



The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature, Revised Edition

Archie T. Wright

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How do we account for the explosion of demonic activity in the New Testament? Archie T. Wright's work traces the development of the concept of evil spirits from the Hebrew Bible through postbiblical Jewish literature. Wright is concerned with the reception history of Genesis 6:1-4 (the source of the "Watchers" traditions) in early Enochic and Philonic Judaism during the Second Temple Period. He suggests that the nonspecificity inherent in the biblical text of Genesis 6:1-4 opened the basis for the later emergence of an etiology of evil spirits as Jewish authors engaged with the text. As a result, Genesis 6:1-4 played an important part in the development of demonology in Second Temple Judaism. Chapters examine 1 Enoch 1-36 (the Book of the Watchers) and the reception of the Watchers tradition in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Philo of Alexandria and draw conclusions about the background of the New Testament conceptions of demons and demon possession.

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