

Use of Apocryphal Writings

The Letter of Jude draws on Jewish writings that are not considered to be canonical Scripture by either Jews or Christians.

- Jude alludes to a story found in *1 Enoch*, according to which the angels that mated with earth women to produce a race of giants (reported in Gen. 6:1–4) were imprisoned by God for the day of judgment (v. 6; cf. *1 Enoch* 6–8).
- Jude quotes from *1 Enoch* in a way that indicates he regards the book's prophecies as reliable and true (vv. 14–15; cf. *1 Enoch* 1:9).
- Jude refers to a story in which the archangel Michael had a dispute with the devil over who should take possession of the body of Moses (v. 9).

The book of *1 Enoch* is an apocalyptic Jewish writing from the third century BCE; its contents may also be assumed by 1 Peter 3:18–20. The tale about the body of Moses is not recorded in any literature available to us, but Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) and a number of other early Christian scholars maintain that it was reported in a Jewish work called the *Assumption of Moses*, which was extant in their day. Most contemporary scholars think that this writing was probably part of a Jewish work known to us as the *Testament of Moses*; our manuscripts of the latter work are incomplete, and the story to which Jude refers may have been contained in the portion that is missing.

Neither *1 Enoch* nor the *Assumption of Moses* belongs to the Old Testament, nor are they part of the collection of books that Protestants call the Apocrypha, some of which are regarded as a secondary canon by Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians. Today, Jude's reliance on these books usually is viewed as a curious holdover from a time when the concept of canon was still in flux.