch 1:9. Second Peter 2:4–5 speaks of angels that sinned and then moves immediately to Noah and the old world. These passages show real conceptual overlap with the Watcher tradition, yet none of them grants blanket Biblical authority to every statement in 1 Enoch or the related literature.

The study finally leaves the ancient mystery behind and moves toward Jesus. In the region of Caesarea Philippi, near the Hermon massif, Jesus asks, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter answers, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Shortly afterward Jesus is transfigured on an unnamed high mountain. Hermon is a plausible geographical candidate, but Scripture does not name it. The theological climax is certain even where the geography is not: the Father says, “hear ye him,” and the disciples finally see “Jesus only.”

1. Why Begin with the Ancient Books?

This study deliberately begins somewhere many Bible studies would not begin: outside the canon. The reason is methodological. People encounter claims about Mount Hermon through books, documentaries, podcasts, videos and sermons. If the church only answers, “That book is not in the Bible,” it may be correct about canonicity while failing to answer the historical question the listener is actually asking.

A better approach is to let each source speak in its own voice and then ask what kind of authority that source possesses. An ancient text may preserve a real tradition, a mistaken interpretation, a theological expansion or some mixture of all three. The Christian does not need to fear that investigation because Scripture does not become less authoritative when another document is read carefully.

The controlling discipline is source labeling. “Enoch says” is not the same statement as “Genesis says.” “Archaeology shows” is not the same statement as “the Bible teaches.” “A scholar proposes” is not the same statement as “history proves.” Much of the confusion surrounding Hermon disappears when those labels are kept attached.

2. What Kind of Book Is 1 Enoch?

First Enoch is a composite ancient Jewish work rather than one book written at one moment. The section most important to this study is commonly called the Book of the Watchers, 1 Enoch 1–36. Scholars generally place that material in the centuries before Christ, and Aramaic Enoch manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm that Enochic literature circulated in Second Temple Judaism before the New Testament era.

That antiquity matters. It means the Watcher tradition cannot be dismissed as a modern invention or a medieval Christian legend. Ancient Jewish readers were already using this material to interpret the world of Genesis. At the same time, antiquity does not equal inspiration. An old source deserves historical attention because it is old, not automatic doctrinal authority because it is old.

For this study, 1 Enoch is therefore treated as a secondary ancient witness. It can show what some ancient Jews believed and how they expanded Genesis 6. It cannot make a statement Biblical merely by supplying a detail that Genesis itself leaves unstated.

3. What 1 Enoch Says Happened on Hermon

The Book of the Watchers tells a much fuller story than Genesis 6. In its account, a company of heavenly Watchers desires human women. Two hundred agree to the act. Their leader fears that some may abandon the plan, so they bind themselves together by an oath. The narrative explicitly places that oath and descent on Mount Hermon.

Enoch then expands the consequences. The Watchers take wives, extraordinary offspring appear, violence spreads and certain Watchers teach forms of knowledge that the author regards as corrupting. Named figures receive particular blame. Judgment follows, the rebellious beings are bound and the giant offspring are destroyed.

The sermon is free to report those claims because reporting is not endorsing. The careful phrase is, “According to 1 Enoch.” The moment that phrase is dropped, an ancient interpretation can quietly become a supposed quotation from Genesis.

4. Hermon, the Oath and the Name

First Enoch itself links the mountain’s name with the oath or curse made there. That feature is best understood as an ancient explanatory wordplay or etiology inside the narrative. It may reflect how the author or tradition understood the name, but the Commentary should not present it as a proven historical derivation of the word “Hermon.”

This distinction is useful beyond this one example. Ancient authors often explained names, customs and places by attaching stories to them. Sometimes those explanations preserve genuine memory. Sometimes they function primarily as literary or theological interpretation. The reader should notice the explanation without confusing the existence of the explanation with proof that the narrated event occurred exactly as described.

5. Jubilees: Similar Tradition, Meaningful Differences

Jubilees is another ancient Jewish work that retells Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus while adding interpretive material. Hebrew fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm that Jubilees also belongs to the Second Temple world. It preserves a Watcher tradition, but it does not simply reproduce 1 Enoch.

One important difference concerns the role of the Watchers. Jubilees can portray their original coming in connection with teaching righteousness or judgment before their later transgression. That is not the same narrative emphasis found in the Book of the Watchers. The difference matters because it demonstrates that ancient writers could inherit a common tradition and still shape it differently.

This is one of the study’s strongest lessons. When two ancient sources agree, the agreement deserves notice. When they disagree, the disagreement also deserves notice. We must not combine every attractive detail from several books into one seamless account and then call the result ancient history.

6. The Book of Giants

The Book of Giants survives in fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts from Qumran. The fragments belong to the same broad Enochic world and develop the fate of the giant offspring. Dreams, fear of coming judgment and appeals to Enoch appear in the surviving material.

The physical existence of these fragments is historically important. The giant tradition was not confined to one later manuscript of 1 Enoch. It circulated in the Jewish world represented at Qumran. That makes it valuable for understanding the intellectual and religious environment surrounding later Jewish and early Christian readers.

Because the work is fragmentary, however, reconstruction requires caution. The Book of Giants can confirm that the giant tradition was being developed. It cannot be used casually as an independent proof of every detail in 1 Enoch 6, including the exact number of Watchers or the Hermon oath.

7. The Damascus Document Uses the Watchers as a Warning

The Damascus Document, another important text from the Dead Sea Scrolls tradition, refers to the Watchers and their giant offspring as examples of those who followed self-will and lust and fell under judgment. That use is especially revealing because the author is not merely collecting supernatural curiosities.

The Watchers function as a moral warning. Privilege does not protect the rebel. Great power does not remove accountability. A being may occupy an exalted position and still fall through disobedience. In that respect, the use of the tradition in the Damascus Document resembles the moral force of Jude and 2 Peter more closely than many modern presentations that focus almost entirely on secret names or supernatural hierarchies.

8. Where the Ancient Sources Agree

Across 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Book of Giants and the Damascus Document, a recognizable family of ideas appears. Heavenly beings transgress. Human corruption increases. Extraordinary offspring or giants belong to the tradition. Divine judgment follows. The rebellious powers do not escape accountability.

That agreement is historically significant. It shows that an interpretive world grew around the short account in Genesis 6. Ancient Jewish readers were asking many of the same questions modern readers ask: Who were the sons of God? What exactly did they do? How did their sin relate to the Flood? What became of them?

Agreement among secondary sources can increase confidence that a tradition was widespread. It does not by itself establish that every narrated detail reaches back to the event described in Genesis.

9. Where the Ancient Sources Differ

The differences are just as important. The principal texts do not all give the same motive, the same sequence or the same details. Most importantly for this study, 1 Enoch is the principal source that explicitly places the descent and oath on Mount Hermon. The other sources preserve related Watcher and giant material without independently supplying the same Hermon scene.

This prevents a common evidentiary mistake. We cannot say, "Several ancient books all say the Watchers descended on Hermon," when the books actually share a broad tradition but not that exact geographical claim. Accuracy sometimes requires a narrower sentence than the exciting version.

The distinction strengthens rather than weakens the study. We do not need to exaggerate the evidence to find it interesting.

10. Now Open Genesis 6

After hearing the ancient witnesses, the investigation reaches its controlling text. Genesis 6:1–4 says that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, took wives and that giants were in the earth in those days. The passage then moves quickly toward the moral condition of humanity: "the wickedness of man was great in the earth."

The larger unit reaches a crucial sentence in Genesis 6:8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." That verse is essential. Genesis 6 is not preserved merely to satisfy curiosity about supernatural beings. It establishes a world in rebellion, a God who judges evil and grace shown in the midst of judgment.

A sermon on Watchers that never reaches human wickedness, divine judgment and grace has allowed the mystery to eclipse the inspired purpose of the text.

11. "Sons of God": The Major Interpretive Question

The identity of the "sons of God" has been debated for centuries. One major view understands them as heavenly beings. That interpretation receives support from the use of the phrase "sons of God" for heavenly beings in Job 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7, and it fits naturally with later Jewish Watcher interpretation.

Other faithful interpreters have understood the phrase as the godly line of Seth or as powerful rulers who abused authority. This Commentary does not need to settle the entire debate in order to make its central point. Even if the heavenly-being interpretation is accepted, it does not automatically follow that every additional detail in 1 Enoch must also be historical fact.

That is an important reasoning principle. Accepting claim A does not prove claims B through Z simply because a later source connects them.

12. “Watcher” Is Biblical Vocabulary, but Not Genesis 6 Vocabulary

The KJV uses the word “watcher” in Daniel 4:13, 17 and 23 for a heavenly figure appearing in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision. The word itself is therefore not foreign to Scripture.

Genesis 6, however, never calls the sons of God “Watchers.” Applying the Watcher label to them comes from the later interpretive tradition represented especially by 1 Enoch and related literature. The distinction may appear small, but it models the larger discipline of the study: keep a term attached to the source that actually uses it.

13. What Genesis Says and What Genesis Does Not Say

Genesis says that the sons of God took wives from the daughters of men. It mentions giants and mighty men. It describes exploding human wickedness and divine judgment. Those are Biblical statements.

Genesis does not say that exactly two hundred beings descended on Hermon. It does not name Semjaza or Azazel. It does not describe an oath on the mountain. It does not assign particular forbidden arts to particular heavenly beings. It does not say that dead giant spirits became demons.

There is nothing wrong with discussing those ideas as ancient tradition. The problem begins only when the phrase “the Bible says” is placed in front of something the Bible never says.

14. Jude 6 and the Angels Who Left Their Habitation

Jude 6 reads, “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” The verse gives inspired New Testament testimony to angelic rebellion and judgment.

The conceptual overlap with the Watcher tradition is difficult to ignore. Heavenly beings leave a proper place, sin and are held for judgment. At the same time, Jude does not mention Mount Hermon, does not give a number of offenders and does not reproduce the detailed list of teachings found in 1 Enoch.

The careful conclusion is therefore stronger than “there is no connection” but narrower than “Jude confirms the whole Book of Enoch.” Jude confirms what Jude says.

15. Jude 14–15 and Enoch

Jude then introduces a prophecy attributed to “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam.” The language closely corresponds to material found in 1 Enoch 1:9. This is the strongest direct literary connection between the New Testament and Enochic tradition used in the study.

The proper question is not whether the relationship exists. It does. The proper question is what that relationship proves. Jude's inspired use of the statement places the statement as used by Jude within canonical Scripture. It does not logically follow that every chapter and every claim in the larger Enochic collection is therefore inspired.

Paul's use of non-Biblical poets provides a useful analogy. An inspired writer can use a true or useful statement known to his audience without granting inspiration to everything else written by the source.

16. Second Peter 2: Angels, Noah and Judgment

Second Peter 2:4–5 speaks of “the angels that sinned” and immediately continues to the old world and Noah. The sequence naturally invites comparison with Genesis 6 and the ancient Watcher tradition.

Peter's purpose is not to satisfy curiosity about the identity or names of the angels. His purpose is judgment and deliverance. Verse 9 gives the pastoral center: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

Once again, the New Testament uses the ancient theme morally. Knowledge of rebellion should produce humility and obedience, not fascination divorced from discipleship.

17. First Peter 3 and the “Spirits in Prison”

First Peter 3:19–20 refers to “spirits in prison” that were disobedient in the days of Noah. The passage has generated several substantial interpretations concerning who the spirits are, what Christ proclaimed and when that proclamation occurred.

The verse belongs in the research because it may touch the same ancient world of thought. It should not be turned into a simple proof-text for a fully reconstructed Watcher doctrine. Difficult passages require more restraint, not less.

18. Hermon Was a Real and Prominent Mountain

Mount Hermon forms the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon range and rises to roughly 9,232 feet above sea level. It dominates the northern landscape near the headwaters of the Jordan and the Caesarea Philippi/Banias region.

Deuteronomy 3:9 preserves multiple ancient names: “Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir.” This small geographical statement is valuable. Hermon was not an imaginary mountain invented by the Enochic tradition. Neighboring peoples knew it and named it within their own cultural worlds.

The mountain's physical prominence helps explain why it could acquire religious significance in different periods. Geography can illuminate why a place became important without proving every story later attached to it.

19. Hermon, Bashan, Og and the Rephaim

Deuteronomy 3 places Hermon within the northern territory associated with the defeat of the Amorite kings. In the same chapter Og king of Bashan is identified with the remnant of the giants or Rephaim.

That means the broader Hermon-Bashan region is already associated in Scripture with unusual ancient peoples before 1 Enoch is ever consulted. This is a legitimate Biblical connection and helps explain why later readers may have found the region suggestive.

But the limit must remain visible: Deuteronomy does not say that the Watchers descended on Hermon. A real Biblical association can make a later tradition interesting without proving the later tradition.

20. Baal-Hermon Is Biblical

Judges 3:3 uses the name "Baal-hermon," and 1 Chronicles 5:23 also preserves the designation. The Bible itself therefore shows that the region acquired associations with pagan worship.

This matters because the Hermon story does not depend entirely on later archaeology to establish religious activity. Scripture already knows the name. What archaeology can add is detail about later sanctuaries and practices that developed around the mountain.

21. The Baal-Hermon Oath Inscription

A Greek-inscribed stone from Mount Hermon in the British Museum is described as warning against entering the temple of Baal Hermon without taking the required oath. That is a striking piece of material evidence because 1 Enoch also associates Hermon with oath-taking.

The correspondence should be presented with equal measures of interest and restraint. The inscription belongs to a much later period than the event narrated by Enoch. It does not prove that rebellious heavenly beings once swore an oath on the mountain. It does show that oath-related cultic practice existed at a Hermon sanctuary in antiquity.

The governing sentence is worth repeating: interesting correspondence is not the same as historical proof.

22. The Bible Does Not Portray Hermon as an Evil Mountain

Popular presentations can make Hermon sound as though the mountain itself belonged to darkness. Scripture gives a more balanced picture.

Psalms 42:6 remembers God from “the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites.” Psalm 89:12 declares, “Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.” Psalm 133:3 uses “the dew of Hermon” as an image of blessing. These texts matter because they place the mountain under the Creator rather than under whatever false powers people later worshipped there.

A place can be used for idolatry without becoming the property of an idol. The earth remains the LORD's.

23. Caesarea Philippi Changes the Direction of the Study

Matthew 16 places Jesus in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, near the Hermon region. By the Hellenistic and Roman periods the area was associated with pagan worship, including the cult of Pan, and with imperial power reflected in the name Caesarea.

The sermon uses this background carefully. It does not claim that Jesus entered the region in order to answer 1 Enoch or to confront every ancient Hermon tradition. The Gospel itself gives the controlling event: Jesus asks, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” and then, “But whom say ye that I am?”

After pages of ancient claims about beings, mountains and powers, the question becomes personal and Christological. Who is Jesus?

24. “The Son of the Living God” in a Region of Competing Claims

Peter answers, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” The phrase “living God” is especially vivid in a landscape known for religious competition, but the sermon should not need theatrical exaggeration to make the point.

Peter's confession identifies Jesus not as one more supernatural figure in an already crowded spiritual world, but as the Christ and the Son of the living God. The focus is no longer on what ancient beings may have done. It is on who Jesus is.

25. The “Gates of Hell” and a Necessary Caution

Jesus continues, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Popular teaching sometimes describes Jesus as standing directly in front of a specific cave, pointing toward it and identifying that cave as “the gates of Hades.”

The region's pagan and underworld associations can responsibly be discussed as background. The Gospel, however, does not record Jesus pointing at a cave and does not identify a particular

geological feature as the referent of His words. Context may make the saying more vivid, but context should not be converted into an invented stage direction.

26. Was the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon?

Matthew 17 follows the Caesarea Philippi episode after six days and says that Jesus took Peter, James and John “up into an high mountain apart.” The Gospel does not name the mountain.

Because of the preceding northern setting and because Hermon dominates the region, Mount Hermon is a plausible geographical candidate. Other sites, including Mount Tabor, have also been proposed in Christian tradition. The responsible wording is therefore “possible,” “plausible candidate” or “strong geographical possibility.”

The study gains nothing by pretending certainty. The theological message of the Transfiguration is far more secure than the mountain’s name.

27. Moses, Elijah and Jesus

On the mountain Jesus is transfigured, and Moses and Elijah appear with Him. The scene naturally recalls earlier mountain encounters with God. Moses represents the law in the memory of Israel, Elijah stands among the great prophetic figures and Jesus appears in revealed glory.

Peter proposes three tabernacles, but the heavenly voice redirects attention: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” The Father does not present three equal authorities. He commands the disciples to hear His Son.

28. Peter Answers, Then the Father Answers

The narrative sequence deserves special attention. At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter answers, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

On the mountain the Father supplies the divine confirmation: “This is my beloved Son.” The same identity question is therefore answered first by the disciple’s confession and then by the Father’s declaration.

This is the safest and strongest climax for the Hermon study. The ancient books begin the investigation, but they do not get the final word.

29. “Jesus Only”

Matthew 17:8 says, “And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.” That short sentence carries extraordinary weight after everything the study has examined.

We have considered Watchers, giants, ancient names, pagan worship, archaeological inscriptions, difficult texts and competing interpretations. None of those subjects is wrong to investigate. But none of them is the center of Christian faith.

The Father's command is "hear ye him." The disciples' final sight is "Jesus only." Mystery must never become more compelling to the church than Christ.

30. Does Jude Quoting Enoch Make Enoch Scripture?

No. Jude's use of Enochic material demonstrates that the tradition was known and that Jude could employ it truthfully within his inspired argument. It does not establish the inspiration of the entire Enochic collection.

This principle protects us from two opposite errors. We should not dismiss 1 Enoch as worthless merely because it is non-canonical. We should not canonize it merely because an inspired writer uses language found there. Historical usefulness and canonical authority are different categories.

31. Can a Non-Biblical Book Contain True Information?

Yes. Scripture never teaches that every sentence outside the Bible is false. History books, inscriptions, legal records, letters and ancient literature can contain accurate information. The question is not whether a source is canonical before it can tell us anything. The question is what claim it makes and what evidence supports that claim.

Biblical inspiration gives Scripture a unique authority that historical sources do not possess. That authority does not require us to deny ordinary evidence. It requires us to keep ordinary evidence in its proper place.

32. A Practical Method for Reading Ancient Sources

The study recommends five movements: read it, understand it, compare it, test it and keep Scripture above it.

Read it: know what the source actually says instead of repeating a quotation from someone else's video. Understand it: ask when the work was composed, what genre it belongs to and what community used it. Compare it: place it beside independent sources and notice both agreement and disagreement. Test it: ask whether Scripture confirms, contradicts or remains silent about the claim. Keep Scripture above it: do not allow later tradition to rewrite the Biblical text.

This method can be used far beyond Mount Hermon. It applies to Josephus, church fathers, rabbinic tradition, apocryphal works, archaeological claims and modern historical reconstructions.

33. The Vocabulary of Confidence

Good research needs more than true and false. Some claims are certain, some probable, some possible and some speculative.

High Biblical confidence: Genesis 6 contains the sons of God, daughters of men, giants, growing wickedness and judgment. Jude and 2 Peter teach angelic sin and judgment. Scripture names Hermon, Bashan, Og, the Rephaim and Baal-Hermon.

High historical confidence: Second Temple Jewish literature preserves a developed Watcher tradition. Qumran manuscripts demonstrate the circulation of Enochic and giant material before and around the New Testament era.

Plausible but unproved: Mount Hermon was the unnamed high mountain of the Transfiguration.

Not established as Biblical fact: exactly two hundred Watchers descended on Hermon, every named Enochic leader corresponds to a historical fallen angel, the spirits of dead Nephilim are the demons of the New Testament or the later Baal-Hermon oath inscription proves the Enochic event.

34. Why “Possible” Is Not a Weak Answer

Christians sometimes feel pressure to produce certainty because an uncertain answer can sound spiritually unsatisfying. But “possible” is a truthful category when evidence permits a claim without establishing it.

Saying “the Transfiguration may have occurred on Hermon” is stronger intellectually than saying “it happened on Hermon” when Matthew does not name the mountain. Saying “Jude overlaps with the Enochic tradition” is stronger than saying “Jude canonizes Enoch.” Truthful restraint is not timid faith. It is careful speech.

35. Why the Study Must Not Become a Sensationalism Study

Watcher traditions contain everything needed to attract attention: forbidden beings, giant offspring, hidden knowledge, strange names and ancient mountains. Those features can easily become the entire attraction.

The sermon therefore needs a deliberate pastoral balance. The unusual material is allowed to be genuinely interesting, but the congregation is repeatedly brought back to the text, to judgment, to grace and finally to Christ. The goal is not to create experts in secret lore. The goal is to create readers who know how to reason faithfully.

36. Genesis 6 Still Ends in Grace

One of the easiest details to lose in a Watcher study is the simplest sentence in the passage: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

Whatever interpretation one adopts concerning the sons of God, the inspired narrative moves from wickedness and grief toward grace. The Flood account is not merely about the reach of corruption. It is also about the God who preserves, warns, judges and shows grace.

That gospel-shaped movement keeps the sermon from ending in fear. The final answer to rebellion is not secret knowledge. It is the saving work of God.

37. The Greater Question Is Not "Who Came Down?" but "Who Is Jesus?"

Ancient tradition asks what heavenly beings came down and what happened when they crossed a forbidden boundary. The Gospel eventually asks a more important question: "Whom say ye that I am?"

That shift is the pastoral destination of the entire study. A listener can know every Enochic name and still miss Christ. A person can debate the geography of Hermon and still fail to confess the Son of the living God.

The church is not saved by correctly reconstructing the Watcher tradition. We are saved through Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, was buried and rose again.

38. Final Commentary Conclusion

The ancient Jewish literature surrounding Genesis 6 is too important historically to dismiss and too secondary doctrinally to govern Christian belief. 1 Enoch explicitly places the Watchers and their oath on Mount Hermon. Jubilees, the Book of Giants and the Damascus Document preserve related traditions that confirm the existence of a broad Watcher-and-giant interpretive world while also showing meaningful variation.

Scripture confirms some major themes: heavenly beings can rebel, sinful angels face judgment, the days of Noah were marked by profound corruption and Jude directly uses Enochic material. Scripture also places firm limits around what may be proclaimed as Biblical fact. Genesis never names Hermon in connection with the sons of God. The Bible never gives the Enochic number, names or detailed catalogue of forbidden teachings. It never plainly teaches that demons are the surviving spirits of dead Nephilim.

Mount Hermon itself belongs to the Creator. Scripture remembers its geography, its connection with the northern region and Baal-Hermon, but also says that Hermon rejoices in God's name and uses its dew as an image of blessing. Near this same great northern landscape, Jesus asks the question that ultimately matters: "But whom say ye that I am?"

The Christian may read ancient books, examine inscriptions, study archaeology and ask difficult questions without fear. But when all the witnesses have spoken, the Father's command remains controlling: "hear ye him." The disciples lift their eyes and see "Jesus only."

39. Principal Biblical Texts for Teaching and Further Study

- Genesis 6:1–8 - sons of God, daughters of men, giants, expanding wickedness, judgment and Noah finding grace.
- Deuteronomy 3:8–13 - Hermon, Sirion, Shenir, Bashan, Og and the Rephaim.
- Judges 3:3; 1 Chronicles 5:23 - the Biblical designation Baal-Hermon.
- Psalm 42:6; 89:12; 133:3 - Hermon remembered in worship, creation and blessing.
- Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 - the Biblical use of the term "watcher," distinct from Genesis 6 terminology.
- Matthew 16:13–20 - Caesarea Philippi, Peter's confession and the promise that Christ will build His church.
- Matthew 17:1–8 - the unnamed high mountain, the Transfiguration, the Father's command and "Jesus only."
- Jude 6, 14–15 - angels leaving their habitation, judgment and the Enoch prophecy.
- 2 Peter 2:4–9 - angels that sinned, Noah, judgment and God's ability to deliver the godly.
- 1 Peter 3:18–20 - the difficult "spirits in prison" passage, included as a possible point of contact rather than a settled proof-text.

40. Principal Ancient and Historical Sources

- 1 Enoch 1–36, especially 1 Enoch 6–16 - the Book of the Watchers and the explicit Hermon descent/oath tradition.
- Jubilees, especially chapters 4–5, 7 and 10 - a related but not identical Watcher tradition and later evil-spirit material.
- The Book of Giants fragments from Qumran - fragmentary Second Temple development of the giant tradition.
- The Damascus Document, especially the Watcher warning around CD II:17–21 - moral use of the Watcher tradition.
- British Museum collection object 1903,0422.1 - later Mount Hermon/Baal-Hermon inscription associated with a required oath for temple entry.
- Qumran Enoch manuscripts, including 4Q201 and 4Q202 - physical evidence that Enochic literature circulated in Second Temple Judaism.
- Israel Antiquities Authority Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library - manuscript records used to identify the Qumran witnesses.
- Loren T. Stuckenbruck, The Book of Giants from Qumran - standard scholarly treatment of the Book of Giants fragments.

41. Final Pastoral Summary

The congregation should leave this study with two convictions held together. First, ancient literature can be worth reading. It can illuminate how earlier readers understood difficult passages, preserve traditions and help us hear the cultural world surrounding Scripture. Second, usefulness is not authority. The Bible remains the standard that tells the church what it may proclaim as the Word of God.

The practical rule is simple: say what the Bible says. Say what Enoch says. Say what Jubilees says. Say what archaeology shows. Do not blur the labels. Where the evidence is strong, speak confidently. Where it is possible, say possible. Where Scripture is silent, do not make later tradition speak in Scripture's voice.

And after every ancient witness has been heard, return to the voice from the mountain: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Then lift your eyes with the disciples and see "Jesus only." That is where this study is meant to end.