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ABRAHAM'S UNCIRCUMCISED CHILDREN:  
THE ENOCHIC PRECEDENT FOR PAUL'S PARADOXICAL CLAIM IN

*GALATIANS 3:29*

by

Amy Genevive Dibley

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Joint Doctor of Philosophy

with Graduate Theological Union

in

Near Eastern Religions

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California at Berkeley

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Fall 2013



ABSTRACT

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Professor LeAnn Snow Flesher, Chair

This study proposes the *Book of Dreams* as the precedent for Paul's program of gentile reclamation *qua* gentiles predating the composition of the Epistles by two centuries.

## Dedication

To my husband Peter, for whom the words *loving* and *supportive* and *partnership* hardly begin to encompass the richness of our journey together through this process.

For our girls, Langsea and Lucia (5 and 4 years old as I submit this), who when playing “mommy” pause from dressing and feeding baby dolls to write their own dissertations.

In thanks to the women of First Covenant Church in Rockford, Illinois and Kerry Staurseth (Langsea’s godmother) who watched those most precious to me so that this first child could at last be born, proving that it also takes a village to write a dissertation.

To my most excellent committee whose genius and insight is evident at every turn in this project.

And for the Apostle Paul, who when all the Pauline scholars gather for coffee in the world to come, will no doubt be amazed at the industry his letters spawned.

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## INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the New Perspective in the aftermath of World War II, the traditional, 'Lutheran' reading of Paul, which set the Apostle in opposition to his Jewish tradition as a convert to Christianity, has been assailed from all sides. The longstanding portrayal of Paul as a reformer in the image of Martin Luther was seriously challenged by Krister Stendahl in 1976. Stendahl countered that the evidence of the Epistles suggests that Paul understood himself not as a *convert* from Judaism but a Jew prophetically *called* to proclaim the gospel among the gentiles. The following year E. P. Sanders disputed the correlating association of *first century Judaism* with *sixteenth-century Catholicism*; an association which had cast Judaism as the legalistic dark foil against the liberating light of Pauline theology. Much New Perspective scholarship has subsequently focused on diminishing the historic antithesis between Paul and Judaism in an effort to repatriate Paul as a Jew; albeit a Jew at the far margins of his society, a cultural critic in an intramural Jewish debate concerning inclusivity.

The premise that Paul stood in opposition to his tradition, either in whole or in part, as convert or critic, is rooted in the long standing interpretive convention that Paul's *metanoia* regarding Christ resulted in a radical paradigm shift. While the subject of Paul's *metanoia* has been rigorously debated (the 'Lutheran' interpretation holding that Paul changed his mind about the efficacy of Judaism; the New Perspective that he reversed himself only on the subject of gentiles) Paul is nevertheless presumed in both readings to have been on the inventive vanguard of a new movement.

Paul's signature contribution to the Christian movement was his instance that gentile converts *remain gentiles* – i.e. that they remain uncircumcised. However, as will be discussed at length in the chapters below, one could hardly exaggerate the significance of circumcision for the religious and cultural identity of Jews in the first century. Yet, even after the confusion in Galatia, the Pharisaically trained Paul never wrote a manifesto ensuring this new vision of humanity was properly laid forth and cogently argued for the far-flung churches vulnerable to the influence of the pro-convert-circumcision fraction within the early Church.

More bewildering still is Paul's exasperated, panicked tone in *Galatians* if, as it is routinely assumed, his argument that the converts should remain gentiles was truly an innovation. Clearly the Galatians understood themselves to have converted to Judaism, hence their desire to complete their conversion by being circumcised. Rebuking them for having been so easily persuaded by the visitors from Jerusalem, Paul warns the converts in no uncertain terms that if they should submit to being circumcised Christ would mean nothing to them, only at the pinnacle of his argument to claim that the converts were already the *children of Abraham sans* circumcision by virtue of their baptism in Christ (Gal 3:27-29). Where, one wonders, was pastoral empathy for the converts' confusion; the teacher's heart for those introduced to an entirely new way of being? Paul showed considerably more patience and understanding for the Corinthians' denial of the bodily resurrection than he did for the Galatians' understandable desire to be circumcised.

I am not arguing by this that a first century Jew like Paul could not have conceived of a need to reshape aspects of his culture and work toward that end, rather I am contending that Paul's literary output – particularly addressing a long standing, emotionally compelling, ground signifier of his culture – would seem not to indicate such a design on his part. Paul's discussion of convert circumcision simply does not read like a man presenting an epiphany but as a tenet of a long established eschatology; so familiar as to not have occur to Paul as needing explication, yet so central as to cause him to have been deeply troubled by the Galatian converts' inadvertent transgression.

Amidst the ever increasing numbers of studies of the Pauline Epistles asserting that the early Christian movement could not have been conceived by its founders as a challenge to Judaism, I offer this one; evidence that reclamation of the gentiles *qua* gentiles as a the precursor to the final judgment predated the composition of the Epistles by two centuries.

This study proposes that, as the prophetic apologia begun to fissure under the historic strain of centuries of gentile dominion, a cohort of religious theorists attempted a series of supplemental explanations accounting for Israel's political misfortune in an effort to buttress the prophetic *Weltanschauung*. The author of the *Book of the Watchers* proposed that peace on the terrestrial plane was thwarted by a malevolent angelic influence in the created order; a situation which would be righted at the final judgment. The author of *Daniel* contended that the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, which had set the period of Israel's punishment at 70 years, had been misunderstood and was, in fact, meant to be interpreted as *weeks of years*; an allotment of time through which the righteous were called to endure in faith before they would be redeemed. The author of the *Book of Dreams*, for his part, took a different look at the enemy. In answer to the question as to why the one, true and just God continued to suffer the unchecked existence of gentiles beyond the designated period of Israel's chastisement, he theorized that the gentiles must have value to God beyond their use as tools in the discipline of Israel or as witnesses to Israel's eschatological redemption as outlined in the prophets. He further theorized that God must intend some future transformative work that would redeem 'gentileness' as a category of being thereby justifying the history of the Second Temple period. Around this reevaluation of the antithetical other formed a school which actively expected the eschatological reclamation of a contingent of gentiles. It was this school that recognized in the resurrection of Jesus the means by which gentiles might be transformed into righteous beings yet remain paradoxically *gentile* though the resignification of baptism. Thus, far from inventing a theology of gentile inclusion, Paul was merely applying an eschatology which up that point had been only a theory.

What follows is a reading of Paul's mission of gentile inclusion *qua* gentiles, not as a cultural innovation, but as a predictable outcome of a theological adjustment already long underway; the product of a conservative series of midrashic half steps aimed at the preservation of the prophetic schema not its overthrow. As in a musical circle of fifths, Paul's theory of gentile inclusion seems to occupy the place of the tritone, farthest from its prophetic center, disquieting and on the verge of breaking off into another key. Yet, when heard in the framework of the tonal harmony, it reveals itself as a logical

progression of the modulation which longs only to resolve itself in the tonic of first century Judaism.

I take as my case study one of Paul's most paradoxical assertions *Galatians 3:29*, his claim that the *uncircumcised* gentile converts in Galatia, by virtue of their baptism, were nonetheless the *children of Abraham*.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Method: Rhetorical Criticism and the Pauline Epistles

The world certainly does not lack for opinions and treatises on the Pauline Epistles. The scope and range of approaches in the last century alone is staggering. As in no other field of biblical analysis, it is essential to locate a study of Paul within the fray, to identify a trajectory of inquiry, in hopes of finding a sturdy perch from which to survey the field and evaluate the evidence.

Whatever else may be claimed about the letters of Paul, they are clearly *arguments*. They are efforts to persuade his audiences of a point of view, dissuade them from a course of action, commend them to some nobility and so forth. Accordingly, rhetorical criticism – the study of persuasion in biblical texts – would seem a particularly promising methodology for a proposed study of Paul. The last thirty years have witnessed a revival of interest in rhetoric as an interpretive tool for biblical criticism. Early theorists and practitioners of the methodology imagined rhetorical criticism might yield a level of precision in Pauline studies heretofore only dreamed of.

As it has emerged within the field of biblical criticism, *rhetorical criticism* attempts to determine the persuasive effect a text had on its original audience, or alternatively, the persuasive effect the author *wished* the text to have on an intended audience. Unlike source, form, or redaction critics who read the text for seams indicating differing source material or editorial hands, the rhetorical critic approaches the texts as a unified, interrelated whole. Like source and form criticism, however, the interest of rhetorical critics has tended to be historical, as it concerns itself with the ‘original meaning’ of the author and the perception of the author’s argument by the original audience.

The following chapter is a brief sketch of what failed, what succeeded and what an appreciation of the rhetorical dimensions of the Epistles might still yield in its ability to reframe how scholars view these fragments of a discourse which took place nearly two millennia ago.

#### CLASSICAL RHETORIC AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES

##### *The Resurgence of Interest in Rhetoric as a Tool for Pauline Studies*

James Muilenburg, in his 1968 presidential address to *The Society of Biblical Literature*, called for biblical criticism to move beyond form criticism through rhetorical criticism.<sup>1</sup> While acknowledging the vast contribution form criticism had made to the field, he noted the inherent weaknesses of the methodology, namely in its need to generalize due to its interest in genre, as well as its resistance to biographical/psychological aspects of interpretation and historical commentary. Form criticism, he contended, had taken the biblical studies as far as could be expected. Muilenburg theorized that a rhetorical critical approach, with its recognition and appreciation of the stylistic, unique aspects of a text as it employs and modifies a genre, held the potential to further unlock authorial intent. “For the more deeply one penetrates the formulations as they have been transmitted to us, the more sensitive he is to the rôles which words and motifs play in a composition; the more he concentrates on the ways in which thought has been woven into linguistic patterns, the better able he is to think the thoughts of the biblical writer after him.”<sup>2</sup>

Muilenburg’s challenge was first picked up in Pauline studies by Hans Dieter Betz in his 1975 article and later in 1979 in his commentary on *Galatians*.<sup>3</sup> Betz argued that Paul’s letter to the Galatians was written in the style of a *judicial apology*, and therefore could be analyzed according to categories of classical Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography theory.<sup>4</sup> Since its publication his findings have been vigorously challenged and alternatively defended.<sup>5</sup> In this ground breaking study, however, Betz failed to outline a methodology for his rhetorical approach. It was the classicist, George Kennedy, who in 1984 first proposed a methodology based on classic rhetorical theory

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<sup>1</sup> James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 1-18. Duane F. Watson elaborates, “It is usually granted that the historical-critical methodologies used to construct the historical situation of the Pauline Epistles are inadequate. Typically the historical situation has been derived from the content of the Epistles themselves, with help from what is known of the historical, cultural and social settings of the audiences addressed (mirror-reading)... It is the thesis of this essay that Greco-Roman rhetorical theory provides further insight into the historical situation of a Pauline Epistle.” in “The Contributions and Limitations of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Theory for Constructing the Rhetorical and Historical Situations of a Pauline Epistle,” in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the Malibu Conference, Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (ed. Dennis L. Stamps; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 125.

<sup>2</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 7.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, “Literary Composition and the Function of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *New Testament Studies* 21 (1975): 353-79 and *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Betz writes, “The apologetic letter, such as Galatians, presupposes the real or fictitious situation of the court of law, with jury, accuser, and defendant. In the case of Galatians, the addressees are identical with the jury, with Paul being the defendant, and his opponents the accusers. This situation makes Paul’s Galatian letter a self-apology, delivered not in person but in a written form.” in *Galatians*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Critics of Betz include R. Dean Anderson in *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. (1998); David Aune in “Review of H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*.” (1979); George Kennedy in *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*.(1984); Richard Longenecker in *Galatians*. WBC (1990); Stanley E. Porter in “The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Literature.” (1992) and “Paul as Epistolographer and Rhetorician?” (1999). Bernard H. Brinsmead adopted Betz’ interpretation in *Galatians: Dialogical Response to Opponents*. (1982) as did James D. Hester with some modifications in “The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians 1:11-2:14.” (1984).

for biblical rhetorical criticism in *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*.

Kennedy's methodology employing the categories of classical rhetoric was straight forward: determine rhetorical unit, define situation, determine the stasis (the main question at issue) and the species of rhetoric (deliberative, epideictic, judicial/forensic), analyze the invention, arrangement and style, and finally, evaluate rhetorical effectiveness of the unit in meeting the exigence. The neatness of the scheme, however, concealed what turned out to be the complicated, if not problematic, nature of applying Greco-Roman rhetoric to the work of the Jewish authors of the New Testament. The results of studies attempting to align Paul's letters with the categories of ancient rhetoric have varied widely. The Pauline Epistles have proved malleable, able to be made to correspond with different classical species in whole or in part.<sup>6</sup>

Studies utilizing Kennedy's rhetorical critical methodology have met with mixed results. "A survey of the rhetorical outlines of Paul's letters reveals virtually no two analyses the same, even by those who have worked together in the common task of doing such analyses."<sup>7</sup> This is complicated by the fact that there is no consensus among rhetorical critics as to which handbooks and treatises should be used in rhetorical analysis, "sometimes Roman and sometimes Greek categories are used, in most instances there being a mix of the two."<sup>8</sup> This has resulted in an "instability of rhetoric's technical terminology."<sup>9</sup> Terminology aside, there are portions of Paul's letters that seem to defy categorization according to classical categories all together. Betz, who adopted Quintilian's terminology for his rhetorical analysis of Galatians, commented that the third and fourth chapter, *the central third of the letter*, was "[a]dmittedly... extremely difficult."<sup>10</sup> In the end such studies have failed to offer insights into Paul's reasoning that greatly clarify his meaning.

## NEW RHETORIC

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<sup>6</sup> For example Mark Surburg compares the findings of Betz and Ben Witherington on the rhetorical structure of Galatians, "The similarity between Witherington's analysis of 1:1-4:31 and that of Betz is striking, especially in light of the fact that the two scholars identify Galatians by means of a different rhetorical species. Witherington notes this fact and comments: "This makes clear that one can agree with Betz on much of the rhetorical structure of Galatians without being in agreement on the rhetorical species of a discourse." This conflicts with both Hall and Smit (see below) who assume that deliberative rhetoric will follow a different *disposition* than forensic rhetoric."

Mark P. Surburg, "Ancient Rhetorical Criticism, Galatians, and Paul at Twenty-five Years," *Concordia Journal* 30 (2004): 26.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, "Paul as Epistolographer and Rhetorician?" 230.

<sup>8</sup> Porter goes on to say, "Since no clear set of categories appears to have been found, it is difficult to know how they can in any way be equated with the rather more straightforward categories of epistolary analysis. The only set of categories that seems to be consistently applied is that of Aristotle. Although it is plausible that Paul could have known and used the categories of Aristotelian rhetoric, there is little if any evidence that he did, and very few Aristotelian readings of Pauline letters have been advanced. The relative simplicity of the categories has not resulted in the analyses proving to be the most penetrating." Ibid., 231.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm Heath, "Invention," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330 B.C.-A.D. 400*, (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 89-120, 111.

<sup>10</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 129.

Increasingly, studies employing a rhetorical critical approach have combined a study of ancient rhetoric with what has come to be termed “New Rhetoric” taken from the title of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s 1958 treatise, *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité de l’ Argumentation*. Unlike classical rhetoric, the New Rhetoric did not restrict itself to oral discourse, nor did it concern itself with issues of delivery. Rather, Perelman cast a wide net encompassing all forms of persuasion, including literary argumentation; however, *La Nouvelle Rhétorique* was a philosophical exploration of argumentation, not a guide to rhetoric ancient or modern, let alone a methodology for biblical criticism. In the 1990’s, New Rhetoric came into vogue in Pauline studies, providing critics with a theoretical approach to rhetoric employing a modern, precise “meta-language”<sup>11</sup> to describe the persuasive strategies of a given text. “A pure ‘new rhetoric’ approach, however, has been unusual in biblical studies.”<sup>12</sup> Rather, studies such as that of Antoinette Wire,<sup>13</sup> Burton L. Mack,<sup>14</sup> and Vernon Robbins,<sup>15</sup> to name but three, have made use of rhetorical theory *new* and *old*, often coupled with other disciplines in ever broader projects.

### *The Project of New Rhetoric*

A year after Muilenburg’s 1968 address to *The Society of Biblical Literature* that revived interest in rhetoric among biblical scholars, C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca’s seminal 1958 work *La Nouvelle rhétorique* was translated into English.<sup>16</sup> Unlike classic rhetoric, the New Rhetoric did not restrict itself to oral discourse, nor did it concern itself with issues of delivery and memory, but rather it took as its purview all acts of persuasion spoken or written.<sup>17</sup> Though the English dissemination of *La Nouvelle rhétorique* did provide biblical critics with a more modern, precise “meta-language”<sup>18</sup> to describe the rhetorical strategies evidenced in the New Testament, *New Rhetoric* was not composed “as a guide to rhetorical or literary criticism, whether ancient or modern. It is, rather, a philosophical work on argumentation; its structure, premises, and techniques.”<sup>19</sup>

Perelman wanted to investigate the role value judgments played in the concept of justice; how people reason about, justify, and attempt to persuade others without appealing to formal logic on one hand or violence on the other. His exploration of the

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<sup>11</sup> Anders Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* (Coniectanea Biblical New Testament Series 29; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998), 21.

<sup>12</sup> R. Dean Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. (Bondgenotenlaan: Peeters, 1998), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Wire, Antoinette Clark. *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul’s Rhetoric*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Mack, Burton L. *Rhetoric and the New Testament*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> Robbins, Vernon K. *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Chaim Perelman, and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver; Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1969). Studies of the Pauline corpus utilizing New Rhetoric became prevalent in the 1990’s.

<sup>17</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 23.

“realm of rhetoric” was a pointed exploration of what he termed the “irrational.”<sup>20</sup> Unlike the rhetoric described in the handbooks drawn from the rhetorical masters to better advise their readers on successful strategies, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *New Rhetoric* was more akin to Aristotle’s project in its interest in the phenomenon of rhetoric; *common* rhetoric.<sup>21</sup> They attempted to describe not particular, ideal methods of persuasion, but the various and practical methods people use “to create or increase to the adherence of minds to the theses presented for their assent.”<sup>22</sup> They largely rejected the “ancient and persistent divisions of inventional strategies that conceive of rhetoric as directing itself to various and distinct ‘faculties’ of the individual (will, mind, emotion). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca insist on approaching rhetoric as an appeal to the whole person.”<sup>23</sup>

By expanding their inquiry to include the examination of texts, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca legitimized biblical critics’ use of rhetoric, albeit *new* rhetoric. Their categorization of all human discourse as ‘persuasive’ relaxed the borders of classical rhetoric, alleviating the need for protracted speculation as to the rhetorical training of the New Testament authors and associated justifications.<sup>24</sup> *New Rhetoric*, however, was not *old* rhetoric – classical rhetoric which, if it did not exactly *form* the New Testament world, certainly *shared* the world with it.

The application of *New Rhetoric* required the assent to the philosophic premise that rhetoric is not only a universal *phenomenon* but can be described in universal *categories*. This idea was a rearticulation of Aristotle’s premise in *The Art of Rhetoric* and, while the premise itself can claim antiquity, its occidental pedigree is cause for some caution. For the project of biblical exegesis *New Rhetoric* in the end is an inescapably modern, western typology applied to ancient Jewish texts.

*New Rhetoric* has had extensive influence in biblical rhetorical criticism, but due to its philosophical nature, sweeping review of literature, general lack of interest in biblical texts and sheer size, *New Rhetoric* has been difficult for biblical scholars to distill into ready exegetical application. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca did not offer a rhetorical methodology but an extensive typology of persuasive argument; an analysis of rhetorical strategy and its effectiveness. *New Rhetoric* is, therefore, summarized and often quoted, but used primarily as a reference tool by biblical scholars.

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<sup>20</sup> J. David Hester Amador, *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction to a Rhetoric of Power* (JSNT 174; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1999), 61-62.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. (W. Rhys Roberts, *The Works of Aristotle*).

<sup>22</sup> Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 45.

<sup>23</sup> Amador, *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*, 65.

<sup>24</sup> For discussion see; Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*; Malcolm Heath, “Invention,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330 B.C.-A.D. 400*, (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997); Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa: Vom vi Jahrhundert vor Christus in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchesellschaft, 1958); Stanley E. Porter, “Paul as Epistolographer and Rhetorician?” in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference, Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (ed. Dennis L. Stamps; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).



## THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE IN RHETORICAL THEORY

While there is a general consensus that the Pauline letters are arguments and a growing consensus that the rhetorical dimension of the letters must be appreciated in any interpretative venture, at present there is no consensus regarding a methodological use of rhetoric in the exegesis of the Epistles. However, all rhetorical approaches, ancient to modern, have in common the recognition that the *audience* is critical both for the rhetor in composition and critic in analysis of the rhetor. Whatever else may come under the purview of ‘rhetorical analysis,’ in the end *rhetoric* is the relationship of an orator to an audience – a relationship which by the very nature of its persuasive aim constrains the discourse, limiting and shaping a rhetor’s argument. This became a key concept for interpreters of Paul; if Paul’s audience could be identified, the constraints they laid on his rhetoric uncovered, perhaps the anomalies of Paul’s arguments could be explained in terms of his effort to persuade particular groups of people.

In ancient Greece, a rhetor’s audience typically consisted of his peers, gathered in a public forum for discussions of politics or law. These audiences were largely homogenous drawn from the city’s citizenry, who like the rhetor himself were male, of some means, were over twenty years old, having completed military training and possessed of Greek ancestry. Classical rhetorical theory developed its descriptive models based on these rather specific occasions. And while a rhetor’s task was simplified in speaking to men like himself, the rhetorical handbooks stress repeatedly the importance of the rhetor gauging his audience and crafting his argument accordingly.

New Rhetoric broadened the concept of *audience* to include any party an individual desires to persuade on any occasion. The beliefs and values of an audience exert a force, shaping the possibilities of acceptable speech a rhetor can offer in a given exigence. Accordingly, the strategy a successful rhetor pursues is necessarily limited by what is deemed to be the most effective strategy for persuading *this* audience. Rhetoric is then an appeal to the rational, universal entity the audience *believes* itself to be in terms that audience finds acceptable.

Perelman understood the phenomenon of persuasion to necessitate a “contact between minds” in the free market place of ideas.<sup>25</sup> It implied a discourse of respect: respect of the rhetor to the audience in her speaking and the audience to the rhetor in their willingness to listen. He maintained, “we must not forget that by listening to someone we display a willingness to eventually accept his point of view.”<sup>26</sup> This theory of the necessity of a ‘contact between minds’ placed the audience in a position of relative power in their ability to give the rhetor a hearing and ultimately to accept or reject the rhetor’s argument. It is the rhetor, in approaching an audience, who must take care to know the lay of the land and construct her line of argumentation accordingly. In this adaptation,

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<sup>25</sup> Chaim Perelman, *The Realm of Rhetoric* (trans. William Kluback; London: Notre Dame, 1982), 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca understood the *rhetor to become a construct of the audience*.<sup>27</sup>

In argumentation, the important thing is not knowing what the speaker regards as true or important, but knowing the views of those he is addressing... The great orator, the one with a hold on his listeners, seems animated by the very mind of his audience. This is not the case for the ardent enthusiast whose sole concern is with what he himself considers important. A speaker of this kind may have some effect on suggestible persons, but generally speaking his speech will strike his audience as unreasonable.<sup>28</sup>

In constructing a persuasive argument, a rhetor “presumes to gain the adherence of every rational being... Every person believes in a set of facts, of truths, which he thinks must be accepted by every ‘normal’ person, because they are valid for every rational being.”<sup>29</sup> These ‘rational beings’ form a rhetor’s audience for whom the argument is then tailored. This seeming tyranny of the audience is tempered only by the role the rhetor’s objective plays in shaping the argument. *New Rhetoric* acknowledges that an argument is crafted first in the mind of the rhetor, who both sees and takes the opportunity to speak. The structure and style of the argument is determined by the rhetor’s perception of the audience she is attempting to persuade. In this the rhetor reclaims a modicum of influence; however, the success of the rhetor is determined finally by the audience in their acceptance or rejection of the argument. While checked by the rhetor’s objective, the controlling force in New Rhetorical theory is ultimately retained by the audience for a rhetor who misreads her real audience will be dismissed by them as irrational and so fail her task to persuade them.

This question of the relationship of rhetor to audience was rigorously debated by scholars in the field of rhetoric in the 1960’s and 70’s. Lloyd Bitzer wrote his seminal article “The Rhetorical Situation” in 1966 from which all discussions on the question take their cue and begin their dispute. In it he argued that rhetorical discourse is tied to the rhetorical situation, or exigence, as an answer is tied to a question, as a solution is tied to a problem.<sup>30</sup> Rhetorical discourse is called into existence as a response to exigence. The situation is ‘rhetorical’ in that it invites a fitting response capable of addressing the exigence.<sup>31</sup> The audience gives the rhetor’s speech meaning and significance by accepting the speech as a response to the exigence. Bitzer, like Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, understood the situation to constrain the possibilities of response available to a rhetor.

Arthur Miller responded to Bitzer in his article “Rhetorical Exigence” published in 1972. Miller nuanced Bitzer’s theory in contending that “within the limits specified by each exigence, the ultimate or perceived nature of the exigence depends upon the constraints of the perceiver. Thus, the ultimate character of an exigence is a conclusion in the mind of its perceiver.”<sup>32</sup> The goal of the rhetor was to know her own constraints

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<sup>27</sup> Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 19-23.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur B. Miller, “Rhetorical Exigence,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. 5 (1972): 111-12.

and discover the constraints of her audience and, by creative invention, bring them into agreement.

It seems clear enough that one primary way to assess the excellence of a rhetor is to determine whether he was successful in bringing his and the hearers' constraints into agreement. To make this evaluation, the critic needs to determine the constraints of both the speaker and the hearers. But the critic should recognize that he also has constraints, and that he will see through them to the exigence that invited the rhetor to speak and the hearer to listen.<sup>33</sup>

Richard Vatz turned Bitzer's theory entirely around in his 1973 article "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation." As the title implies, Vatz argued that the *situation* does not control the rhetorical *response* but the *response* controls the *situation*. He contended that "meaning is not intrinsic in events" or situations as Bitzer had claimed.<sup>34</sup> The choice involved in any act of communication regarding what information to present and how it is presented reveals that "meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by the rhetor."<sup>35</sup> Therefore a theory proposing to elucidate the relationship between a situation and rhetoric must account for the depiction of the situation by the rhetor.

The essential question to be addressed is: What is the relationship between rhetoric and situations? It will not be surprising that I take the converse position of each of Bitzer's major statements regarding this relationship. For example: I would not say "rhetoric is situational," but situations are rhetorical; not "... exigence strongly invites utterance," but utterance strongly invites exigence; not "the situation controls the rhetorical response..." but the rhetoric controls the situational response; not "... rhetorical discourse... does obtain its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it," but situations obtain their character from the rhetoric which surrounds them or creates them.<sup>36</sup>

However, Bitzer, Miller and Vatz stake out the theoretical territory of the relation of a *known* audience to a *known* rhetor. Because the audience of the New Testament authors was not that assumed in classical rhetorical theory, biblical rhetorical critics are forced to reconstruct the author's intended audience, taking clues from the argument itself guided by one of the above outlined theories. This reconstruction is crucial. Without it, according to rhetorical theory, the parameters of the argument cannot be established. With different emphases to be sure, this has been the goal of biblical rhetorical critics, to establish the identity of the audience and so the constraints operating in the argument, thereby limiting the field of possible interpretation.

Paul's audience in *1 Corinthians* was the focus of Antoinette Wire's book *The Corinthian Women Prophets* in what is perhaps one of the purer experiments of New Rhetorical theory in New Testament studies. Her interest lay specifically in reconstructing the identity and lives of the first century prophetesses within the early Church which Paul both speaks about and addresses directly at various points in his correspondence and for which his letter is the sole source of information. Given Paul's persuasive objective in writing *1 Corinthians*, Wire theorized it was possible, according

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>34</sup> Richard E. Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6 (1973): 156.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 159.

to New Rhetorical theory, to reverse engineer the convictions and concerns of the Corinthians from Paul's rhetoric, or, at the very least, the convictions and concerns of the Corinthians as Paul perceived them. Her study hinged on the premise that, "[i]n no detail can a persuader afford to ignore those who are to be persuaded. Because everything spoken must be shaped for them, the measure of the audience as the speaker knows it can be read in the arguments that are chosen."<sup>37</sup> Thus, she reasoned, in so much as Paul depicted the prophetesses at all, his rhetorical agenda required he do so accurately. Theoretically, then, if one believes the author one is analyzing to be a competent rhetor, rhetorical-criticism as a methodology holds out the tantalizing prospect of interpretive precision.<sup>38</sup>

It is certainly no stretch to believe that Paul would have attempted to tailor his rhetoric to the Corinthian exigence as closely as possible in order to meet with success. Nor can one doubt that an accurate reflection of the Corinthians women prophets can be seen in aspects of Paul's rhetoric. However, these are statements of faith, beyond independent verification (with the sources currently available to scholars at any rate). Brilliantly intriguing as it is, Wire's reading in the end – as is all rhetorical analysis of the Pauline Epistles – is an inescapably circular endeavor. Past being addressed to various prominent cities and Paul's identification of his addressees as *converts*, the Epistles offer few clues that are not drawn from a mirror reading of elements of the letters.<sup>39</sup> The "precision" of rhetorical analysis, as Wire terms it, in the end is illusive.<sup>40</sup>

### *Real and Intended Audiences*

All rhetorical theorists/critics are in agreement on the importance of the audience *as perceived by the rhetor* in interpreting a rhetor's persuasive intent. Paul certainly was addressing real, historical audiences in which there existed real exigences that urgently called forth and constrained his response. No doubt, as Miller would have it, Paul's perception of the various exigences and his responses exerted their own constraints on the historical situation. Yet there is an aspect of this equation that seems to have escaped comment as to whether it is possible to *know* an audience to the degree the rhetorical theory postulates.

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<sup>37</sup> Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> "...an argumentative text does not give only one side of the argument – unless the speaker is completely incompetent – because to argue is to gauge your audience as accurately as you can at every point, to use their language, to work from where they are in order to move them toward where you want them to be. So what we have is not just one individual's viewpoint but a window into a volatile situation, volatile yet not amorphous because certain points of agreement are clear in premises taken and authorities cited..." Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> See; John Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case." *JSNT* 31 (1987):73-93.

<sup>40</sup> "The precision of the new rhetoric comes from its axiom that all arguments serve the function of persuasion. In no detail can a persuader afford to ignore those who are being persuaded. Because everything spoken must be shaped for them, the measure of the audience as the speaker knows it can be read in the arguments that are chosen."

Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 3.

On the surface it would seem an irrelevant line of inquiry, as rhetorical theory does not offer a prescribed level of familiarity with an audience but merely makes the rather obvious point that the more a rhetor is aware of the constraints operating on the audience she wishes to persuade the better chance of success she enjoys simply by being able to avoid inadvertently offending them in some manner and so causing them to dismiss her argument. The question above, however, is asked after the *praxis* of ‘knowing’ an audience. Is it possible in practice to know, and therefore address, a real audience of more than one individual of nominal acquaintance? Is there a sense in which the appeal to New Rhetoric’s “universal audience” is in reality an appeal to the *universal self*?

I began pondering this point, whether it is possible to speak to a “universal audience,” over the course of my first years teaching at a private university. My courses averaged forty students, eighty to ninety percent of which were the same age, same ethnicity, sharing equivalent educational backgrounds and similar socio-economic status. They are, for all intents and purposes, a homogenous audience. In addition, I as their instructor shared much in common with them culturally and religiously. The classes were a manageable size, I learned the students' names, I spoke with them after class, I read their papers myself. In effect, they were “known” to me. And yet, while I spent three intensive hours with them every week for a semester, I found that in the course of a lecture, I periodically assumed that they had understood something they had not. After realizing I had reached such an impasse, I had to retrace my steps, finding new ways to articulate what I was so sure was clear the first time. I began to realize in these moments that though my (mostly) bright, eager students sat physically before me taking copious notes, I have been, in fact, talking to myself. In fact, this depiction is itself too neat. It was a rare moment in which my nearly homogenous, similarly educated, relatively small audience were all on the same page. With an audience of one, as measured subjectively in the type of clarification questions I was asked, my persuasive effort found faster results. For every student added to the discussion, however, I had to increasingly rely on an ever more cobbled impression of them as an audience. At work was a law of diminishing returns. For the sake of coherence in a lecture to forty such students, my cobbled impression takes the form of *the interlocutor I wish them to be*, i.e. an audience persuaded by the argument I am making.

As I ponder Paul the rhetor, Paul the teacher, turning his letters over and over again, the advantage of my situation described above over his as represented in the Epistles is manifest. Watching an audience react to verbally articulated argument *as they hear it* offers the rhetor the advantage of being able to adjust midstream to problems that would derail the persuasive effect. Written correspondence affords the rhetor no such luxury. Paul, a self identified Jew and apostle to the gentiles, was operating by his own admission in a cross cultural environment. The evidence suggests that Paul’s audiences were diverse indeed, Jews, gentiles, men, women, masters, slaves, free people, rich, poor, healthy, sick. His authority was challenged (*Galatians*), his audience disliked him (*2 Corinthians*), long periods of time passed before he received feedback (*Philippians*). One might imagine that Cicero himself would be daunted by the task of addressing such audiences.

Given the factors involved in a calculated act of persuasion, what is the probability that Paul could have *actually* addressed his *real* audience? Here a distinction must be established between the *real* audience, the historical recipients of the Epistles, and the *intended* audience, whom Paul believed himself to be addressing. As Bitzer contends, “It is clear also that a rhetorical audience must be distinguished from a body of hearers or readers: properly speaking, a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.”<sup>41</sup> The *real* and *intended* audiences are not unrelated. Paul’s addressees were people of his acquaintance; some he had spent considerable time with; some were his good friends. Yet the fact remains that Paul penned his letters with no control over the final composition of that real audience, those who eventually read/heard his rhetoric in a distant city, weeks, perhaps even months after its composition. This accounts for the rather general appeal that characterizes the letters and perhaps the ease with which they were accepted as timeless scripture by later, certainly unintended, audiences.

As is the nature of written correspondence, Paul’s letters were read in his absence, but more importantly for our purposes, the letters were composed by Paul *in the absence of his audience*. The spatial gap that lay between Paul and his real audience created a poverty of reaction. Paul could not read his real audience’s response to his argument as he constructed it. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out, “the body of accepted opinions that determines the argumentative situation always lacks clear definition. It is capable of extension, depending on the fields taken into consideration; *it shifts each moment as the argument proceeds.*” (italics mine).<sup>42</sup> Paul’s rhetoric, when it arrived at its destination, was fixed, incapable of responding to the development of the exigence as the exigence encountered the letter. More to the point, when Paul was crafting his argument, he had to anticipate how his audience would respond in order to write the letter; *he therefore had to construct them*. It is no surprise, then, that he constructed an interlocutor capable of being persuaded by *his* argument. In the absence of the real audience, the construct of the intended audience displaced that of the real altogether.

*2 Corinthians* offers a case in point within the undisputed Pauline corpus. Issues of the composite nature of the letter and whether it is actually a third, fourth or fifth letter in a series of lost correspondence between Paul and the Corinthian Church aside, *2 Corinthians* is the only surviving response Paul offered to a rebuttal his *real* audience offered to one of his previous letters. It is therefore invaluable to this discussion. In answer to an exigence in Corinth, Paul had penned *1 Corinthians*. Whether it was by this letter or, as some have argued, a letter written after *1 Corinthians* now lost, Paul’s audience became offended.<sup>43</sup> This offence created the exigence to which *2 Corinthians* was a response, an exigence that necessitated an apology from Paul and defense of his authority. The reasons for the offence are of no concern here, what is to the point in this discussion is the fact that Paul failed his rhetorical task. The Corinthians were an audience ‘known’ to Paul. He enjoyed a lengthy stay with this group of people according

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<sup>41</sup> Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 8.

<sup>42</sup> Perelman, *The New Rhetoric*, 460.

<sup>43</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Eung Chun Park, *Either Jew or Gentile: Paul’s Unfolding Theology of Inclusively*. (Louisville: Westminster, 2003).

to the book of *Acts* and corresponded with them on at least one other occasion, and yet in his effort to persuade them, he gravely misread the situation. It becomes clear in the case of the Corinthians, Paul's *intended* audience was not in fact his *real* audience. His construction of them as an audience (as presented to them in arguments offered in the letter) was flawed. By their offended response the *real* Corinthian audience demanded a correction to his construction. To this end Paul offered an interpretation of their injury and his motivation in an attempt to bring their various constraints into agreement, *For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.* (2 Cor 2:4). And while his sincerity is not at issue, it is clear that as the persuader, it fell to him to repair the damage perceived by the *real* audience. Whether he was successful in assuaging the Corinthians must be left for the moment. The question at hand is, if Paul failed in addressing the *real Corinthians*, who can it be said he was addressing? The answer is, a construct of his own making, surely with cues taken from the real audience, but nonetheless, Paul was addressing *his construction* of the Corinthian Church as an audience.

All *intended* audiences are therefore not necessarily *real* audiences. Consequently in the quest "to think the thoughts of the biblical writer after him,"<sup>44</sup> as Muilenburg challenged, it is the authorial *construct* of the audience which is crucial in rhetorical analysis – particularly of the Pauline Epistles – not the composition of the real audience. It is the nature of the medium which preserved Paul's rhetoric for posterity, that Paul in practice could not actually address his real audience save in the most general way.

This is not to argue that Paul was necessarily a poor rhetor, nor that he consistently misread/misconstructed his audiences, nor that he failed to persuade anyone by his rhetoric. What is advanced by this theory is the primacy of the *intended* audience, the *constructed* audience over the *real* audience in the exegetical pursuit of Paul's intended meaning. In the ideal rhetorical situation, the intended and the real audiences would be indistinguishable. Certainly an audience approaching homogeneity, of limited number and directly accessible to the rhetor would greatly increase the chances of a rhetor's success. Paul, however, had none of these advantages. That his attempts might fail in at least some quarters of his varied and remote real audience was perhaps inevitable.

### *Audience as a Projection of Self*

Axiomatic to classical rhetorical theory is the postulation that successful acts of persuasion are grounded in a rhetor's ability to tailor her speech to her intended audience. The better the rhetor, the more tailored the speech. Rhetorical theorists understand the audience, either real or perceived, to constrain the rhetorical possibilities available to a rhetor in meeting a given exigence. Biblical rhetorical critics have subsequently contended that, to a greater or lesser degree, it is possible to reverse engineer the convictions and concerns of Paul's audiences from his Epistles or, at the least, the

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<sup>44</sup> Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 7.

concerns and convictions of his audience as Paul perceived them. The reconstruction of Paul's intended audience in theory could reveal the constraints operating on his 'speech,' and therefore illuminate his rhetorical strategy, clarifying some of his more perplexing arguments.

In an ideal situation (namely a known, present, homogenous audience) much of rhetorical theory might yield the results for which scholars hope. However Paul was not addressing people with whom he shared a cultural/religious deep structure in his Epistles, but pagan converts to Jewish messianism. His efforts were severely straightjacketed by the medium of Epistle through which Paul argued his cases. While acknowledging the valuable insights this approach has offered, this study challenges the premise that in praxis it was possible for Paul as a rhetor to tailor his speech to his audience as conceived by classical rhetorical theory.

The physical absence of his real audiences forced Paul to embellish and fill out his impression of the constraints operating in the churches he wrote. That embellishment, that construction, in turn was constrained by his own identity. Paul, like all rhetors, presented cogent arguments he imagined to be persuasive to rational people like himself, his 'universal audience.' In the poverty of response that a physically present audience would have supplied as a corrective to his construct, Paul had to make reasoned assumptions, assumptions drawn from what he did know, namely late Second Temple period Judaism.

Paul, like all rhetors, had to build his arguments. In doing so he laid the foundation which he believed would bring both his own constraints and those of his audience into agreement. In order to progress through an argument, particularly that of *Galatians*, he had to have thought/believed/trusted that each given point the structure he was creating would support the weight of the main argument. With each assumption the argument by default was pulled ever farther into the orbit of Paul's sociolect. The further Paul developed an argument, the more he was forced to rely on his construct of the audience he was addressing, in an effort to anticipate their reactions and head off potential objections. The more he came to rely on his construct of the audience, the more the construct began, no doubt subconsciously, to reflect Paul himself, a Pharisaically trained Jesus follower.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Christopher D. Stanley in his book *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* has posed an interesting question as to the ability of Paul's historical *real* audience to have understood his rather complicated intertextual exegesis as scholars such as Richard Hays and others have suggested. He discusses issues of literacy in the ANE and the probability of access/exposure to the LXX and/or Tanakh. Paul's real audience might have had to decode his quotations and allusions from the Hebrew Bible. Stanley offers three types of readers that would have likely been the recipients of one of Paul's missives; an *informed reader* – who knew the original contexts of Paul quotations and would have been in a position to offer a critique if not counterpoint, a *competent reader* – who would have had some familiarity with biblical narrative but would be unfamiliar with original contexts of quotations and therefore likely to be impressed with the plausibility of Paul's argument, a *minimal reader* – with little exposure to the Tanakh/LXX and therefore easily convinced of Paul's argument for lack of comparison.



This is not to argue Paul knew nothing of his audience; he had founded the Galatian Church, kept in correspondence with them, and heard reports of them from mutual acquaintances. Rather, this study endeavors to acknowledge that persuasive speech carried out remotely to the diverse and foreign audiences posed a difficult if predictable set of challenges for Paul as a rhetor. While Paul's desire to persuade his real, historical audience is not in question, the manifest challenges of his task places his rhetorical endeavor, by default, in a subcategory not clearly accounted for in rhetorical theory.

In a rhetorical reading of the Epistles, it is not then the identity and constraints operating on Paul's *real* audience which must be established in order to elucidate his most problematic arguments but the identity and constraints operating on *Paul* himself. While not doubting the reality of the exigence, that the Galatians did desire to complete their conversion by becoming circumcised, this study will leave aside questions of how Paul's *real* Galatian audience would have understood or been convinced of Paul's argument. Rather this study proposes a rhetorical reading of *Galatians* that privileges the authorial construction of the audience; a construction both informed and constrained by the author's sociolect. By focusing on the *constructed audience as a projection of self* this approach in essence seeks to understand how Paul would have understood and thus constructed his argument regarding circumcision in terms of his own Jewish deep structure. All issues of audience aside, *Galatians* was an argument that at the very least had to make sense first in the mind of Paul himself. This is the piece I am after – how Paul made sense of his claim that by not observing the rite of circumcision the Galatians were the *children of Abraham*.

#### NARRATIVE CRITICISM

While the governing approach of this study is *rhetorical*; i.e., asking questions as to the *exigence* and *argument* of every text which falls under the purview of this inquiry, where possible I will supplement narrative critical readings of texts which lend themselves to such analysis. Rhetorical and narrative criticisms have a natural affinity, as narrative critical readings require the critic's cognizance of an author's rhetorical agenda in composing a narrative under scrutiny.<sup>46</sup> The attention to narrative critical aspects of texts where possible in this study are intended to offer additional support to the rhetorical critical assessments of texts in demonstrating the internal coherence of a given reading and thereby, I hope, the probability of my interpretation.

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<sup>46</sup> See Robert Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetical of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana, 1985) and "The Bible's Art of Persuasion: Ideology, Rhetoric and Poetics in Saul's Fall," *HUCA* 54 (1983) 45-82.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Problem: The Paradox of *Galatians* 3:29

#### THE CASE FOR ABRAHAM'S UNCIRCUMCISED CHILDREN

Paul's claim that the gentile converts in Galatia were the children of Abraham by virtue of their *uncircumcision* forms the supreme paradox of Pauline theology. It was a position seemingly at odds both with established scripture, namely *Genesis* 17, and the entirety of the extant Jewish witnesses roughly contemporary with Paul who had reason to mention circumcision.

Either from Paul's initial teaching or under the tutelage of others who arrived in Galatia some time after Paul's departure, the Galatians came to understand that their faith in Jesus as the Christ effectively constituted their conversion to Judaism.<sup>1</sup> They were subsequently persuaded by those later visitors that they needed to complete their conversion by observing the rite of circumcision in keeping with Jewish Law.<sup>2</sup> To say that Paul 'opposed' the position advocated by the visitors is an understatement. No other subject covered in the Pauline canon received such vehement treatment. Absent in *Galatians* is Paul's customary encouraging, complimentary greeting. In its place he

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<sup>1</sup> "From a Jewish perspective, without social conversion – that is, without the integration of a gentile into a Jewish society – there is no conversion at all; the gentile remains a gentile... What must a gentile do in order to achieve social integration into the Jewish community? The only empirical or 'objective' requirement that our sources reveal is circumcision for men." Shaye J. D. Cohen *The Beginning of Jewishness, Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 168-9.

"Even though Paul rhetorically says in *Galatians* 1:6 he is astounded (*θαυμάζειν*) that the Galatian believers are so quickly turned to the other gospel, it is not difficult to see why they did so. First of all, as long as the Jesus movement was not yet a separate religion from Judaism, the Hebrew Bible was the only Scripture of authority for Christians, Jewish or Gentile, and it prescribes that the observation of the entire Torah is required of the righteous. Moreover, the circumcision, the Sabbath law, and the purity law – all of which had bearing on Jewish-Gentile relations – were regarded by many as the most important commandments: functioning as the identity markers for the covenant people, for whom alone salvation is reserved. It would have been easy for the Judaizing intruders to persuade the Galatian Gentile believers to follow suit." Eung Chun Park *Either Jew or Gentile* (Louisville: Westminster, 2003), 49.

Only "[a]fter the time of Justin and his promulgation of *Verus Israel* [2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E.], becoming a Christian (or follower of Christ) meant something different – it no longer entailed becoming a Jew ..." Daniel Boyarin *Border Lines, the Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 73.

<sup>2</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul, Law, and the Jewish People*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 18 ff.

Theories as to the identity of the visitors to Galatia and their connection to Jerusalem have varied widely. For synopsis see: Robert Jewett "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation" in *The Galatians Debate* (ed. Mark D. Nanos; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002) 334-347; Mark D. Nanos, "The Inter- and Intra- Jewish Political Context of Paul's Letter to the Galatians." in *The Galatians Debate* (ed. Mark D. Nanos; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002) 396-407 and Richard N. Longenecker *Galatians* (Word 41; Dallas: Ralph P. Martin, 1990) lxxxviii-xcix.

offered the Galatians only a brief salutation before launching into admonishment, *I am astonished that you so quickly have been turned from the one who called you by the grace of Christ to a different gospel* (Gal 1:6). He emphatically, pedantically reiterates portions of his argument as though his readers were particularly dull, *...even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again - if anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!* (Gal 1:8-9 other examples 1:10-12, 4:20). He goes so far as to belittle his audience, *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?... Are you so foolish?* (Gal 3:1-3). Such a rhetorical pitch is hardly warranted had the Galatian converts not desired to be circumcised. The intensity of *Galatians*, its singularity in focus and sense of urgency leaves the impression that the knife was poised and the Galatians prone.

Paul's response to the situation in Galatia was that under no circumstances should the converts allow themselves to be circumcised. Had he followed this demand with a simple declarative statement along the lines of "and now for something new... the righteous need no longer be Jews" or something to that effect, matters would have been greatly clarified. The problem arises in Paul's protracted, some might argue tortured, attempt to tie the movement to Abraham (here one must read: *Judaism*, the whole of *Galatians* 3 and 4) whilst maintaining that converts should not be circumcised. Complicating the matter further, Paul appealed to Jewish scripture and specifically the figure of Abraham in support of his anti-circumcision position.

In fact Paul argued something far more extreme than that there was simply *no need* to observe circumcision in the messianic age - he asserted that the circumcision of the converts posed a *threat* to the realization of the messianic age itself. He warned gravely, *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the Law (read: circumcision)<sup>3</sup> Christ died for nothing* (Gal 2:21; see also 5:2-6).

It is imperative however to note that Paul did not correct the Galatians' understanding that by becoming Christ-followers they were becoming Jews. Rather his rhetorical efforts were entirely concentrated on proving to the converts that they *already* possessed the status they sought, i.e. they already were the children of Abraham (one must read: *Jews*) by virtue of their faith and baptism in Jesus Christ. *...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer*

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<sup>3</sup> The traditional reading of *nomos* in *Galatians* as a sweeping reference to the entirety of the Torah has been seriously questioned. In the focused context of *Galatians*, *nomos* is at the least referring to *circumcision* as it pertains to the argument at hand. Therefore this study takes a minimalist approach reading *nomos* as largely interchangeable with *circumcision* in the context of *Galatians*. For further reading see James D. G. Dunn *Jesus, Paul and the Law* and more broadly Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches*.

John Calvin typifies the traditional interpretation of *nomos* as referring to the whole of Jewish Law, "Let them now babble, if they dare, that these statements apply to ceremonies, not to morals. Even school boys would hoot at such impudence. Therefore, let us hold as certain when the ability to justify is denied to the law, these words refer to the whole law." (Cal. *Inst.* 3.11.19 [Battles]). For a recent incarnation of the traditional interpretation of *nomos* see also Colin G. Kruse *Paul, the Law, and Justification*.

*slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:26-29).*

The assertion that 'children of Abraham' was coterminous with 'Jews' in the mind of Paul requires a momentary digression as it has become a rather romantically ambiguous term in Christian contexts obscuring the explicit nature of the designation when employed by the Jews of antiquity. Granted, the Abraham cycle possesses several gaps, e.g. Abraham's additional sons and circumcision of Ishmael, with which a sufficiently motivated interpreter could have midrashically circumvented the exclusivity of the Jewish claim both to the designation and the rite. In theory any of the descendants of Abraham's eight sons could claim the designation *children of Abraham* or have it claimed on their behalf.<sup>4</sup> Abraham circumcised both Ishmael and Isaac, and likely all his sons by Ketura, given the terms of the covenant in chapter 17. Yet, in what Cohen terms the "Ishmael paradox," circumcision as the mark of the covenant promising progeny, land, and prosperity belonged to Isaac alone.<sup>5</sup> While the paternity of all eight children is readily admitted by the author of *Genesis*, for all but Isaac the connection to Abraham remained merely a description of ancestry. Paul was clearly aware of the danger that by disavowing circumcision he theoretically opened other portholes for rival claimants to the title *children of Abraham*. In an allegory closing the end of his argument concerning the nature of the Law and the covenant (Gal 4:22-28), Paul goes to some length establishing for his readers that while Ishmael may have been biologically Abraham's child, the covenant belongs to Isaac and Isaac's children alone.<sup>6</sup> This is telling. With the means embedded in the Abraham cycle to widen the tent allowing additional avenues by which the Galatian converts could have adopted the title *children of Abraham*, Paul refrains. Rather he insists that the Galatian converts were children of Abraham not through some obscure, improvisation but through the promised son Isaac. While the designation "Jew," *Yehudi* (Hebrew), *Ioudaios* (Greek), *Iudeus/ Iudaeus* (Latin) respectively, functioned primarily as an ethnographic and later religious/cultural designation,<sup>7</sup> *children of Abraham* and its cognates evoked the mythic story of Jewish origin and the exclusive covenantal relationship of the people to their God in Jewish literature marked by the covenant of circumcision.<sup>8</sup> Allowing the fact that Abraham had other children, the designation *children of Abraham* in Jewish texts nevertheless denoted only the children of Isaac's son Jacob.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore difficult to read the Jew Paul's adoption of that title for the Galatian converts as anything other than his assertion that they were, in some sense, *Jews* despite the existence of their foreskins.

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<sup>4</sup> Of the eight sons listed in the *Genesis 25* role call, five return immediately to the obscurity from which they were summoned. In minor antagonistic roles the descendants of Midian, Ketura's son, and those of Ishmael, Hagar's son, figure periodically in the primary story of Isaac the favored son of Sarah and his descendants but likewise soon fade into narrative obscurity.

<sup>5</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised?: Gender and Covenant in Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005). 8-13, 67-92.

<sup>6</sup> Cohen, *Beginnings*, 124.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>8</sup> For example; Psalm 105:6-10 *O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant...*

<sup>9</sup> For example; 1 Chr 16:13-18; Isa 41:8; Jer 33:25-26; Act 3:13; 7:8.

Paul's position on the circumcision of converts, seen as embedded in his larger rejection of the *nomos*, forms the universal starting point for all Pauline studies: namely that Paul stood in opposition to the Judaism of his day either in whole or in part, either as a convert or critic. From this a spectrum of scholarly hypotheses emerge attempting to determine Paul's theological geography relative to normative Judaism.

The idea of a "normative" Judaism is of course problematic in itself.<sup>10</sup> There has been considerable emphasis over the last thirty years to acknowledge the facets of ancient Judaism, to speak of *Judaisms* as opposed to *Judaism*. That human societies generally defy monolithic definition is readily apparent. Border lines defining communities are certainly porous lending themselves to the adoption and adaptation of foreign customs and philosophies.<sup>11</sup> While acknowledging this fact there is nevertheless a center to late Second Temple period Judaism that exerts a gravitational pull on certain practices, traditions and modes of thinking that kept those at the far margins of the culture in orbit. Much like arranging dinosaurs fossils, the question of who can be considered a Jew in the context of the first century is largely an issue of the orientation of the scholar attempting the answer. The categories of 'Jew' and 'Hellene' are admittedly blunt<sup>12</sup> if necessary tools. All Pauline scholars must to a greater or lesser degree construe the particularities of the border defining 'Jewry' in order to establish their starting premise justifying their reading of Paul relative to his native cultural context.

## MAPPING PAUL

### *The Traditional Take*

The traditional reading of Paul, now commonly referred to as the "Lutheran Paul," holds that he was a purposed convert from Judaism in all its manifestations.<sup>13</sup> The story of Paul's Damascus Road revelation recounted by the author of *Acts* coupled with Paul's own statements in *Galatians* and *Philippians* form a powerfully compelling portrait. Saul, a good Jew, zealous for the traditions of his forefathers, was beset with anxiety over his inability to perfectly keep the Mosaic Law. Through divine revelation he came to understand that the righteousness and therefore salvation that had so long eluded him was obtainable through faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>10</sup> Among the expansive commentary on the complexity of first century Judaism see: Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*; Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*; Hayes and Mandell, *The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity*; Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE*; Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*; Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*.

<sup>11</sup> For further commentary see: Boyarin, *Border Lines: the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004) *in toto*; Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* pp. 32-39.

<sup>12</sup> For discussion see; Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: the Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998) xiii-xx.

<sup>13</sup> For modern interpretations of and apologies for the traditional reading of Paul see: Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*; Andrew A. Das, *Paul, the Law and the Covenant*; Collin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law, and Justification*; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*; Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith*, and articles; Mark Theilman, *From Plight to Solution*; Stephan Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* among others.

Converted to Christianity, the once persecutor of Christians became a preacher of the faith he once attempted to destroy.

The primary defect of Judaism in this reading was duly identified as legalism related to Torah observance. Based largely on *Galatians*, Paul was understood to have argued that observance of the Jewish Law was an impediment to righteousness and in fact represented a form of bondage from which believers in Christ were freed. First century Judaism thus assumed the role as foil for Pauline enlightenment. From this theological orientation, the Church Fathers quite naturally assumed Paul's abnegation of circumcision, the paradigmatic symbol for Judaism, as irrefutable evidence of his rejection of Judaism itself.<sup>14</sup>

Interpreting Paul's prohibition on the circumcision of converts as his sanction for the incorporation of gentiles *qua* gentiles into the messianic movement, commentators favoring the traditional reading of Paul have taken as a given that material Judaism can be excised from the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>15</sup> Since Paul forbids the Galatians the

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<sup>14</sup> A few examples suffice to illustrate the point: "For, as the carnal circumcision, which was temporary, was inwrought for "a sign" in a contumacious people, so the spiritual has been given for salvation to an obedient people... Therefore, as we have shown above that the coming cessation of the old law and of the carnal circumcision was declared, so, too, the observance of the new law and the spiritual circumcision has shone out into the voluntary obediences of peace... accordingly we, who "were not the people of God" in days bygone, have been made His people, by accepting the new law above mentioned and the new circumcision before foretold." Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 1, 3 (Thelwall).

"They [Jews] alleged other causes for their anger and envy, which they bore shut up within their hearts – namely, that He [Jesus] abolished circumcision; that he took away the necessity of abstaining from the flesh of swine: - in which the mysteries of the Jewish religion consist." Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 4, 17 (Fletcher).

"St. Paul also circumcised his disciple Timothy, not because it was necessary for righteousness but rather to avoid causing offense to the Jews who were weak in faith and had not yet grasped the freedom that comes with trusting in Christ. However, when they despised faith's liberty and insisted on circumcision as a requirement for righteousness, Paul resisted them and did not permit Titus to be circumcised (Gal 2:3). He did not wish to offend or scandalize those who were weak in faith, and thus Paul yielded to their practices for a time. But the Apostle also did not want to compromise the liberty of faith by yielding to those who stubbornly cling to works in order to justify themselves. He opted instead for a middle way, sparing the weak for a time while always opposing those who trust works. His goal in adopting this position was that all might be converted to the liberty of faith." Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* 85 (Tranvik).

<sup>15</sup> A couple of examples to again illustrate the point; "But thou wilt say, 'Yea verily the people are circumcised for a seal.' But also is every Syrian and Arab, and all the priests of idols: are these then also within the bond of His covenant? Yea the Egyptians also practice circumcision. Learn then, my children, concerning all things richly, that Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practiced that rite, have received the mysteries of the three letters. For [the Scripture] saith, 'And Abraham circumcised ten, and eight and three hundred men of his household.' What then was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen firs, and then the three hundred. The ten and the eight are thus denoted – Ten by I, and the Eight by H. You have [the initials of the name of] Jesus. And because the cross was to express the grace [of our redemption] by the letter T, he says also, "Three hundred." He signifies, therefore, Jesus by two letters, and the cross by one... No one as been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this, but I know you are worthy." *The Epistle of Barnabas* 9 (Weigel). "Accordingly, when you ask why a Christian is not circumcised if Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, my reply is, that a Christian is not circumcised precisely for this reason, that what was prefigured by circumcision is fulfilled in Christ. Circumcision was a type of removal of our fleshly nature, which was fulfilled at the resurrection of Christ, and which the sacrament of baptism teaches us to look forward to in our own resurrection. The sacrament of the new life is not wholly discontinued, for our resurrection from the dead is still to come; but this sacrament has been improved by the substitution of baptism for

paradigmatic symbol of *Jewishness* it would seem to follow that the Abrahamic covenant must be something essential to which the material, embodied expressions of Judaism such as circumcision, kashrut and Sabbath were superfluous. Even accepting this line of reasoning one is nevertheless struck by the very Jewish character of the Pauline Epistles. For one deliberately breaking with the religion of his past, Paul appealed with curious regularity to Jewish scripture for legitimatization of his arguments. If Paul was indeed attempting to establish a new *épistème*<sup>16</sup> one wonders why he did not simply abandon Judaism and be done with it.<sup>17</sup>

SEGAL

To the problem of the convert Paul's Jewish affect Allen Segal proposed an interesting solution.<sup>18</sup> Employing the psychology of conversion he argued that Paul's Jewish deep structure – patterns of thought conditioned over a lifetime – could not have been wholly supplanted at the moment of his conversion. Paul remained dependant, particularly in the early years after his conversion, on that deep structure to process his experience. His language, imagery and points of reference predictably and necessarily would have been taken from his native Jewish culture. Judaism therefore continued to serve Paul as his primary referential matrix even as he attempted to extricate himself from it. It should not be surprising that evidence of this deep structure surfaced, especially in the early Epistles, until Paul could effectively adopt (perhaps even invent<sup>19</sup>) a Christian language and structure to replace it. "Paul does not [cannot?] forget his Jewish past," Segal argued, "rather he bends his Pharisaic exegesis to new ends."<sup>20</sup> Whatever the similarity of Paul's language to the culture and religion of his birth,

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circumcision, because now a pattern of the eternal life which is to come is afforded us in the resurrection of Christ, whereas formerly there was nothing of the kind." Augustine *Reply to Faustus* 19. 11 (Stothert).

<sup>16</sup> "[E]pisteme may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape – a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand. By *épistème*, we mean in fact, the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences and possibly formalized systems; the way in which, in each of these discursive formations, the transitions to epistemologization, scientificity, and formalization are situated and operate..." Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (trans. A. M. Sheridan-Smith; New York: Pantheon, 1972) 211. "Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what is true." Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*. (ed. Colin Gordon; trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper; New York: Pantheon, 1980) 131.

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008) 55.

<sup>18</sup> While accepting the traditional reading of Paul as a convert and antinomian, Segal parts ways with the Lutheran interpretation in postulating that Paul abandoned the ceremonial aspects of Torah as a procedural solution to the bifurcated community and not on theological grounds. See Allen F. Segal *Paul Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale, 1990) 192.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 181

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 117

however he may have construed his identity, Segal concluded, Paul was no longer Jewish.

Segal's theory goes far in explaining how it is Paul can in places sound so very Jewish without actually being Jewish. What he cannot explain via the psychology of conversion, nor does he try, is Paul's insistence that baptism made uncircumcised gentiles of Galatia the *children of Abraham*. A rhetorical critic attempting to buttress Segal's theory might argue that Paul was constrained by the exigence in Galatia into co-opting, "bending to his own ends" as Segal would have it, the designation *children of Abraham* in order to mitigate its clearly powerful hold on the minds of the Galatians. Yet, it must be acknowledged, if his pointed intention was to break with Judaism, Paul severely muddled matters by asserting the product of baptism into *Christ* was that the gentile converts became the children of *Abraham*. It is admittedly a dubious prospect to armchair-quarterback a debate in progress from the distance of two millennia; nevertheless, if Paul's goal was to substantially separate the Jesus movement from its Jewish origins he could have (should have) left his argument with the assurance to his readers that *in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith* (Gal 3:26). That Paul goes on in the grand climatic stroke of this argument concerning the religious identity of converts to bring the matter directly back to the archetypical Jewish figure is difficult indeed to reconcile with a reading postulating Paul to be a purposed convert from the religion of his birth.

### *The Rise of the New Perspective on Paul*

WREDE

The turn of the twentieth century saw the rise of alternative readings of Paul challenging the traditional interpretation. William Wrede contended that Paul was indeed a convert but that his conversion had been accidental. The scenario remained largely the same: Paul came to radical belief in Jesus as the messiah and boldly proclaimed the gospel but rather than a cognizant, decisive forsaking of Judaism for Christianity, Wrede postulated that Paul gradually slipped the bonds of Judaism over the course of his mission to the gentiles. Paul's position on the Law, namely its ritual observances such as Sabbath, kashrut, and particularly circumcision, were not dictated by a theological conviction but were rather conditioned by the gentile resistance – even repugnance – to such practices.<sup>21</sup> The objection of these otherwise tractable converts to these particular practices risked the gentile mission itself. Paul compromised. Far from a calculated rejection of Judaism, the abandonment of circumcision was an expediency in service of a grander goal. So gradual was the shift, so pressing the immediate peril of the gentile mission, Paul may not have even realized that he himself had become a convert to the religion of his own invention. Nevertheless Paul's willingness to abandon the distinctive marks of Judaism defined him for posterity, if by default, as a convert.

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<sup>21</sup> William Wrede. *Paul* (trans. Edward Lummis; London: Elsom and Co., 1907), 64.

See also James D. G. Dunn. *The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991) 29.



Wrede further attempted to depose the doctrine of justification by faith as the center of Pauline thought in favor of broader understanding of redemption. Wrede contended that Paul did not understand the plight of humanity to be the *individual's* guilty conscience before God as scholars of the "Lutheran" school contended but the *human race's* bondage to the real spiritual powers of sin, death and Law.<sup>22</sup> Sin "clings" to the flesh; humans therefore are enslaved to the powers of this world by virtue of their physicality.<sup>23</sup> Redemption from this condition necessitated the throwing off of the enabling flesh in imitation of the resurrected messiah.<sup>24</sup> Paul perceived the Jewish Law to be part of the problem because it antagonized the crippled, infected flesh to sin and then condemned the helpless physical beings for their failure to uphold its statutes.<sup>25</sup> The messiah freed humanity from sin, death and the Law. As circumcision was an ordinance of the very Law the messiah obtained freedom from, its continued practice in Christian communities, Wrede concluded, represented a dangerous backsliding.<sup>26</sup>

#### SCHWEITZER

Albert Schweitzer, a contemporary of Wrede, contended that *eschatology*, not issues of justification, drove Paul's theology. Paul's compulsion to preach to the gentiles was motivated by his eschatological belief that when the full number of gentiles had been converted, a number known only to God, evil would come to an end. These gentile converts became "Christian Jews in order that... they might be assimilated to the believers from Judaism, and with them might become partakers in the Messianic Kingdom which was about to begin with Christ."<sup>27</sup> The inclusion of gentiles in the messianic glory, Schweitzer contended, was a common tenet of Jewish apocalypticism adapted from the Exilic and post-Exilic prophets.<sup>28</sup> On this point Paul and his opponents were in complete agreement. Paul's conviction however had what Schweitzer termed a "universalistic" cast that resulted in "its particular character."<sup>29</sup> The gentile converts were needed *as gentiles* to fulfill their eschatological role. If they were to submit to circumcision they would become *Jews* who believed in Christ thus removing themselves from the ranks of *gentile* believers necessary to bring about the eschatological end of evil. On this account alone Paul could not concede circumcision for the gentile converts – they were called in Christ as *gentiles* and *gentiles* they must remain.<sup>30</sup>

Schweitzer further reasoned that the Mosaic Law *ontologically* could play no role in the world to come.<sup>31</sup> The Law governed *natural* beings, where by contrast the coming

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 92-93

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 99 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 92-98.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>27</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. (trans. William Montgomery; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 182.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 177 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>31</sup> The plight of humanity, Schweitzer argued, was in part a result of a divine concession given to hostile angels ceding control of human affairs for a time. These angels, according to Gal 3:19, had given the Law to Moses on Sinai (*Mysticism*, 52-55). Paul and other similarly convicted Jews would naturally have

kingdom of God was transcendental, and its members by extension *supernatural*.<sup>32</sup> What hold could such a Law and its ordinances have over believers who had become supernatural through the waters of baptism?<sup>33</sup> As Paul and other believers awaited the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God in power, Schweitzer reasoned, they had “no time for the meticulous observance of the law.”<sup>34</sup> The Law in the age of Christ was not wholly supplanted; rather it was relegated to a lower place.<sup>35</sup> Though, Schweitzer conceded, Christianity was eventually Hellenized, Paul’s theology was in concert with the Jewish eschatology of his day.<sup>36</sup>

## STENDAHL

Wrede’s attempt to depose justification by faith from the center of Pauline thought and Schweitzer’s theory that Paul’s eschatology was in accord with the eschatological expectations of his day laid the ground work for Krister Stendahl’s attempt to claim Paul as a follower of Christ *and* a Jew in the aftermath of World War II. Agreeing with Wrede, Stendahl insisted that Paul’s argument concerning justification was limited to the Galatian crisis and could not be extrapolated to imply a condemnation of the *nomos* more generally.<sup>37</sup> To read the doctrine of justification by faith as the heart of Pauline theology was to gravely misinterpret the Apostle. He famously laid the blame for this misreading first at the door of the fourth-century Bishop of Hippo Augustine and ultimately at that of the sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther. Luther, Stendahl argued, had stylized himself as Paul *redivivus*. As Luther was to Catholicism so in turn Luther cast Paul relative to Judaism.<sup>38</sup> This formed a square of opposition in which late Second Temple period Judaism was related to sixteenth-century Catholicism as seen through the eyes of the reformer. Stendahl attempted to dismantle the association of Paul to Luther countering that the evidence of the Epistles, when read with an intertestamental ear, reveal that Paul understood himself not as a *convert* from Judaism but a Jew prophetically *called* to proclaim the gospel among the gentiles.<sup>39</sup> Paul did not suffer from Luther’s issues of conscience, Stendahl contended, nor did he harbor a defensive hostility toward the religion of his birth; rather Paul understood Christ to be the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham.<sup>40</sup> If Paul believed Christ represented the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, then Jesus must have stood in continuity with Judaism, not in opposition to it. Given this fundamental premise, Paul, as Christ’s apostle, could not

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expected the righting of the world to encompass a relieving of this burden Jews were made to bear under this hostile angelic regime. The abolition of the Law was not a divine contradiction but a divine correction. In fact, according to Paul, redemption from this perilous state had already been accomplished for believers through their participation in the death and resurrection of Christ in baptism which anticipated the final and complete overthrow of the angels and their enslaving Law (64).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>37</sup> Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 26.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 78-96.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 7-22.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 86.

have been in opposition to Judaism anymore than Jesus himself. Luther's reading of Paul, Stendahl concluded, said much about Luther and little about Paul.

Having effectively called into question Paul's association to Luther and thereby his identification as a convert, Stendahl met with considerably less success attempting to explain Paul's statements concerning circumcision and the Law. His first line of attack, and rightly so, was to diminish circumcision's role as a metonymy for the *nomos* in *Galatians*.<sup>41</sup> Rather than a blanket ban on the observance of the Jewish Law, Stendahl argued that the Epistles reveal that Paul operated with a sliding scale concerning various Jewish practices. Whereas Paul absolutely prohibited circumcision in *Galatians*, he was more lenient concerning issues of kashrut in *1 Corinthians*.<sup>42</sup> In explaining Paul's interdiction Stendahl stated, "Paul's argument is that one does not need to go through Judaism into Christianity, but that there is a straight and direct way to Christ for Gentiles apart from the law."<sup>43</sup> Christianity was a "...new avenue of salvation, which has been opened in Christ, an avenue which is equally open to Jews and Gentiles, since it is not based on the Law, in which the very distinction between the two rests."<sup>44</sup> This is of course problematic for his continuity hypothesis as it effectively reestablishes Christianity as something other than Judaism and Judaism ultimately as nonessential. Perhaps Paul did not perceive Judaism as a stumbling block to salvation as the traditionalist held, but, according to Stendahl, it was no help either. Stendahl did attempt to mitigate the implications of this interpretation in a later portion of his argument by asserting that Paul viewed gentile Christians as "honorary Jews."<sup>45</sup> He did not elaborate on how this honorific materially affected his reading of *Galatians* against that of the traditional interpretation or why if Paul was willing to acknowledge the gentile converts as *honorary* Jews why he resisted them becoming *actual* Jews. At points Stendahl boldly flirts with the idea that Paul intended two Christian communities, one Jewish and one gentile, but never worked out the hypothesis.<sup>46</sup>

In Stendahl's defense it must be acknowledged that his self-appointed task was monumental. In challenging his tradition, pushing against the colossus which is the "Lutheran" interpretation of Paul, in order to pry some distance between Paul and his antinomian, anti-Judaistic typecast, he offered a critical rallying point for scholars of what would become the "New Perspective on Paul" to coalesce even if he could not advance a solution to the problem of Paul and the Law himself. Noble intentions and gallant attempts aside, Stendahl in the end could not break from the Lutheran conclusion: for Paul salvation lay apart from Judaism.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>46</sup> "Paul's reference to God's mysterious plan is an affirmation of a God-willed coexistence between Judaism and Christianity in which the missionary urge to convert Israel is held in check." Ibid., 4. Also see Eung Chun Park, *Either Jew or Gentile: Paul's Unfolding Theology of Inclusivity* (Louisville: Westminster, 2003) – who does work this idea out.

## SANDERS

The publication of Stendahl's lectures was followed the next year by E. P. Sanders' watershed work, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Where Stendahl had called into question the association of Paul to Luther, Sanders, for his part, set out to crush altogether the opposing association of Judaism to sixteenth century Catholicism.<sup>47</sup> He attempted to demonstrate from ancient Jewish sources something the rabbis had long contended: that the perception of Judaism as a works-righteousness religion fundamentally misconstrued it. Jews of the first century did not view the Law as oppressive and therefore did not long for relief from it. Rather, Sanders contended, Judaism was a religion operating on a principle of *covenantal nomism* predicated on the grace of God. God's grace was manifest in his choosing of a covenant people.<sup>48</sup> The people maintained the covenant, and therefore remained in right relationship with God, by accepting and observing the precepts of the Law. There existed no crisis over moral imperfection as the Law provided the means by which adherents could repent of their transgressions.<sup>49</sup> The Law was not a burden but a gift and privilege marking the Jews as a people especially loved by God.<sup>50</sup>

Paul, having been raised a Jew, could not have been ignorant of Judaism's *modus vivendi*. Therefore, Sanders reasoned, issues of legalism could not have been Paul's reason for rejecting the Law. The primary mistake in Pauline interpretation had been in thinking that Paul had worked from *plight* to *solution* when rather it had been the reverse.<sup>51</sup> Paul had a solution – Jesus Christ. What he was in need of was a problem.<sup>52</sup> The problem Paul eventually settled on was Jewish legalism but, Sanders insisted, this was a secondary inference, a byproduct of his revelation that Jesus was the messiah. Paul was governed by twin convictions: that Jesus was the only way to God and that he, Paul, was called to preach this message to the gentiles. The math Sanders argued was simple: if Jesus was the only way to God then the Law could not be. The Law posed a problem then only in cases in which it was believed the Law was necessary in addition to Christ to come to God. Paul's process of working backward from solution to plight accounted, Sanders argued, for his seemingly conflicted claims about the Law.

The deduction that believing gentiles were to be included in the assembly of the righteous *qua* gentiles motivated Paul's particular targeting of the ceremonial aspects of Torah, particularly circumcision. "In the case of debate over circumcision in *Galatians*

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<sup>47</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) xii.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>49</sup> Morna Hooker challenged Sanders' assertion that Paul's "pattern of religion" differed greatly from that which he identified as Judaism's 'pattern of religion' in her article "Paul and Covenantal Nomism" in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*. (eds. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982) 47-56.

<sup>50</sup> Sanders, *Paul*, 110.

<sup>51</sup> Sanders had in view Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*; "It is perhaps the principal fault in Bultmann's treatment of Paul that he proceeded from plight to solution and supposed Paul proceeded in the same way." *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>52</sup> "...for Paul, the conviction of a universal solution preceded the conviction of a universal plight." *Ibid.*, 474.

the problem was not that there was something morally wrong with the rite or the Law and people it represented but that it was a marker of demarcation.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, Sanders concluded, along the lines of Schweitzer, that Paul’s problem with Judaism was its ethnocentricity. Sanders often quoted, if reductive, summation of the matter was that, “what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity.”<sup>54</sup>

That Paul, at best, misunderstood his tradition or, at worst, misrepresented it predictably sat ill with many Protestant scholars who were otherwise persuaded of Sanders’ larger points concerning Judaism. James Dunn summed matters up, “Sanders in effect freed Pauline exegesis from its sixteenth-century blinkers, but he has still left us with a Paul who could have made little sense to his fellow Jews and whose stated willingness to observe the law elsewhere (I Cor. 9.19-23) must have sounded like the most blatant self-contradiction.”<sup>55</sup> Various solutions have been proposed attempting to reconcile the New Perspective on Judaism with Paul’s antinomian posture, to find a way to reread Paul as a coherent Jewish thinker.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Four New Perspective Takes on Paul: Dunn, Hays, Wright and Boyarin*

##### DUNN: Christianity as philosophic essence of Judaism

James Dunn emerged early as one of the foremost proponents of the New Perspective on Paul. While lauding Sanders’ work as it concerned ancient Judaism, Dunn argued that Sanders had been too quick to claim that Paul’s pattern of religion was wholly different than that of his tradition.<sup>57</sup> Dunn contended that Paul’s conversion was not from one religion to another but from one theology to another.<sup>58</sup> “Even though the concept of ‘Messiah’ itself underwent radical reinterpretation,” Dunn maintained that continuity with Judaism “was evidently counted as of first importance.”<sup>59</sup> With this stress on continuity between Paul and his tradition Dunn was left to supply a sufficient motivation for Paul’s antinomian critique of Judaism. He adopted Sanders equation that Paul must have worked from solution to plight, that his revelation of Christ exposed him to the “flaws in his previous ‘zeal for his ancestral traditions.’”<sup>60</sup> Dunn insisted that Paul’s phrase “the works of the Law” referred only to circumcision, kashrut and Sabbath and could not be extrapolated into an indictment of Torah as a whole.<sup>61</sup> These ceremonial aspects of the Jewish Law, he argued, were temporary by design, instituted for the purpose of bringing about the eschatological restoration of the world resulting in

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<sup>53</sup> Sanders, *Law*, 20.

<sup>54</sup> Sanders, *Paul*, 552.

<sup>55</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Louisville: Knox, 1990) 201.

<sup>56</sup> In addition to the authors discussed below, see: John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*; J. Christiaan Beker, *The Triumph of God*; Terence L. Donaldson *Paul and the Gentiles*; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* and Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*.

<sup>57</sup> Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 186.

<sup>58</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 179.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

the justification of gentiles through Christ.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the aspects of the Law targeted by Paul were the widely acknowledged markers of Jewish ethnicity and culture. The problem Paul identified in his tradition post-revelation, Dunn extrapolated, must then have been Jewish nationalism. The continued observance of the ritual expressions of Torah in the messianic age was an implicit assertion of Jewish national privilege in contradiction to the eschatological goal of world restoration.

So, now that the time of fulfillment had come, the covenant should no longer be conceived in nationalistic or racial terms. No longer is it exclusively Jewish *qua* Jewish privilege. The covenant is not thereby abandoned. Rather it is broadened out as God originally intended – with the grace of God which it expressed separated from its national restriction and freely bestowed without respect to race or work, as it had been in the beginning.<sup>63</sup>

Insisting that Paul did not differ from his Jewish compatriots on the central importance of grace, Dunn managed to recast the discussion in a considerably more congenial tone. And yet, for all Dunn's protestations of continuity, the "parting of ways" between Judaism and Christianity, he concluded, was inevitable.<sup>64</sup> Moreover the groundwork for the divorce was laid by none other than Paul himself: "[In *Galatians*] we are seeing the transition from a basically Jewish self-understanding, the transition indeed from a form of Jewish Messianism to a faith which sooner or later must break away from Judaism to exist in its own terms."<sup>65</sup> While embracing Sanders' reinterpretation of ancient Judaism and Stendahl's reinterpretation of Paul, in the end Dunn could not break with the classical reading that set in Paul opposition to Judaism. Judaism was not the corruption for which Christianity was the corrective, rather, in Dunn's assessment, Judaism was the form of religion which Christianity quickly outgrew.

HAYS: Christianity as hermeneutical evolution of Judaism

Richard Hays read the Pauline letters for echoes of Jewish scripture that were suggestive of evolving patterns of meaning.<sup>66</sup> The Epistles he argued, fraught with quotes and allusions to Hebrew scripture, evidenced the archetypical Jewish hermeneutic of troping.<sup>67</sup> The continuity principle tying Paul to his tradition, according to Hays, lay not in a collective theology or eschatological expectation but rather in a shared hermeneutic. Paul's invention then was not his method of reading scripture but rather his broadening of the Jewish trope to include a gentile audience. This broadening was dictated by Paul's eschatological conviction that the advent of Christ marked the beginning of the new age. His troping of scripture was in turn necessitated by the need to understand and thus legitimize the Christ event in terms of Jewish sacred texts. Standing simultaneously in the Jewish hermeneutical tradition and on the precipice of the new age, Hays argued Paul possessed a "hermeneutical warrant" for his reapplication of scripture

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<sup>62</sup> "From the beginning, God's eschatological purpose in making the covenant had been the blessing of the nations." James Dunn. *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 114.

<sup>63</sup> Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 197.

<sup>64</sup> See James D. G. Dunn. *The Parting of the Ways*.

<sup>65</sup> Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 198.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Hays. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1993) 11-12.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

to Jesus and gentile inclusion. Where Segal had interpreted Paul's Jewish affect as a predictable holdover from his Jewish upbringing, Hays, observing the same phenomenon, interpreted it as the continuity principle binding Paul to his tradition.

Hays considered Dunn's analysis to have underplayed the plight of Israel and the "world shattering event" that was the crucifixion.<sup>68</sup> Such an apocalyptic event, Hays reasoned, would have naturally triggered, required even, Paul's "radical judgment upon and reassessment of all that has gone before it."<sup>69</sup> Concurring with Sanders he held that Paul rejected the Law "not because of an empirical observation that no one can do what it requires but because its claim to give life... is incompatible with the gospel story, which says that Christ had to die in order to give life to us (Gal 3:13-14; cf. 2:21)."<sup>70</sup>

In terms of the argument of Galatians, this story of Jesus Christ is crucial because it demonstrates that the Galatians' well-intentioned desire to achieve righteousness through circumcision and/or "works of the law" is absurd and self-defeating; anyone who has heard the gospel story, as Paul understands it, should realize that we are justified not by anything we do but by Jesus Christ – indeed, if our interpretation is correct, through the πιστις of Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us (Gal 2:16, 20). That is the whole meaning (the *dianoia*) of the gospel story.<sup>71</sup>

By virtue of being a Jew Paul had the inherent, ancestral right (responsibility?) to midrashically reinterpret his world along this new axis of meaning. The very act of his reinterpretation of the significance of the Law should not be read, Hays argued, as Paul's abandonment of Judaism but rather an exercise in the essence of what it was to be Jewish. In a semantic slight of hand, Hays attempted to massage the incongruity of the Law and gospel maintaining that Law was not *nullified* in this dialectic but rather *transformed* into a "new figuration of grace."<sup>72</sup>

Toward the goals of the New Perspective, Hays managed to establish a formal continuity between Paul and Judaism. Under the cover of cultural license he offers a gentler, organic means of reading Paul's invalidation of the Law. What is advanced then in Hays work is a claim that Paul came to his antinomian position through legitimate hermeneutical means leaving entirely unchallenged however the traditional construct of Paul's opposition to Judaism.

WRIGHT: Christianity as restoration from Exile

N. T. Wright, in what he dubbed a "narrative turn," attempted to establish Paul within Jewish tradition as someone who furthered *Israel's* story through his understanding of the role of Christ. Casting for a problem worthy of a messianic

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) xxxvii. The *eventual* parting of Christianity and Judaism as Dunn had imagined Hays countered was "too smooth." xxxvii.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 179. Hays argued in *The Conversion of the Imagination* that the issue governing Paul's discussion of the Law in *Romans* was the justice of God – how God would justify both Jews and gentiles by the same means. Richard Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 69.

<sup>71</sup> Hays, *Faith*, 210-211.

<sup>72</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 159-160.

solution, Wright shifted focus from Paul's personal plight to that of the Jewish nation: foreign occupation. When viewed by Paul and his contemporaries from the perspective of the meta-narrative of Jewish history, Rome was merely the latest in a long series of gentile overlords dating back to the Babylonian conquest of Palestine.<sup>73</sup> Though the Jews had returned from exile in Babylon, Israel, as a sovereign nation, had never been reconstituted. Thus, Wright contended, the Jews at the time of Christ, though physically returned to the land were in a continuing state of political exile.<sup>74</sup> This *de facto* exile, Wright contended, was the plight for which Paul understood Jesus to be the solution.<sup>75</sup> The problem of exile however was necessarily historical and local: the solution, by contrast, was "transhistorical" and global.<sup>76</sup> The grand narrative of the covenant people reached its *telos* in Jesus whose death and resurrection ushered in the new age, new covenant, and newly defined *children of Abraham* comprised of believing Jews and gentiles.<sup>77</sup>

Though Wright's recasting of the problem along more traditional messianic expectations (namely that the messiah would deal with Israel's national enemies) in the end he reasserts much of the same Lutheran refrains cloaked in new rhetoric; the problem with the Law was ethnic Israel's failure to keep it,<sup>78</sup> the Law could not deliver the life it promised,<sup>79</sup> the purpose of Israel's election was to be a light to the gentiles (a task at which they failed),<sup>80</sup> the redefinition of *children of Abraham* as any who believe in Christ was according to divine design,<sup>81</sup> etc.

BOYARIN: Paul as a Jewish cultural critic

Reading Paul as a "Jewish cultural critic"<sup>82</sup> Daniel Boyarin attempted to deconstruct the binary opposition of Paul-Judaism thereby (re)claiming Paul as an "important Jewish thinker."<sup>83</sup> In a direct challenge to Segal's interpretation, Boyarin argued that Pauline theology was a legitimate expression of Judaism in the Roman period.<sup>84</sup> Against Sanders' theory that Paul arrived at his conclusions working from solution to plight, Boyarin contended that Paul had been wrestling with a preexistent

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<sup>73</sup> Concern over this state of exile is evidenced in "Baruch, MMT and many other second Temple writers." N. T. Wright. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 91-92.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

"If we ask how it is that Israel has missed her vocation, Paul's answer is that she is guilty not of 'legalism' or 'works-righteousness' but of what I call 'national righteousness', the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership of God's true covenant people." Wright. "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith" *TB* 29 (1978): 61-88.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 35.

<sup>82</sup> Daniel Boyarin. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. (Berkeley: University of California, 1994) 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.



theological tension within Judaism between “narrow ethnocentrism and universal monotheism.”<sup>85</sup> Concurring with Dunn that Paul’s primary critique of Judaism centered on Jewish nationalism, he attempted then to work out both the motivation and mechanism through which Paul could have arrived at his controversial conclusions.<sup>86</sup> Based on *Galatians* 3:28, *there is no longer Jew nor Greek...*, Boyarin postulated that Paul was motivated by a profound concern for the oneness of humanity.<sup>87</sup> Paul’s plight was generated by the unresolved tension between his attraction to universalism and his twin convictions that Torah was God’s revelation and that the Jews were God’s people.<sup>88</sup> Paul’s Damascus Road experience of Christ presented a solution to this quandary. The revelation of Christ’s dual nature, both human and divine, disclosed to Paul the very structure of reality.<sup>89</sup> As with the historical Jesus, the outward, material manifestations of the Jews and the Law had inward, spiritual, eternal referents – they were signifiers of a greater signified.<sup>90</sup> This revelation provided the hermeneutical key that allowed Paul to subjugate the particular, ethnic expression of Torah to its greater universal, spiritual referent.<sup>91</sup> This subjugation or shedding of the historical, embodied practices of Judaism was the means by which Judaism could be metamorphosed wholly into its universal referent. Paul, Boyarin contended, was unique neither in his plight, nor in his attraction to the principle of univocity nor in his allegorical hermeneutic. Paul’s theological innovation lay in his argument that *convenantal nomism* was but the material signifier of the spiritual signified *faith*, and in his insistence that in Christ the signified had completely eclipsed the signifier.<sup>92</sup>

To the greater goal of universalism, circumcision was an obvious obstacle. It was “for Jews alone, male Jews at that,”<sup>93</sup> and thus fell naturally into the center of Paul’s critique of Jewish ethnic and gender hierarchy. *Galatians*, Boyarin argued, registers Paul’s “dissent from the notion that one particular people could ever be the children of God to the exclusion of other peoples.”<sup>94</sup> Through the mechanism of baptism in which Christians reenact the death and resurrection of Jesus, the baptized were allegorically reborn and supplied with a new genealogy in which they became the children of Abraham.<sup>95</sup> In severing of the signifier *circumcision* from its historical signified *children of Abraham*, Paul freed Judaism from its particular ethnic restraints. “By entering into the body of Christ in the spirit, people become one with the seed to which the promise was made and thus themselves heirs of Abraham and children of God according to the promise.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>88</sup> Boyarin explains, “Despite this powerful, nearly irresistible concern for universal ‘Man’ and critique of ‘Judaism,’ Paul nevertheless remain convinced that the Hebrew Scriptures contained God’s revelation and that the Jews had been at least the vehicle for the communication of that revelation.” Ibid., 52.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 24.

Suspending questions of Paul's legitimacy, Boyarin grounds his argument in the possible, generously expanding the discourse of first-century Judaism to encompass Paul's unorthodox theology. Paul was a *Jewish* man wrestling with a vexing *Jewish* problem to which he attempted a radical but nonetheless *Jewish* solution. Rejected in the main by Jews, Paul's solution was more widely accepted among gentiles who, not sharing a native familiarity with the Jewish *langue*, were able to adopt *baptism* in place of *circumcision* as signifier of *children of Abraham* largely without difficulty.<sup>97</sup> In a kind of theological natural selection, this had the effect of spawning the phylogenetic siblings of Rabbinic Judaism and Patristic Christianity. Though Paul's letters mark the birth of Christianity, his theology, Boyarin concluded, can be entirely accounted for within the broad scope of first-century Judaism. Paul (e)merges in Boyarin's work as (n)either Jewish (n)or Other, as both the product of his tradition and the father of a new *épistème*.

In the quest for what has become the holy grail of New Perspective studies – a way to read Paul as a coherent Jewish thinker – Boyarin's reading provides Paul the elusive triad of sufficient *motive*, probable philosophical *means* and evidenced *methodology*. In so doing he manages to reserve a place for Paul within the borders of ancient Jewish culture, albeit at the far margin, the universal pole of the Jewish discourse.<sup>98</sup> I would in fact be utterly persuaded of Boyarin's case had Paul only inverted the order of the "proofs of belonging" in Gal 3:26-29.

The Galatians were clearly concerned that they meet the requirements for salvation, that they qualify as *children of Abraham*. Paul, in essence, argued that the converts already possessed the status they sought and that any additional action aimed at further securing their position was not only unnecessary but in fact jeopardized that very status. It was then left to the apostle to offer some rationale, some proof in support of this claim. He constructed his case in chapter three walking his readers through an intricate midrash concerning Abraham, faith and the timing of the promise. This argument naturally concluded in a direct address of the exigence in 3:29 where Paul assured the converts that they were indeed *children of Abraham, heirs according to the promise*. However Abraham, as progenitor of the Jewish people, is a strikingly *particular* figure. Had *universalism* been Paul's driving theological concern, it seems extremely awkward for him to then have concluded that the product of baptism into Christ was that converts could claim this very particular identity of "children of Abraham." Why, one wonders, wouldn't Paul have simply claimed that we are all children of Adam?

Adam aside, the structure of the argument as it stands in *Galatians* appears inverted if Paul's rhetorical objective was to move the Galatians from the particular identity they sought to a universal understanding of their conversion. It reads, *for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are children of Abraham, heirs*

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<sup>97</sup> With of course the notable exception of the Galatians.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

according to the promise (Gal 3:26-29). Paul could have subsumed *children of Abraham* under the larger rubric *children of God* constructing the argument to read, ***It is true some are the children of Abraham but in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek... for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are children of God, heirs to all God has promised...*** or something to that effect. One might reasonably imagine that an assurance that the converts were children of *God* would have trumped any claim of belonging to a particular *man*, righteous and favored though he may have been. Yet, paradoxically, Paul argued the exact opposite. That the converts belonged to God, an apparently uncontested claim, was conscripted as proof they must then also belong to Abraham. Had universalism been Paul's driving theological concern he should have omitted verse 29 altogether and ended his argument cleanly with the baptismal formula *There is no longer Jew or Greek...* case concluded. Paul had the theological means (in the baptismal formula) to circumvent Abraham's particularity entirely and thus render circumcision irrelevant – instead he opted to place Abraham, and thus one must concede *Judaism*, at the very center of the converts' identity in Christ.

Arguably Paul lends himself to post-structural analysis. In his articulation of the baptismal formula collapsing the binary oppositions of ethnicity, class, and gender (Gal 3:28), in his conclusion in dialogue with “others” that οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις (Gal 6:15; also 5:6), in his transvaluation of terms such as ‘Israel’ (Gal 6:16) – Paul, I grant, sounds like a proto-deconstructionist.<sup>99</sup> Certainly the exigence of *Galatians* – the state of the converts' penises – as Boyarin points out, begs a Lacanian reading. Boyarin however does not merely deconstruct Paul, he argues that Paul, in the guise of cultural critic, was in effect deconstructing the world as *he* knew it. It is an interpretation which grants Paul prescient powers over his language and context. While not a philosopher proper, Boyarin contends, Paul's allegorical reinterpretation of the particular, signifying flesh as a means of resolving the theological quandary of Jewish ethnocentrism v. Jewish monotheism was *genius*.

That Paul then would have circled back to Abraham, one could argue, was perhaps inevitable. It is not unlike what we see in the book of *Job* whose author, in direct challenge to Deuteronomistic theology, struggled mightily with the idea that righteous people may indeed suffer only in the end to return to orthodox theological fold, blessing Job twice over for his trouble in the final act. The author of *Job*, however, spent some forty-one chapters attempting to establish the legitimacy of his antithesis before succumbing. By comparison, Paul, who penned his most radical, anarchical concept by far in the baptismal formula, surrendered to the traditional paradigm in the very next sentence. It is this proximity that bothers me. The Deuteronomistic conclusion of *Job* following the long course of the author's argument has the feel of a tether – something the author found inescapable, inevitable. Had Paul similarly labored with the revolutionary implications of the dissolution of the fundamental stratifications of human existence, only to eventually arrive at some awkward synthesis of universalism and Abrahamic particularity, I could more readily accept the idea that Paul was attempting to

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<sup>99</sup> Limiting this tally to evidence provided by *Galatians*.

resignify circumcision. That Paul's very next thought, however, following the baptismal formula *there is no longer Jew or Greek*, was to define the newly baptized as the *children of Abraham* leaves little room to imagine that Paul himself saw any contradiction in the assertion. The bold, unabashed, unsubstantiated nature of the claim suggests a logic readily apparent to Paul now obscured.

Language, however, is itself a paradox. While the principles of post-structuralism are seemingly demonstrable at every turn, we linguistic pedestrians (who are both defined and determined by the language we employ) do not principally understand or, for that matter, experience language to defer meaning unendingly. We function as a matter of course as though signs in the context of the linguistic structure are generally stable, reliable conduits of meaning.<sup>100</sup> And while we labor consciously under the assumption of fixedness, we seem to intuitively suspect the threat of instability lurking at the periphery and so seek to fix points (*pointes de capiton*) within the structure to anchor what we fear could become, or perhaps already is, a slippery chain of signification.<sup>101</sup> Regardless of the fact that such grounding signifiers are in fact equally susceptible to deconstruction, societies nonetheless desire them – the irreducible elements of identity – seek them out, and, once established, guard them vigorously. While signifiers can be demonstrably divided from their signifieds in analysis, ordinary people, the commonly intelligent, generally “confront only the ‘associative total’ of the sign itself.”<sup>102</sup> Indoctrinated in the culture of their birth, most people are unable or unwilling to question the grounding signifiers of their society for fear of “pulling the semantic carpet from beneath their own feet.”<sup>103</sup> It is only the rare, brave genius who is capable of pulling the loose thread unwinding the carpet from beneath the feet of the masses while they still stand upon it.

Circumcision, having functioned as a primary metonymy for *Jews* and *Judaism* since the Maccabean period, was a grounding signifier (if we allow that such things exist in popular imagination) *par excellence* within the culture of Jewry of the first century. It was the irreducible element of Jewish identity. As such circumcision was for all intents and purposes functionally inviolable within the Jewish linguistic system. I am not implying by ‘inviolable’ that circumcision was without controversy. Surely its continued practice was a matter of debate, tradition, rejection, reverence and alternatively indifference among the Jews of the first century. What Boyarin proposes Paul to have accomplished however is of different order entirely; that Paul, as a part and a product of first century Judaism, conceived of the opportunity to and necessity of substituting one of the most clearly established ritual signifiers of his culture for another as one might shuffle a deck of cards.

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<sup>100</sup> Strauss contended, “Human societies, like individuals, never create absolutely, but merely choose certain combinations from an ideal repertoire...” Claude Lévi Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (trans. John and Doreen Weightman; New York: Penguin, 1955) 178.

<sup>101</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (trans. Bruce Fink; New York: W. W. Norton, 2002) 291-292. Without such stable elements, Lacan argued, meaning within the structure would not be possible. 271-280. Derrida critiques Lacan's theory of *point de caption* in *Dissemination* 33-35.

<sup>102</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (trans. Annette Lavers; New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) 113.

<sup>103</sup> Matthew Sharpe, “Jacques Lacan (1901-1981),” n.p. [cited 15 October 2010]. Online: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/lacweb/>

To arrive at Boyarin's conclusion one must rank Paul among the great philosophical minds. And while Boyarin arrives at the appellation *genius* for Paul in a most original way, it is in fact a common inference, a grounding assumption in the field of Pauline studies that the Epistles were the product of an extraordinary mind. This tacit assumption of *genius* causes interpreters in turn to look for Paul to *be* extraordinary, to *be* revolutionary, to *be* unique, to *be* inventive. This predisposition is compounded by Paul's claim to have had a divine revelation. In fact Paul's revelation(s) has functioned as a wild card within Pauline interpretation capable of cloaking improbable or otherwise unsolvable pieces of the theological puzzle in divine mandate.

I am not debating the merits of deconstruction, nor am I debating the possibility of Boyarin's reading— I am rather questioning the unremitting theory of Paul's genius and therefore the *probability* of Boyarin's reading.

If the grounding assumption regarding Paul is shifted from extreme pole of *genius* toward the more common — *precocious/bright*, it then becomes difficult to imagine how it would have formulated in the mind of the Pharisaically trained Paul, that it was possible, let alone that he might succeed, in substituting *baptism* for *circumcision*. I find myself unpersuaded that it would have, could have, occurred to a merely smart Paul, born to and bound by his Jewish *épistème*, to disassociate *circumcision* from *children of Abraham* anymore than it would occur to me (admittedly not a genius) to disassociate the *U.S. veterans of World War II* as a signifier of *just war* within my own American *épistème* or my German friends to disassociate the *coming down of the Berlin Wall* from *Wiedervereinigung* within their German *épistème*.

Though Paul identified himself as a Jew and scholars of the New Perspective endeavor to read him as such, he is reflexively exempted from the constraining parameters of this identity based largely on his anomalous position concerning circumcision in *Galatians* and the divine nature of his epiphany. I am not contesting the point that the Galatian debate resulted in the resignification or even secondary signification of *children of Abraham* within the largely gentile Christian community. I am questioning the acceptance of the fundamental premise within Pauline scholarship: that because Paul made the argument that the converts should not circumcise, circumcision posed a *problem* for Paul be it theological, philosophical or missional. The discipline has so long held this supposition that it seems now largely self-evident. Emphasizing instead the constraining nature of language and culture, the power of deep structure to construct, configure and constrain the subject's thoughts, I would like to shift the field of interpretation in this experiment from the possible, the extraordinary, the genius to the probable, the ordinary, the common — to read Paul not merely *within* his Jewish *épistème* but to read Paul as *bound* by his Jewish *épistème*.

Everyone agrees that circumcision was important to *Jews* in the first century. Dunn rather succinctly puts the matter, "...it is no exaggeration to say that for the typical Jew of the first century AD, particularly the Palestinian Jew, *it would be virtually impossible to conceive of participation in God's covenant, and so in God's covenant*

*righteousness, apart from these observances, these works of the law* (italics Dunn's)." <sup>104</sup> All of the scholarly acknowledgement concerning the importance of circumcision, however, has had shockingly little impact on how Paul is read. It is particularly difficult from a Christian perspective, in which the otherness of Judaism and her associated rituals has been a core tenet of Christian identity, to truly grasp how powerfully central circumcision would have been to Paul's identity. The following is an attempt to establish how Paul could have inherited and experienced circumcision within his Jewish *épistème*.

## CIRCUMCISION

From the extant textual evidence, circumcision seems to have been overtly established in Jewish culture as the signifier of *children of Abraham* in the mytho-heroic narrative of *Genesis* 17 and to have come to function some centuries later as a metonymy for *Jews* and *Judaism* through the mytho-historic narratives of *1* and *2 Maccabees*. While other Jewish authors had cause to mention circumcision, particularly in the decades following the *gezerot* of Antiochus, their commentary assumes the theological conclusions if not the material itself of *Genesis* and *1* and *2 Maccabees*. These stories then form the base narratives which served to anchor circumcision as a grounding signifier within the Judaisms of Paul's day.

However, the role these texts played in historical establishment of circumcision as a ritual of significance within the culture is of secondary importance to the aims of this study. My interest rather lies in attempting to understand, to appreciate something of the inherent, assumed value of circumcision woven into the deep structure of Jewish culture though these narratives as Paul would have inherited it. Leaving aside altogether questions as to the veracity of the narratives and associated issues, this discussion focuses exclusively on the emotional culture these texts engendered around this ritual, particularly in the *Maccabees* as the events portrayed therein shaped much of the political realities of the late Second Temple period.<sup>105</sup> This, then, is a narrative critical reading of these primary stories which alternately advanced circumcision and then locked it into place as metonymy for *Judaism*.

### *Genesis and the Tanakh*

*Genesis* 17 is the well-known passage on circumcision in which God promised Abraham innumerable progeny with the stipulation that every male of his household be circumcised. This stipulation however was not limited to the biological children of the patriarch but demanded of the entirety of Abraham's *ménage*. Both domestic slaves and those born to and purchased from foreigners must also be circumcised (Gen 17:12). A forensic analysis of *Galatians* indicates that the visitors to Galatia advocating for the circumcision of the converts likely argued their case primarily from this chapter.<sup>106</sup> The

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<sup>104</sup> Dunn, *New Perspective*, 110.

<sup>105</sup> "Indeed, Jewish martyrology is to be approached as an essentially literary rather than historical phenomenon..." S. A. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2* (SNTS 114; Cambridge: Cambridge, 2001) 13.

<sup>106</sup> The evidence for this being that Paul's rebuttal, when not dealing with issues relating to his position and authority, exclusively dealt with the story of Abraham in an attempt to reinterpret or otherwise mitigate this

logic in this line of argumentation is obvious. Nowhere is the practice of circumcision more adamantly or authoritatively advanced in scripture than *Genesis* 17. The pointed extension of the command to include *those brought into Abraham's house* likely made its extrapolation to the Galatian proselytes only logical; circumcision was the clear obligation of those who would convert to Judaism.

The author of *Genesis* clearly intended not merely to assign *circumcision* as the signifier of *children of Abraham* but to make it unassailable. The author tells the reader that God himself issued the command and that it was given to and accepted by the primogenitor of Israel as a condition of the nation's existence. This covenant was to exist between God and Abraham, and Abraham in the form of his descendants, in perpetuity. Three times over in the course of twenty seven verses it is reiterated that circumcision was to be an "everlasting covenant" (Gen 17:7, 13, 19). Failure to observe the ordinance was to result in the offender being "cut off" from his people (Gen 17:14).<sup>107</sup> Bringing to bear divine authority, patriarchal precedent, covenantal obligation, ethnic privilege and ultimately mortal threat, the author left little to no room for prevarication. Circumcision according to the author of *Genesis* was a nonnegotiable imperative.

Beyond the power of the author/redactor to bring about however was the additional endorsement of circumcision commensurate with the acceptance of *Genesis* as Holy Writ. That *Genesis* 17 became scripture made *circumcision* as a signifier of *children of Abraham* sacrosanct, inexorably binding it as a signifier of Jewish identity.

For all of *Genesis*' strident insistence however, circumcision rarely elicited comment from the other authors of the Tanakh. When it was discussed its importance and mandatory nature were never challenged. Circumcision is a component in six narratives three of which are found in *Genesis* itself, two in *Exodus* and one in the book of *Joshua*.<sup>108</sup> It is mentioned only once in Levitical Law concerning the timing of the ritual after the birth of a son, *on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised* (Lev 12:3) but interestingly no allusion is made to the consequence for noncompliance. It is wholly absent as a subject from any prophetic rebuke. Circumcision was used metaphorically to illustrate a state of devoted submission to the covenant more generally by the authors of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah: for example,

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chapter specifically. For further discussion see; John J. Collins "A Symbol of Otherness," John Nolland "Uncircumcised Proselytes?" and Calvin J. Roetzel *The Letters of Paul*.

<sup>107</sup> On a narrative level it is worthy of note that this is the first threat leveled in *Genesis* since that issued to Adam and Eve concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The "cutting off" for the failure to observe circumcision is reminiscent of the exile of Adam and Eve from the garden, their being cut off from immortality. Cain similarly is cut off from his people and consequently in fear of his life. One exiled from the community of the covenant is one exiled from its divine protections sanctioned under that covenant and therefore implicitly under the threat of the death. In *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Philo interpreted "cutting off" as "death" and proceeded to offer three possible interpretations; 1. that the passage envisioned the child being put to death, 2. that it was a fate to be suffered by the parents for their failure to observe the rite, 3. that failure to circumcise a boy would result in the death of the boy's soul. Philo favored the later. (Philo, *QG* 3.52)

<sup>108</sup> Gen 17 establishment of the covenant of circumcision; Gen 21 circumcision of Isaac; Gen 34 circumcision of the Shechemites; Ex 4 Zipporah's circumcision of Gershom, Ex 12 circumcision in preparation for the Passover; Jos 5 circumcision of the Israelites by Joshua.

*Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer* (Deut 10:16 also 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25). Here it should be noted that the metaphor's power lies in the presupposed importance and regular practice of physical circumcision.

Cohen concludes from the sparse interest in the rite shown by the authors of the Tanakh that circumcision must not have been regarded "as the essential mark of Jewish identity or as the sine qua non for membership in the Jewish polity" before the period of the Maccabees.<sup>109</sup> However, a lack of exigence could equally explain the lack of commentary; there simply was no need to write of a ritual whose value and meaning no one debated. Whatever reason for its infrequent mention by the biblical authors, circumcision was practiced widely enough by Jews in the Second Temple period to have become one of the things they were known for among pagans.<sup>110</sup>

### *Maccabees*

An exigence *par excellence* concerning circumcision however did present itself in form of the *gezerot* of Antiochus Epiphanes to which Jewish authors replied in earnest. In response to what appeared to be a Jewish up-rising (167 B.C.E.) in Jerusalem and likely in an attempt to quell future such Jewish rebellions,<sup>111</sup> the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.E.) attempted to eradicate what he perceived to be the source of the unrest; *Jewishness*. He proscribed specifically Jewish practices,<sup>112</sup> among them circumcision, which predictably propelled these very practices to the foreground of the debate concerning Jewish identity in the second century B.C.E.

Erich Gruen is surely correct that the Maccabean revolt did not represent the titanic clash of Greek and Jewish civilization that it is often envisioned to be.<sup>113</sup> It was however the crucible through which *circumcision* emerged as the primary metonymy for *Judaism*.<sup>114</sup> In all likelihood this had less to do with the perception of people who lived through the persecutions of Antiochus than with how the events were remembered for posterity in the books of the *Maccabees*.

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<sup>109</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989) 52.

<sup>110</sup> Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 74.

<sup>111</sup> Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) 191.

For theories regarding the cause of the war and debate concerning Antiochus' motives in issuing the *gezerot* see; Elias Bickermann, *Der Gott der Makkabäer*; K. Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform und Religionsverfolgung*; Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*; Erich S. Gruen "Hellenism and Persecution: Antiochus IV and the Jews"; Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* vol 2; Otto Mørkholm, *Antiochus of Syria*; and Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*.

<sup>112</sup> According to *1 & 2 Maccabees*, Antiochus commanded that all the people of his realm *should give up their particular customs* in order to facilitate that they *all should be one people* (1 Mac 1:41-42). He ordered the desecration of the Temple, the defiling of the priests and the erection of idol shrines (1 Mac 1:46-47). On penalty of death he compelled the Jews to eat swine's flesh (2 Mac 6:18; 7:1) and offer sacrifices to the pagan gods (1 Mac 2:23). He expressly forbade the Jews to offer sacrifices in the Temple, observe the Sabbath or any other Jewish festival, and commanded that the Jews leave their sons uncircumcised.

<sup>113</sup> Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 1-40.

<sup>114</sup> Cohen, *Beginnings*, 39.



The authors of *1* and *2 Maccabees* do not appear to be making any particular case for circumcision beyond endorsing the classic position set forward in *Genesis*. Circumcision, in fact, received comparatively scant attention in the Maccabean meta-narrative when compared to the lengthy tales of Eleazar and that of the mother and her seven sons martyred for their refusal to eat pork. Yet the martyrdom of the nameless, voiceless mothers and their infant sons captured the popular Jewish imagination in such a way that circumcision came to eclipse all other particularly Jewish practices as the signifier of *fidelity to the Law* and ultimately *Judaism* itself. The key lies I believe in *how* the martyr stories were told.

## 2 Maccabees

The author of *2 Maccabees* offered a carefully constructed tetrad of ever-lengthening martyr tales as the initial Jewish resistance to the *gezerot* of Antiochus. The tales encompass the three characteristic distinctions of Jews known to pagans in the Greco-Roman world: circumcision, Sabbath, and kashrut.<sup>115</sup> Two mothers and their babies are thrown from a wall to their deaths for circumcising their sons in defiance of the king's edict (2 Mac 6:10). An unnumbered group are burned to death for attempting to secretly observe the Sabbath in a cave (2 Mac 6:11).<sup>116</sup> Eleazar and a mother and her seven sons are alternately torn limb from limb, skinned, crushed, boiled, and otherwise molested for their refusal to eat pork in accordance to the Jewish Law (2 Mac 6:18-7:42).

The stories however are oddly disproportional. Where the subjects of circumcision and Sabbath are each assigned a singular tale, the author affords subject of kashrut two tales. The tales of Eleazar and of the mother and seven sons, grouped together at the end of the series, are the only voiced protagonist. While the author describes in some detail the martyrdoms of Eleazar and of the mother and her seven sons for their refusal to eat religiously forbidden food, by contrast the martyrdoms of the mothers who circumcised their babies and those burned alive for observing the Sabbath are so brief, taking up only a line, that they can hardly be categorized as *tales*.

Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons are each given apologies in which their reasoning and valor are showcased.<sup>117</sup> Importantly, all nine are offered opportunities to

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<sup>115</sup> See; Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2002) 48-52; Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 73-75; Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 153 ff.

<sup>116</sup> Josephus records "They also strangled those women and their sons whom they had circumcised, as the king had appointed, hanging their sons about their necks as they were upon the crosses." Josephus *Ant.* 12.248 [Whiston]

<sup>117</sup> These tales are built on the near-martyrdom legend of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The protagonists face the threat of death for clinging to their ancestral religion and are given a speech in which their steadfast devotion and unshakable conviction are made clear to the gentile tyrant. *If we are thrown into the blazing furnace of fire, the God we serve is able to deliver us from and rescue us from your hand O King. But even if he does not, let it be it known to you O King that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up* (Dan 3:17-18). Despite Nebuchadnezzar's considerable effort to execute them, the three young men of *Daniel* are in the end saved by their piety, the king recognizing the error of his ways. The authors of the *Maccabees* dramatically expanded on this tale type.

save their lives by complying with the king's edict and all nine – in full knowledge of their options – willingly go to their deaths. Friends of Eleazar even propose a ruse to rescue him in which he would have only appeared to have eaten the forbidden food, an offer he subsequently declines. These scenes certainly evoke admiration, horror and pride but importantly not pity. Eleazar and the mother and her sons are not tragic heroes who suffer the results of a character flaw or a mistake.<sup>118</sup> Eleazar, having lived a full and righteous life, *chooses* death over impiety. The mother and her seven sons likewise when offered the alternative of blasphemy *choose* to die. Death, however, was not their fate. The fate of the circumcised babies, by contrast, was chosen for them and once done in a private moment of parental bravery could not be undone when exposed publicly.

By the classical definition,<sup>119</sup> the martyrdom of the babies is not properly a *tragedy*. Their fate is brought about by external causes: namely, the decision of their parents to have them circumcised. However, the haunting silence of the nameless mothers in the face of the impending murder of their children leaves a critical gap in the text in which the reader, imagining the scene, cannot help but wonder if the mothers did not deeply regret their decision... if the author records no defiant speech on their part because they could not make one... if by giving them no voice he isn't silencing what would have been their repentance, begging and, in the end their screams. If the fate of the babies is technically a *misadventure*, then the silence of the mothers, read independently of the other tales, at least invites the possibility of an interpretation of *tragedy*.

The tetrad's structure opens with the martyrdom of unnamed, voiceless mothers and infants, and closes with that of the likewise unnamed but voiced mother and her seven unnamed-but-voiced sons. The tetrad moves quickly from silence to a crescendo of speech. The longest apology given to the voiced mother's remaining youngest son, notably *her* baby, who she begs to accept his death rather than transgress the covenant. In resisting the temptation to detail the martyrdom of the circumcised babies, in silencing their mothers, the author invites his readers to appropriate the sentiment of the speeches of the mother and seven sons for the mothers of the circumcised babies thereby filling the uncomfortable silence of the first tale. The dual pressure of the need to have the martyrdom of the circumcised babies fit the tetrad's theme of "unrepentant resistance" coupled with the moral outrage at the death of innocents demands the reader reject the interpretation of *tragedy* on the part of the silent mothers. If the mothers and the babies are fated to die, the reader is lead to conclude, let it be because they willed it.

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Where the defiance of the three men was represented by a single collective speech Eleazar and the mother and seven sons are each given colloquy. Where the author of *Daniel* leaves the details of being burned alive to the reader's imagination, the author of the *2 Maccabees*, by contrast, seem to relish in describing the tortures of his heroes. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus proves bent on destruction though he is given repeated opportunities to ameliorate his ways. Despite their extreme bravery Eleazar and the mother and seven sons are ultimately martyred, their piety assuring them a place in the world to come.

<sup>118</sup> As defined by Aristotle in *On Poetics*, 1453-4. For discussion see; S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art: With a Critical Text and a Translation of The Poetics* (London: Macmillan, 1895).

<sup>119</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*.

Unlike the martyrdoms of the circumcised babies and Sabbath worshipers, the tales of Eleazar and the mother and seven sons are fully resolved within the tetrad. By embracing martyrdom, the nine strip the tyrant of his power denying him his objective thereby besting him, albeit at a horrific cost. By contrast, the martyrdom of the mothers and babies and the worshipers, for the lack of verbal confrontation and thus opportunity for inspiring apology, lack also the neat resolution of the tales that followed them. In the broad scope their martyrdom could be said to find redress in the larger success of the Maccabean revolt yet it leaves me as a reader longing for the specificity and therefore relative comfort afforded the tales of Eleazar and the mother with the seven sons.

Could he be asked, the author of *2 Maccabees* might explain the voicelessness of the mothers of the circumcised babies by appealing to the nature of the crimes involved. For these mothers, their crime, circumcision, was a decision of the past. Once scored in the flesh there was nothing to *do* upon discovery and, more to the point perhaps, nothing to say.<sup>120</sup> Whether to eat swine's flesh however was a present choice in the narrative world of Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons: it was a decision still to be made thus justifying the vocalization/rationalization of martyrs resolution to die. Even so, the martyrdom of the mothers of the circumcised babies presented the author with the perfect platform on which to air the rebel manifesto. Placed in the mouth of these new mothers, some of the most vulnerable members of any society, such a speech could have been easily pitched, *ad misericordium*, to evoke the reader's pity, thereby securing the reader's loyalties. The ceding of this opportunity in silencing the mothers generates an unresolved angst within the narrative that leads the reader to infer the apologies of the mother and seven sons on behalf of the silent mothers in order to balance the tetrad thematically. The reader must thereby conclude that for the mothers of the circumcised babies, as with the mother and her seven sons, that there is no price too high for covenant faithfulness.

The restraint of the author of *2 Maccabees*, an author so clearly fond of speeches, in the face of such an opportunity suggests to me that he intended the nagging discomfort of the lopsided tales. The question is then: to what end? This need to appropriate the apology of the mother and her seven sons on behalf of the mothers of the circumcised babies has the effect of forcing the reader from a natural state of passivity. In the exercise of establishing a defiant resolve on behalf of mothers of the circumcised babies, the reader must strike common cause with them, must place themselves in their metaphorical shoes, and is thus quite cleverly brought to the point of identification with them.

All four tales place the protagonists on the horns of the same dilemma: assimilation or annihilation.<sup>121</sup> All four tales have the same result: the death of the

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<sup>120</sup> This is true of the Sabbath worshipers as well; their decision to disregard Antiochus' command lay equally in the past.

<sup>121</sup> This dilemma, assimilation or annihilation, is the driving quandary of the book of *Esther* as well. Haman orchestrates the annihilation of all *identifiable* Jews. The dilemma Queen Esther faces is whether to identify herself with the community and so expose herself as a target to Haman or to "keep silent," remain assimilated, and become a bystander to the annihilation of her people. Queen Esther, of course, reveals her heritage to the Ahasuerus, Haman's fortunes are reversed and the Jews are saved. A/The moral of the story is, for *Judaism* writ large, assimilation and annihilation are equivalent outcomes. Failure of individual

protagonists. However the nature of the threat posed to the community differs critically in the fact the first of the tales is told of infants. Granted, Eleazar and the seven sons are observant Jewish *men* and as such the issue of circumcision could not have driven their particular tales. A martyr story about resistance to the edict forbidding circumcision was a story necessarily told of infants. Nonetheless, grown men have the prospect of procreation and thus the insured continuance of the community of which they are a part. Eleazar, the epitome of what faithful Jewish boys, if allowed, grow to become, was nonetheless old. While the text makes no specific mention of Eleazar's children it is possible if not probable that a man his age would have had a family. While the author exclusively stresses the brother/son relationships of the seven sons to each other and their mother, their speeches present them as reasoned, articulate, devoted, determined individuals and therefore gives the impression that they too were men, even young men, but not children. This coupled with the caveat that the act of eating prohibited food could be gotten around for the price of one's public honor sets the threat represented in these tales apart in kind from that of circumcision. The martyrdoms of Eleazar and the mother and seven sons, though a clear threat to the community, were the deaths of brave individuals. By contrast the murder of the unnamed circumcised babies in theory posed the threat of the annihilation of a generation in their infancy and so the literal annihilation of those willing to identify as Jews. The silence of the martyred mothers and babies underscores this; the babies are yet to be.

Most obviously the act involved differs critically as well. The amputation of a child's foreskin was intended as an indisguisable mark of ethnic identification. While a surgical procedure is certainly more dramatic than the avoidance of prohibited food, more importantly (for the emotional impact of the tales), circumcision was a ritual observance done on behalf of someone else. The consequence incurred when discovered is therefore emotionally fraught as the act indicted another, a dependant, an innocent.

The tetrad's primary *raison d'être* within the narrative of *2 Maccabees* was to provide the political and theological justification for the Maccabean revolt.<sup>122</sup> It meets this objective well; the triumph of the Jewish rebellion over the wicked Seleucid overlords is extremely satisfying. Yet circumcision, past this brief tale, did not factor as a subject in the larger narrative of *2 Maccabees*. The author's agenda clearly did not encompass the promotion of circumcision to the position of metonymy for *Judaism*. Had *2 Maccabees* stood alone in world of Jewish literature, it seems unlikely that circumcision could have risen to such heights on the strength of its singular recommendation. Yet, when read through the narrative lens of its cognate *1 Maccabees*, the nagging lack of resolution invoked by the silence of the mothers of the circumcised babies finds its ultimate vindication in a synthesis which virtually begs to be made.

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Jews to claim the community, in essence to *be Jewish*, has the same result, if through different means, as if Haman's plot had succeeded.

<sup>122</sup> This is developed more explicitly by the author of *4 Maccabees*, *These, then, who have been sanctified through God, are honored not with this honor alone but also on account of them our nation was not ruled by our enemies, the tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified. They have become a ransom for the sin of our nation.* 4 Mac 17:20-21.

## 1 Maccabees

The author of *1 Maccabees*, for his part, had no proclivity for martyr stories. He duly notes that people were executed for their defiance of the *gezerot* but did not dwell on the particulars. Their crimes are variously catalogued as possession of a book of the Law, possession of a circumcised son, refusal to eat unclean food and generally being in the wrong place at the wrong time (1 Mac 1:37, 57, 60-63). The martyrs of *1 Maccabees* are unnumbered and unnamed; the manner of their deaths, with one notable exception, unknown. Their laconic tales embedded within the more detailed account of the defilement of the Temple serves in the narrative, as in *2 Maccabees*, as the pretext for the Maccabean revolt.

The difference in narrative style between the authors of *1* and *2 Maccabees* is nowhere more evident than in the single line each author allotted the martyrdom of the circumcised babies. Where the punishment for circumcision was limited in *2 Maccabees* to the mothers and their babies, in *1 Maccabees* it is broadened to encompass fathers, siblings and the mohels who performed the rite. This expansion serves on the one hand to exponentially increase the Seleucids' brutality while simultaneously providing additional places of purchase for readers' empathy. Where the author of *2 Maccabees* numbers those martyred for the crime circumcision at four, the number of victims is restricted in *1 Maccabees* only by the reader's imagination. Whatever the author of *1 Maccabees* gains in these variations on the register of horror comes, however, at the expense of the reader's ability to conjure the scene in their imagination. The two women of *2 Maccabees* paraded before their families and neighbors to their deaths are all too easy to picture – their desolate march all the more pitiable, somehow, for the fact that they are alone.

In his otherwise spare account of the martyrs, the author of *1 Maccabees* did offer a single, uncharacteristically gruesome detail in the tale of the circumcised babies; he recorded that they were hung from their mothers necks. This bit of graphic indulgence certainly amplifies the barbarity of the punishment in its irony; the mothers' bodies, the source of the babies' life and sustenance become, in this gruesome turn, the apparatus of their deaths. In contrast, the author of *2 Maccabees* writes that the babies were hanging at their mothers' breasts. The image evoked could not be more different. The babies of *2 Maccabees* are introduced to the reader as thriving, clearly desirous of life, in contrast to the strangled creatures of *1 Maccabees*. Thus the reader of *2 Maccabees* is further conscripted as a literary witness not just to the babies' murder but to the moment of their killing as they are thrown, still clinging to their mothers, to their deaths.

While it is the clear intent of the author of *2 Maccabees* to wring his readers heart in pity and outrage there is an undeniable elegance to the simple, understated resolve of the martyrs in *1 Maccabees*, *they chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant – and they died.* (1 Mac 1:63). The cataloging of the martyrs in *1 Maccabees* is neatly egalitarian. None of the martyrs are voiced. Having taken their stance they boldly accept their fate. There is none of the imbalance, intended or not, of

the 2 *Maccabees* tetrad of tales and so none of the nagging lack of resolution for those martyred for having circumcised a son.

While the tale of the circumcised babies as recounted in *1 Maccabees* lacks *2 Maccabees* dramatic flare, circumcision as a subject plays a significantly larger role in the narrative arc of *1 Maccabees* than that of its cognate. Circumcision is mentioned four times in the opening chapters of *1 Maccabees*. The first is evoked in reference to the establishment of a gymnasium in Jerusalem. A portent of the looming struggle for a religious, national identity that would soon follow, the gymnasium was the first of the calamities to befall the faithful Jews. Jewish traitors, the author explained, sought to make an alliance with the gentiles as a means of staving off future national calamity (1 Mac 1:11). The condition levied for such an alliance was that Jews were to observe gentile customs (1 Mac 1:13). To this end a Greek-style gymnasium was constructed in Jerusalem. Jewish men removed or otherwise disguised the marks of their circumcision to order to compete, according to Greek custom, heroically nude (1 Mac 1:14).<sup>123</sup> On this point the author of *1 Maccabees* was unequivocal – for a Jewish man to conceal his circumcision in order to appear Greek was commensurate with a wholesale abandonment of the covenant, *They made themselves uncircumcised and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the gentiles...* (1 Mac 1:15). As circumcision was an obvious point of friction in the context of a Greek gymnasium, its mention in correlation to the establishment of such a facility in Jerusalem was entirely natural to narrative context.

The second and third mentions of circumcision come in the listing of the *gezerot* and the response of the martyrs who continue the practice in defiance of Antiochus' edict. *[The King demanded] they leave their sons uncircumcised... so that they might forget the Law... whoever does not obey the command of the king will die... and they put to death the women who had their children circumcised according to the decree ...* (1 Mac 1:48-50, 60). As with the mention of circumcision in connection to the establishment of the gymnasium, the mention of the rite at this point in the narrative is likewise entirely natural to the context. Antiochus, seeking the unity of his kingdom attempted to eliminate particular loyalties and so targeted particular Jewish practices such as circumcision. The people in resisting continued to practice circumcision and were predictably martyred for their trouble.

The final reference to circumcision in *1 Maccabees* comes on the heels of the first Jewish victory against the apostate Jews. The militant Jewish resistance, rallied under the flag of zeal for the Law (1 Mac 2:27), rose in response to the martyrdom of the faithful. Taking the offensive, the Jewish army attacked those perceived to be Seleucid

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<sup>123</sup> “The fact that Jewish identity was so closely bound up with these observances obviously created obstacles for Jews who were attracted by Hellenistic culture – as amply illustrated by the events which led up to the Maccabean revolt.” John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 13.

Gruen argues that this claim is surely a “wild exaggeration” based on the fact “II Maccabees, which provides some specifics about Jews in the gymnasium and is even more condemnatory, says nothing about nudity, let alone about the camouflage of circumcision... II Maccabees would have surely pounced upon that information... Neither the existence of a gymnasium nor participation in its activities required abandonment of the faith.” Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 29-30.

collaborators, “sinners” and the “lawless,” who fled to their gentile comrades for safety (1 Mac 2:44). Having gained the field, the insurgents’ first order of business was to tear down the pagan altars and forcibly circumcise all the uncircumcised boys found within the borders of Israel (1 Mac 2:44-46). Where the first three mentions of circumcision in *I Maccabees* were natural to their narrative contexts, this final reference is not. That the Jews would tear down the pagan altars upon their victory is a predictable, even expected response. As the erection of such altars represented the conquest of the Greeks and so demolition of the pagan altars represented the Jewish repossession of the territory. That they would forcibly circumcise the sons of Jewish apostates in the same breath however is entirely unpredictable.

As with Newton’s laws of motion, the reader of *I Maccabees*, to one degree or another, expects an equal and opposite reaction to the Seleucid outrages, *a response in kind*. The destructive action of tearing down the pagan altars anticipates a constructive act such as the erection of an *eben ha-ezer* or the stationing of a Jewish outpost, something called for by the immediate narrative context. While the circumcision of the apostates does form a chiasmic anti-point to the apostates’ removal of their circumcision in chapter one, it is not in fact an equivalent act. Even if the gymnasium was a bastion of hellephiles, participation in the gymnasium was voluntary. The forced circumcision of all apostates within the borders of Israel differed fundamentally in kind. Notably, the author of *I Maccabees* offers no apology for Mattathias’ decision: he simply assumed the appropriateness of compulsory circumcision as a response to a Jewish victory.

From a narrative critical perspective, however, the forced circumcision of the hellephiles is the emotive apex of *I Maccabees*. Though it occurs unusually early in the narrative it nonetheless bears all the dramatic hallmarks of a climax. The section unfolds chiasmatically;

- A. Mattathias’ lament (2:1-13)
  - B. Mattathias and sons refuse to offer the pagan sacrifice (2:14-22)
    - C. Jewish rebels flee and suffer the Sabbath massacre (2:15-39)
      - C<sup>1</sup>. Jewish rebels organize, attack and are victorious (2:40-44)
    - B<sup>1</sup>. Mattathias and allies tear down altars and circumcise the sons of the apostates (2:45-48)
  - A<sup>1</sup>. Mattathias’ last words (2:49-70)

Nothing else in the narrative rises to the poignancy of this moment, as it represents not merely of ascendancy over a bitter enemy but the decisive reversal of Jewish fortunes. The author concludes that in destroying the pagan altars and circumcising the apostates the rebels *rescued the Law out of the hands of the gentiles and kings* (1 Mac 2:48a). On the heels of the martyr tales, framed by the admonishing speeches of the rebel leader, this first victory and reclamation of Jewish identity is worthy of Hollywood.

Executed within the sphere of Maccabean influence, compulsory circumcision served to score the reestablished border in the flesh of the *‘amme ha-aretz*. This in turn advanced an extremely literal, embodied, provincial view of Jewish identity. To be *in*

Israel you must *be* Israel.<sup>124</sup> To *be* a Jew you must *look* like a Jew. In this inversion of the *gezerah*, Mattathias reaches for the same political solution sought by his nemesis: unity in conformity. In the neat narrative world of *1 Maccabees*, circumcision accomplishes this homogeneity in a single knife stroke.

Circumcision, of course, was only one of several practices particular to Jews outlawed by Antiochus. One might imagine Mattathias could have equally forced the observance of the Sabbath or ordered the slaughter of all pigs in Judea in redress of the other injustices suffered by the faithful. Circumcision is surely the more dramatic choice as it involves blood, pain, fear, disfigurement (of a type), if not also a bit of levity when one imagines the hunt for the miscreants. Yet in his reclamation, Mattathias selected a single signpost to mark his victory: circumcision.

While *1 Maccabees* is the earliest text demonstrating circumcision in the role of supreme metonymy it does not follow that the author was the originator of this figure of speech. That he felt no compulsion to substantiate the association coupled with his assumption of the appropriateness of compulsory circumcision in the wake of Jewish triumph suggests that circumcision was already functioning in such a capacity at the point *1 Maccabees* was composed. However, pinpointing the origin and exact moment in which circumcision took center stage in the discussion of Jewish identity is not of primary concern here. What is at issue is the fact that when circumcision does surface in its metonymic capacity it does so without rival in the climactic moment of reversal in a pivotally significant national legend.

#### 4 Maccabees: a conjecture

The author of *2 Maccabees* clearly intended the mothers of the circumcised babies to be admired by the reader in their noble dedication to the covenant and, should the need arise, be emulated. It was a skillfully crafted, highly memorable, economically told tale. Yet the story of the martyred babies was only the precursor to the tetrad's main event – the martyrdom of those who refused to eat forbidden food. Past its singular mention in this one brief tale, circumcision does not factor further in the narrative of *2 Maccabees*.

By contrast the author of *1 Maccabees* did employ *circumcision* in a metonymic capacity. And while no other specifically Jewish practice was afforded such prestige within the narrative world of this text, circumcision factored only in the opening two chapters of this sixteen-chapter narrative. Clearly the author's agenda did not encompass a program aimed specifically at foregrounding circumcision. Had either *1* or *2 Maccabees* been the only recounting of the Jewish victory, circumcision would have likely remained one of several important markers of Judaism; a signifier of *children of Abraham* but not *the* metonymy for whole of what it was to be *Jewish* in the late Second Temple period.

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<sup>124</sup> This sentiment is echoed in Josephus' recounting of the consolidation of Hasamean power: "Now at this time the Jews were in possession of the following cities that had belonged to the Syrians, Idumeans, and Phoenicians... and Pella; which at last they utterly destroyed, because its inhabitants would not bear to change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews." Josephus *Ant.* 13.395 [Whiston]



However, two centuries later, when writing of the Seleucid persecutions, the first century author of the *Testament of Moses* focused entirely on circumcision and the defilement of the Temple making no mention whatever of kashrut or Sabbath. "... a king of kings of the earth who, having supreme authority, will crucify those who confess their circumcision... and their sons will be cut by physicians to bring forward their foreskins." Tromp comments, "Since it is difficult to imagine how someone can 'deny his circumcision', *circumcisionem* must be taken as a metonymy for 'Judaism'. *Negare circumcisionem* then means 'to disavow being circumcised', that is 'to renounce Judaism'..."<sup>125</sup> Writing in the same period Paul, for his part, employed circumcision regularly as a metonymy for Judaism dividing world the world into the seemingly self-evident categories of *circumcised* and *uncircumcised* without apology, ἀλλὰ τούναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας καθὼς Πέτρος τῆς περιτομῆς (Gal 2:7). How then can circumcision's unchallenged ascendancy to role of supreme metonymy be accounted for?

Though I can offer few proofs from the first-century, I do not think it far-fetched to suppose that the tales of the circumcised babies were regularly synthesized both in popular memory and public recountings of the Maccabean rebellion.<sup>126</sup> The first-century book of *4 Maccabees*, though pointedly focused on the expansion and philosophical exploration of the tetrad of *2 Maccabees*, offers evidence of just such synthesis in his composition of the tale of the circumcised babies. The author adhered to the tale as found in *2 Maccabees* on the point that victims were women and their babies, not whole families and mohels. He likewise held that they were martyred by being thrown from a substantial height. However he followed *1 Maccabees* in refusing to number the victims as the author of *2 Maccabees* had done. He also borrowed a sentiment found in *1 Maccabees* establishing the women's cognizance of the consequences for defying the *gezerot*.

4 Maccabees 4:25

...because they had circumcised their sons, women were thrown headlong from heights along with their babies, *knowing all the while that they would suffer this*.

1 Maccabees 1:60, 63

...they put to death the women who had their children circumcised... *they chose to die* rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant – *and they died*.

Having identified the same troubling aspect of the *2 Maccabees* tale as I have above, the author of *4 Maccabees* attempted to address the uncomfortable silence of the mothers by adapting the authorial conclusion of *1 Maccabees* that the women who circumcised their sons intentionally went to their deaths.

The tales of the martyred babies as recounted in *1* and *2 Maccabees* are alike in subject matter, theological perspective and, perhaps most importantly, in length.

<sup>125</sup> Johannes Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 217.

<sup>126</sup> A similar phenomenon occurs in Christian communities' celebration of the birth of Christ where the wholly different narratives of the gospels of Matthew and Luke were and are still regularly amalgamated.

However, as I pointed out above, there are key variants in the details. Because the tales are so short, those details – the number of the victims, the mode of their death – appear not to effect the conclusion: they are all martyred for the crime of circumcision. The tales therefore appear interchangeable. Gaps created in the tale of *2 Maccabees* beg to be filled by the some details included in the tale of *1 Maccabees*. Perhaps even more to the point, however, when the emotionally fraught tale *2 Maccabees* is read in place of its cognate within the narrative arc of *1 Maccabees*, the nagging silence of the mothers finds a rather satisfactory redress in forced circumcision of the Jewish apostates who must submit to circumcision in a silence equal to that of the martyrs themselves. It is a tempting redaction.

There are arguably few things more compelling than a well-told story. If it was indeed the case that the tales of the circumcised babies were commonly synthesized, we may have a, possibly the source of the *pathos* constraining the discussion concerning circumcision in the first century. *1 Maccabees*' use of circumcision as metonymy created a framework for which *2 Maccabees* may very well have provided a compelling emotional engine.

#### Pagan Zeitgeist and Jewish Weltanschauung

In the cessation of the explicit threat against 'Jewishness' achieved by the victory of the Maccabees, circumcision might have eventually receded to its former place in the pantheon of Jewish identity markers. However, as the Seleucid Empire gave way to the Roman, so the acute exigence *gezerot* gave way to the chronic, if lower key exigence of the Roman public bathhouse.

Successor to the Greek gymnasium, the Roman public bathhouse was a pervasive cornerstone of pagan culture. Established in nearly every city neighborhood, town, hamlet and military fort in the Empire and its territories, the baths were frequented daily by of every strata of society.<sup>127</sup>

The universal acceptance of bathing as a central event in daily life belongs to the Roman world and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that at the height of the empire, the baths embodied the ideal Roman way of urban life. Apart from their normal hygienic functions, they provided facilities for sports and recreation. Their public nature created the proper environment—much like a city club or community center—for social intercourse varying from neighborhood gossip to business discussions. There was even a cultural and intellectual side to the baths since the truly grand establishments, the *thermae*, incorporated libraries, lecture halls, colonnades, and promenades and assumed a character like the Greek gymnasium.<sup>128</sup>

The Romans inherited with the Greek gymnasium the Greek aesthetic idealizing the natural, i.e. *uncircumcised*, male body.<sup>129</sup> Given the central role of the baths, Greco-

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<sup>127</sup> See Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1999).

<sup>128</sup> Fikret Yegül, (*Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: MIT, 1992): 30

<sup>129</sup> "Circumcision... was just one of those inexplicable practices which distinguished the Jews, a practice causing some instinctive revulsion." Molly Whittaker *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views*

Roman culture was one in which public nudity was an expected, daily common place. It was therefore a culture in which the difference between pagan and observant Jew were on regular display.<sup>130</sup>

While genitals have long been a subject of interest and amusement for people of all cultures, the concealed/revealed nature of Jewish circumcision in the Greco-Roman social context drew particular fire from the pagan satirists of the first centuries. Strabo, 64/63 B.C.E. – 25 C.E., listed circumcision among the proofs of the degeneration of Moses' righteous religion (Strabo, *Geo.* 16.2.37). Petronius', ca. 27 – 66 C.E., character Habinnas commenting on his Jewish slave offered this summation, "In fact, he'd be perfect if he didn't have two bad points: he's circumcised and he snores" (Petronius *Sat.* 68.7-8 [Arrowsmith]). In a poem about the promiscuous Caelia, Martial, ca. 38 – ca. 102 C.E., stressed her debauchery by writing that she granted her favors *even* to circumcised Jews (Martial *Epi.* 7.30.5). In another poem Martial wrote of a man who covered his genitals in an extremely large sheath under the guise of protecting his voice leaving his friends to surmise his possession of generous endowment. While he was exercising the sheath fell off, much to the amusement of the poet, revealing that he was instead hiding the fact he was circumcised (Martial, *Epi.* 7.82). Martial dedicated still another poem to a rival "circumcised poet" whom he derided as both a plagiarist and pederast<sup>131</sup> (Martial, *Epi.* 11.94). Tacitus, 56-117 C.E., wrote that Jewish customs generally were "preposterous and mean." He found circumcision particularly offensive as he believed it demonstrated the Jews general hatred of humanity. For those who converted to Judaism, circumcision, Tacitus warned, was but the first step in a slippery slope ending in general despising of the gods, country, parents and children (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.2 [Moore]).<sup>132</sup> Aware of such ridicule, Philo, ca. 20 B.C.E. – 40 C.E., retorted that the pagan cynics should first bother to investigate the matter before passing judgment as, "it is not probable that so many myriads should be circumcised in every generation, mutilating the bodies of themselves and of their nearest relations, in a manor which is accompanies with severe pain, without adequate cause..." (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.3 [Yonge]).

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(Cambridge: Cambridge, 1984) 80. See also; John J. Collins, "A Symbol of Otherness: Circumcision and Salvation in the First Century" in *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, and "Others" in Late Antiquity*. Ed. by J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs. (Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities Series: Chico, 1985) 163-186. and Leonard B. Glick, *Marked in Your Flesh: Circumcision from Ancient Judea to Modern America* (New York: Oxford, 2005) 27-31.

<sup>130</sup> "In the bath one normally would be able to tell if a neighbor was circumcised; see Martial 7:28... In rabbinic baths too people are nude: B. Shabbat 10a. Josephus reports that the Hellenizers concealed their circumcision in order to be Greeks even when unclothed (*AJ* 12.41, cf. *I Macc.* I:II). *BJ* 2.161 reports that Essene women wore a garment while bathing, men a loincloth; this implies that non-Essenes were naked while bathing." Cohen, *Beginnings*, 48 fn 91.

To what degree circumcision was in fact a useful marker for identifying Jews in the first century can be debated. Much depends on how one construes the evidence as to the level of Jewish participation in the pagan gymnasiums and baths. Certainly for the vast majority of Jews, for the greater part of any given day, it was a mark of difference entirely concealed by their clothing. Suetonius, ca. 71 – ca. 135 C.E., does tell the story of a ninety year old man inspected in a crowded public court to establish if he was circumcised and so subject to the Jewish tax, but this would seem to be an anomalous case. (*Domitian* 12). For the purpose of our study the utilitarian aspects of circumcision matter little.

<sup>131</sup> To borrow Gruen's summation, *Diaspora*, 51.

<sup>132</sup> For further discussion see Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 153-158 and Gruen, *Diaspora*, 51-52.

Predictably the Greco-Roman “code of genital etiquette” had the potential to place “circumcised Jews at an embarrassing disadvantage in public baths, wrestling matches, and competitive games”<sup>133</sup> if not exclude them from participation altogether.<sup>134</sup> Inevitably under such social pressure some Jewish men sought the means by which they could hide or correct their ritual defect.<sup>135</sup> According to Celsus, a circumcision could be concealed by drawing the skin up around the glans and securing it with a string called a *kynodesme* or by a comparatively minor surgical procedure called *infibulation* in which a wooden pin called a *fibula* was inserted into what remained of the foreskin and the skin would then be gathered up around the pin over the glans and secured with a string (Celsus, *Med.* 7.25.2.).<sup>136</sup>

The Cadillac of correctives, however, was clearly epispasm: “If the glans is bare and the man wishes for the look of things to have it covered, that can be done,” Celsus assured his readers... The surgeon would cut around the glans freeing the sheath of skin surrounding the shaft of the penis, pull the skin forward and dress the wound carefully so that the skin would reattach to the glans leaving a foreskin. At a time before effective anesthesia, a man inclined to try this procedure had Celsus’ assurance that it was “not so very painful.” (Celsus, *Med.* 7.25.1 [Spencer])<sup>137</sup>

The development of *infibulation* and *epispasm* and the popularity of the *kynodesme*, as seen in Greek art, testifies to the existence of a market for such a procedure though, it should be noted, not to the numbers of men who sought them out.<sup>138</sup> Paul himself was clearly aware of these procedures and in *1 Corinthians* 7:18 and prohibited such correctives for Christians. “From references and allusions to [epispasm] in classical and rabbinical literature, it appears that [the procedure] reached its peak of popularity in the first century C.E. ... foreskins assumed an importance they have rarely had before or since.”<sup>139</sup>

The response in Jewish literature to this sustained exigence was univocally in line with the position advocated by the author of *1 Maccabees*: Jews circumcise.

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<sup>133</sup> David L. Gollaher, *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 14. See also; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 59-60.

<sup>134</sup> Robert G. Hall, “Epispasm: circumcision in reverse,” *BR* 8 (1992): 52-57.

At issue was propriety – it was a social *faux pas* in the context of a Greek gymnasium to have the glans of a man’s penis exposed. “The Greek standard of modesty held that the foreskin should cover the glans. Visible glans in an uncircumcised man was taken as a sign of arousal and was thus considered indecent within the arena. To prevent mishaps, many athletes wore the *kynodesme*, a strand of colored string that looped around the foreskin, closing it tightly over the glans.” Gollaher, *Circumcision*, 13-14.

“Circumcision was regarded by the Greeks and Romans as a physical deformity, and hence, like others who had various deformities, circumcised men were not permitted to participate in the Olympic Games.”

Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, 155.

<sup>135</sup> Hall, “Epispasm,” 52.

<sup>136</sup> Brought to my attention by Hall’s article “Epispasm and the Dating of Ancient Jewish Writings,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 2 (1988): 71-86.

<sup>137</sup> Reference is made to this procedure in the *Testament of Moses*, “and their young sons will be cut by physicians to bring forward their foreskins.” (8:3 [Priest]).

<sup>138</sup> Epispasm “appears to have been a common practice among Hellenized Jewish men, from at least as early as the second century B.C.E.” Glick, *Marked*, 31.

<sup>139</sup> Hall, “Epispasm,” 52.

A Jewish man feeling his circumcision to be a great social disadvantage to him was likely to leave his sons uncircumcised whether or not he had the means or the nerve to correct his own perceived disfigurement. The author of *Jubilees* was emphatic on this point: Jewish boys are circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law or they are not Jews.

This law is for all the generations for ever, and there is no circumcision of the days, and no omission of one day out of the eight days; for it is an eternal ordinance, ordained and written on the heavenly tablets. And every one that is born, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, belongs not to the children of the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, but to the children of destruction; nor is there, moreover, any sign on him that he is the Lord's, but (he is destined) to be destroyed and slain from the earth, and to be rooted out of the earth, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord our God. (Jub 15:25b-27a [Wintermute]).

Though Philo himself allegorize the meaning of circumcision he was nonetheless harshly critical of Jews who failed to perform the physical ritual.<sup>140</sup>

For there are some men, who, looking upon written law as symbols of things appreciable by the intellect, have studied some things with superfluous accuracy, and have treated others with neglectful indifference; whom shall I blame for their levity; for they ought to attend to both classes of things, applying themselves both to an accurate investigation of invisible things, and also to an irreproachable observance of these laws which are notorious... [N]or because the rite of circumcision is an emblem of the excision of pleasures and of all the passions, and of the destruction of the impious opinion, according to which the mind has imagined itself to be by itself competent to produce offspring, does it follow that we are to annul the law which has been enacted about circumcision. (Philo, *Migration of Abraham* 89-93 [Younge])

A convert *from* their Jewish heritage was defined by Josephus as one who hates Jewish customs, “As for Antiochus he... thought to give [the pagans] a demonstration of his own conversion (μεταβολή), and his hatred of the Jewish customs...” (Josephus, *War*. 7.3.3 [Whiston]).<sup>141</sup> Conversely he defined a convert *to* Judaism embraces Jewish customs.

Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers that they submitted to circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, *that they were hereafter no other than Jews*. (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9.1 [Whiston] italics mine)

That the conversion of the Idumeans was compulsory gave Josephus no pause. As Cohen observes, “[f]or both Jews and gentiles the boundary line between Judaism and paganism was determined more by Jewish observance than by Jewish theology.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> “Philo’s discussions of circumcision indicate that the practice was of prime importance to his concept of Jewish orthopraxy. Is writing on the subject have a sense of urgency, for he saw circumcision not only attacked from without, but also undermined from within.” Alan Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity* (BJS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 58.

<sup>141</sup> Another example see Josephus, *Ant.* 12.5.1.

<sup>142</sup> Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. 61.

This concept that ‘circumcision makes the Jew’ is reflected in the narratives of *Greek Ester* and *Judith*. In *Ester* the Persian proletariat, having adeptly assessed a shifting of the political winds in Susa following the disgrace of Haman, find it advantageous to align themselves with their heretofore enemies the Jews. They accomplish this alliance according to the narrative solely through circumcising themselves. Once circumcised, the author of *Ester* declares them without qualification to be Jews. πολλοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν περιετέμοντο καὶ ἰουδαίζον διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων *Many of the gentiles were circumcised and lived according to Jewish custom out of fear of the Jews* (Grk Est 8:17b). In the book of *Judith*, the gentile Achior upon witnessing the dramatic deliverance of the Jews from the hands of the Assyrians, decided to join the winning team and become a Jew. His conversion was accomplished by circumcision *solus*. *Achior, having seen all the God of Israel had done, believed in God exceedingly. He circumcised his uncircumcised flesh and was added the house of Israel and remains so to this day* (Jth 14:10).

Josephus recounts the story of Izates that has several elements in common with the situation in Galatia. Izates the gentile king of Adiabene was a willing and eager convert to Judaism much as the Galatians appear to have been. Like the Galatians, Izates desired to complete his conversion by being circumcised. Ananais his Jewish tutor, like Paul though for different reasons, strongly counseled Izates against being circumcised fearing his subjects would never consent to being ruled by a Jew. Ananais assures Izates that God would forgive him this omission given the particulars of the political situation. Though not entirely persuaded the King complies only to be later confronted by the renowned Rabbi Eleazer from Galilee who pointed out, no doubt as did the visitors to Galatia, the hypocrisy of reading Moses yet not obeying the commandments. Izates promptly underwent circumcision despite the political risk and Josephus concluded, *God himself hindered what they feared from taking effect; for he preserved both Izates himself and his sons when they fell into many dangers, and produced their deliverance when it seemed impossible, and demonstrated thereby, that the fruit of piety does not perish as to those that have regard to him, and fix their faith on him only.* (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.2 [Whiston]).

### *Summary*

The “ultimate force of symbols depends...on their power to stir the emotions, moving men to action and reaction”<sup>143</sup> Societies employ such ritualized symbols in the socialization of children’s emotions along prescribed arcs to both establish and reinforce cultural obligations for the purpose of social cohesion.<sup>144</sup> The emotional culture of first-

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<sup>143</sup> Ioan Lewis et al., *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-cultural Studies in Symbolism* (London: Academic, 1977) 2. See also Kertzer, *Ritual*, 99-101.

<sup>144</sup> Johnmarshall Reeve, *Understanding Motivation and Emotion* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2009) 353 ff. “Microsociology reveals that emotions are learned through interaction...Mesosociology reveals that emotions are socially useful, indeed indispensable, to the social order. Emotions reflect the institutional settings in which they are experienced. Macrosociology reveals that emotions are shaped by society and culture. Emotions reflect the history and values of a people... In fact, emotions are inescapably *social*, important to the understanding of social interaction, social

century Judaism, centered around the grounding signifier of circumcision, function as emotional cultures of all societies have always functioned: to condition and in turn sanction behavior and beliefs, to create a sense of belonging and common cause – to mold loyalties as it minted minds.<sup>145</sup> The emotion circumcision engendered in the Jews of the first century demonstrates “the powerful dependence people feel [generally] toward their society.”<sup>146</sup> Divinely ordained, embedded in the founding cultural myth, reinforced in national calamity, a rite of some antiquity and relative uniqueness,<sup>147</sup> circumcision would not have been easily or lightly thrown off within the Jewish *épistème*.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR READING THE EPISTLES

In an admonishment concerning circumcision in his letter to the Philippians, Paul had cause to list his credentials as a Jew, περιτομῆ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραὴλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος, κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος (Phil 3:5-6).<sup>148</sup> This autobiography<sup>149</sup> forms the minor component of a *qal vahomer* argument in which Paul contends that as great as was his Jewish identity, so much greater did he consider his identity in Christ. Rhetorically these proofs establish not only the legitimacy of Paul’s Jewish identity but presented him as a serious, educated and successful Jew. This in turn lent credibility to his heterodox teaching on circumcision to an audience converting to what they believed to be Jewish messianism. Paul’s diminution of his considerable religious, cultural heritage, so arresting to modern readers, was likely an attempt to strike common cause with his audience, to level the playing field in mitigating his inherited advantage as he encouraged them to forgo the mark of covenant distinction; no doubt an effort to reassure the Philippians that by remaining uncircumcised they did not jeopardize their salvation. As it functions in the larger pericope, this brief autobiography pivots the argument from the particular issue of circumcision with which it opens, to a broader issue of the Law, on which Paul then greatly expands in a sweeping rhetorical crescendo (Phil 3:7-11).

As the subject immediately at hand was circumcision, it is not necessarily surprising that Paul would have led this autobiographical section with the subject of his

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institutions, and society and culture.” Gordon Clanton “Jealousy and Envy” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions* (eds. Jan E. Stets and Jonathan H. Turner; New York: Springer, 2007) 411.

<sup>145</sup> Emile Durkheim and others questioned the premise that religious activity is a response to emotion because it failed to recognize “that participation in religious ritual and ceremonies is frequently obligatory and socially expected.” Malcolm B. Hamilton *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1995) 58.

<sup>146</sup> David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (Binghamton: Vail-Ballou, 1988) 100.

<sup>147</sup> While the Jews were “not the only nation to practice circumcision... in Rome in the first century the Jews were particularly associated with it... any circumcised person in the city of Rome would be assumed by the state to be a Jew, and whoever was assumed by the state to be a Jew was liable to the *fiscus Judaicus*...” Cohen, *Beginnings*, 42.

<sup>148</sup> Paul does mention his heritage and zealotry in other letters, notably Gal 1:13-14; Rom 11:1 and 2 Cor 11:22, *Philippians*, however, contains the most complete catalogue.

<sup>149</sup> Dodd argues this term is misleading as focus on the information as biography obscures its rhetorical function. Brian J. Dodd, *Paul’s Paradigmatic “I”: Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1999) 171.

own circumcision. Yet, as the autobiography is structured, circumcision, listed as the *first* proof, appears oddly situated. As the expression of Jewish religious conviction, one would think circumcision would have more naturally been ordered to follow the identification of the religion itself. Had Paul organized his autobiography this way, circumcision would have occupied the center point of the proofs, the fourth of the seven elements and would have formed a natural transition from the wider, accidental aspects of Paul's identity to the personal, elective aspects. It would have narrowed from those things to which one is subject to by birth, turning on a religious mark on Paul's person given at birth, and building out to the ways in which he appropriated and participated in his tradition.

1. national – ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ
2. tribal – φυλῆς Βενιαμίν
3. religious identifications<sup>150</sup> – Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων
4. *circumcision* – περιτομῇ ὀκταήμερος
5. Pharisaism – κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος
6. zeal – κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
7. blamelessness – κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος

It is of course possible that *Philippians* 3:5-6 was a stream of consciousness, that Paul began his list with circumcision purely because it was the topic he was most immediately addressing; however, Paul showed a penchant for carefully constructed, often poetical turns of phrase. If Paul missed the opportunity to smooth and tighten the order of this passage, I think it is likely he meant to do so. If this is indeed the case, then circumcision might not be just the *first* proof of Paul's Jewishness but the *foremost* proof in his own mind – a proof that, once established, qualified and legitimated the rest of his claims. If this was Paul's rationale, conscious or not, behind the ordering of his autobiography, then we have a clear glimpse of a Maccabean substructure informing Paul's identity.

Of course, Paul had been circumcised as an infant and on that score, one could argue, his identity as a Jew was compulsory, a testimony to the religious convictions of his parents. Social psychologists, however, contend that identity is a social construct.<sup>151</sup> As parents form a young child's primary society, the ethnic association parents make in the process of their own self-identification provides a critical "horizon of meaning" for their children – the means by which the child locates and thereby defines themselves in the world.<sup>152</sup> Paul, per his testimony, was born to observant Jewish parents – at least on

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<sup>150</sup> "The phrase "a Hebrew of Hebrews" (*Hebraios ex Hebraiōn*) in Philippians certainly means more than simply of Israelite stock, since the Apostle has just previous traced his lineage by saying "an Israelite by race, of the tribe of Benjamin."... On the other hand we cannot assert it means more than a Hebraic religious background." Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty: The Origin and Nature of Paul's Christianity* (Vancouver, Regent, 2003) 22.

<sup>151</sup> See James E. Côté, Charles G. Levine *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture: A Social Psychological Synthesis* (Mahwah : Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002) also Anna Duszak, ed., *Us and Others: Social Identities Across Language, Discourses and Cultures* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002)

<sup>152</sup> Maykel Verkuyten, *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 116.



the point of circumcision. He was given the name of Israel's first king, *Saul*,<sup>153</sup> who, like Paul's family, hailed from the tribe of Benjamin. While we have an admitted poverty of information concerning Paul's upbringing, it would seem likely from the few clues we are afforded, that Paul's parents intended to construct their son's identity along rather traditional lines. Parents of any age, however, do not need social psychologists to tell them that the identity they attempt to instill in their children is only subjectively appropriated. The content and instruction provided for a child's internalization, no matter what a parent intends, does not determine the outcome: "enculturation is not cultural 'cloning'."<sup>154</sup> In Paul's case though, despite centuries of press contending the opposite, there is considerable evidence that his socio-cultural conditioning took deep root.

Of the seven claims Paul made concerning his identity in *Philippians*, the first four – circumcision, nationality, tribe and religion – were accidents of birth. The remaining three – his Pharisaism, zealotry and righteousness – were volitional appropriations of his cultural inheritance. Where the compulsory aspects of Paul's autobiography offer a broad context for locating his ethnic identity, it is the elective aspects which hold out the tantalizing possibility of specificity in which to anchor Paul's self-understanding. Yet, of the three proofs on offer, two are wholly subjective. Paul's profession to have been "blameless regarding Torah" (likely hyperbole) was a product of his own evaluation of the matter, and could never have been substantiated in any case. That he considered himself zealous for the traditions of his ancestors cannot be creditably debated but the evidence he furnished in support of this claim – his persecution of the Church – was certainly not a common interpretation of Jewish zealotry.<sup>155</sup> It is his unqualified identification as a Pharisee that grounds Paul's understanding of his Jewishness in a comparatively specific context.<sup>156</sup>

The Pharisees emerged in the wake of the reestablishment of Jewish national sovereignty in the second century B.C.E.<sup>157</sup> In a cobbled impression formed by the early

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<sup>153</sup> This detail is known from the book of *Acts*. The author of *Acts* does offer additional biographical detail concerning Paul but, as the reliability of *Acts* is routinely called into question on this subject, I have, with this single exception, excluded it. The biographical detail the author did include about Paul, as one might expect, serves seamlessly to advance the narrative agenda *Luke-Acts*. Only this detail of Paul's Hebrew name seems superfluous which suggests to me, whatever else one might conclude about the narrative, the veracity of this detail.

<sup>154</sup> Verkuyten, *The Social Psychology*, 21.

<sup>155</sup> After all, if persecution of the Church was indeed a standard of Jewish zealotry, surely there would be supporting evidence of roving bands of zealous Jews hunting Christians in the first century. While Paul did, according to *Acts*, find some sanction for his mission from the high priests (*Acts* 9:1-2), he was not commissioned for this task. Rather *Acts* indicates it was Paul who approached the high priest with this project. No doubt Paul's choice of proof to illustrate his zealotry was constrained by his audience. Given a different exigence he may have well produced more traditional proofs. As it stands however, zealotry in the form of persecution of the Church does not offer a firm ledge from which to gain perspective on how Paul understood his Jewish identity.

<sup>156</sup> Nearly every scholar writing on Pharisees begins their treatise with the now standard disclaimer bemoaning the poverty of source material. And while I concede the difficulty, unlike some of the other associations Paul might have made within ancient Judaism, Pharisaism is a comparatively known entity. For summary and analysis see Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 1-17.

<sup>157</sup> Among the considerable works on the subject: John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2008) Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth: A Study of Their Background*,

sources, they appear as pious, devoted believers who understood themselves as guardians of Israel's ancient traditions.<sup>158</sup> As such they were naturally concerned with issues of purity and Jewish distinction: fasting, washing, Sabbath, kashrut and circumcision. They were reputed to have been superior interpreters and teachers of the Law.<sup>159</sup> In their early incarnation, the Pharisees acted as a watchdog group holding the Hasmoneans to the theocratic ideals of the revolution.<sup>160</sup> As a populist movement their considerable power base lay with the masses. Josephus remarked, "... while the Sadducees are able to persuade none but the rich, and have not the populace obsequious to them, but the Pharisees have the multitude on their side..." (Jos, *Ant.* 13.298 [Whiston]).

The esteem the Pharisees enjoyed among the plebeians was likely greatly enhanced by their focus on the ritual purity and other distinctive aspects of their religion.<sup>161</sup> These observances – Sabbath, kashrut, circumcision and the like – were the prerogative of the common people: one need not be a priest, employ a priest, or be in the Temple to observe these sacred rites. When interpreted through the narrative lens of the Maccabean martyr tradition, the Pharisaic stress on these issues effected a theological, if largely theoretical, empowerment of the Jewish proletariat.<sup>162</sup>

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*Their Halachic and Midrashic Teachings, the Similarities and Differences* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966) Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton eds. *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (Waco: Baylor, 2007) Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1988) Gunter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (trans. Allan W. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995).

<sup>158</sup> Namely the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, the gospels, Pauline Epistles, Mishnah and Tosefta.

The Pharisees are not mentioned by name in the DSS but references to "those who seek smooth things" are believed to be an epithet for them. James C. VanderKam "Pharisees and the Dead Sea Scrolls" in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton. Waco: Baylor, 2007) 225-236.

<sup>159</sup> "...the Pharisees, which are supposed to excel others in accurate knowledge of the laws of their country." Josephus, *Life*, 191. [Whiston] "...for there was a certain sect of the Jews, who valued themselves highly upon the exact skill they had in the law of their fathers, and made men believe they were highly favored by God..." Josephus, *Ant.* 17.41 [Whiston] This is the familiar typecast from the New Testament as Pharisaic confrontations with Jesus revolve around issues of and interpretations of Law. At the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) the believers who were Pharisees argued the point of convert circumcision though in the end they are persuaded by Peter of the Pauline interpretation of the matter.

<sup>160</sup> "...[Alexandra] governed other people, and the Pharisees governed her." Josephus, *War.* 1.112 [Whiston]

<sup>161</sup> The Pharisees themselves were likely "part of the ruling classes as retainers in some way dependant on the rich and powerful who controlled most of society's surplus." Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 42. "Louis Finkelstein... long held that the Pharisees were part of the proletariat and made their living as urban artisans. But this is very unlikely. Urban workers and artisans were not part of the middle class, as they sometimes are today. Though we know almost nothing about the economic life of Pharisees (especially if we discount the later view projected back on the first century by rabbinic literature), we do know how the artisan class lived through data from the Roman and other empires. Both artisans and the unclean or degraded classes were similar to peasants in lack of power." Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 325.

<sup>162</sup> "Whether these martyrdoms are to be viewed as examples of vicarious atonement or simply as efficacious is a matter which continues to be debated. In any event, our author is in no doubt as to their outcome, as a select reference to the ensuing sequence of events readily illustrates. At once we learn that the early success of Judas' men – who now 'secretly entered [παρεισπορευόμενοι] the villages' and 'enlisted those who had continued in the Jewish faith [ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ]' – is attributable to the fact that the martyrs' sacrifice had redirected God's wrath away from Israel and towards its enemies (2 Macc. 8.1-5, 28, 30).

As Rome waxed and the Hasmoneans waned in the first century B.C.E., so the Pharisaic political agenda shifted to address the threat posed to the Jewish state and religion emanating from the *Caput Mundi*.<sup>163</sup> Inspired by the success of the Maccabean revolt, they nurtured the hope that as God had acted in the not-so-distant past on behalf of the faithful, so He must certainly act again on behalf of the faithful in the future.<sup>164</sup> The Pharisees called the Jewish proletariat to covenant fidelity, to exercise the inherent power of any Jew to be righteous and so worthy of divine deliverance. Rallied around the powerful symbols of national identity – Sabbath, kashrut and circumcision – the Pharisees attempted to harness the power of the daily piety of common Jews for the purpose of national redemption.<sup>165</sup> “Just as, for the Maccabean martyrs, refusing to eat pork and refusing to obey the pagan ruler were one and the same thing, so the concern for purity functioned as a means of symbolically enacting that resistance to pagan rule which was nursed secretly and maintained in readiness for revolutionary opportunities, whenever they might be afforded.”<sup>166</sup> S. A. Cummins sums up the matter: “While [Pharisaism was] no doubt a complex matter, at its most altruistic it was an attempt to uphold the same Jewish traditions for which the Maccabees fought and died.”<sup>167</sup>

In confessing himself a Pharisee,<sup>168</sup> Paul revealed a traditional, nationalist flavor to his Jewish identity – an identity centered, informed and defined by ancient rituals, not the least of which was circumcision. Thus, prior to his *metanoia*, Paul does not appear to have been lingering on the philosophical edges of Judaism, to be easily picked off and seduced by Hellenism.

Of course few would dispute the fact that circumcision was central to Paul’s identity as a *Jew* – the issue at hand, however, was his identity *after* his revelation. Had

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Thus, Judas’ forces now have a keener perspective upon the task at hand, always ‘keeping before their eyes’ the Gentiles’ attempt at ‘the overthrow of their ancestral way of life [τῆ τῆς προ γούκῆς πολιτείας κατάλυσιν]’. In this they are also conscious of the heavenly power at work in and through their willingness ‘to die for their laws and their country’ as participants in divine reconciliation (2 Macc. 8.12-29). Indeed, they are deemed invulnerable because of their zeal for the laws of their Defender God (2 Macc. 8.36).” Cummins, *Paul*, 35-6.

<sup>163</sup> “These are those that are called Pharisees, who are in a capacity of greatly opposing kings.” Josephus, *Ant.* 17.2.41 [Whiston]

<sup>164</sup> Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 181.

<sup>165</sup> “The Pharisaic agenda remained...to purify Israel by summoning her to return to the true ancestral traditions; to restore Israel to her independent theocratic status; and to be, as a pressure group, in the vanguard of such movements by the study and practice of Torah...As a result, their agenda always pushed them in one of two related and parallel directions. Either they would make common cause with the out-and-out rebels, continuing the tradition of ‘zeal’...Or they would withdraw into the deeper private study and practice of Torah, creating an alternative mode of Judaism which achieved its liberation from Rome and from corrupt Judaism, by living in its own world where neither pagan nor renegade could corrupt it.” N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 189-90.

<sup>166</sup> Wright, *New Testament*, 187-8.

<sup>167</sup> Cummins, *Paul*, 63.

<sup>168</sup> Segal, and others, reading *Philippians* 3 as a self-apodioxis, have argued the *then/now* language makes clear: “Paul is no longer a Pharisee.” Segal, *Paul*, 117. If *Philippians* 3 argument is a *qal vahomer*, as I contend below, then Segal’s conclusion is not necessitated.

Jesus taught that circumcision was of no consequence in the messianic age Paul's reversal on the issue would naturally be accounted for by his radical devotion to Christ and his teachings. Yet, on such an incendiary issue, the Jesus of the gospels is entirely silent. Even the author of *Luke-Acts*, a clear devotee of Paul, refrained from placing in the mouth of Christ anything approaching Paul's position as staked out in *Galatians*. Certainly the anti-circumcision position does find a type of precedent in the stories of Jesus' occasional disregard of the Sabbath and Pharisaic fasts or in his rare encounters with gentiles but these precedents, given the stakes outlined in *Galatians*, are comparatively weak.<sup>169</sup> In fact, if the gospels are read in isolation from the Pauline Epistles and the *Acts of the Apostles*, one is hard-pressed to identify the trajectory that necessitates the conclusion that circumcision should be nullified in the messianic age.

The author of *Acts* does recount that Peter was the first to be given the revelation concerning the acceptance of gentiles *sans* circumcision on the roof of Simon the Tanner's house and in his subsequent encounter with centurion Cornelius (Acts 10). Rhetorically such a revelation given to Peter – the foremost of the Lord's apostles and leader of the Church – offered critical credibility to the anti-circumcision-of-converts position within the narrative arc of *Acts*. Paul, however, does not seem to have been aware of this episode at the point he wrote *Galatians*.<sup>170</sup> It would have added considerably to his argument in chapter 2 concerning Peter's waffling on the subject of eating with uncircumcised converts had Paul had at his disposal the information that Peter had earlier received a divine revelation on this very point.

The silence of Jesus on the subject of circumcision, Paul's ignorance of Peter's revelation and the general lack of interest in the debate by all other New Testament authors: it would appear that Paul was the only one to have recognized the dire threat he claimed circumcision posed to the messianic age. Yet Paul composed no treatise, wrote no exposition on the subject attempting to sell his Jewish compatriots on what must have seemed an inconceivable point. This lack of effort on Paul's part is rhetorically troubling. Where it took four canonical gospels to make the case for a pacifist messiah, the success of which could be debated, the two cryptic chapters Paul afforded the abrogation of circumcision in *Galatians* (and forty-eight verses in *Romans*) hardly seem adequate to the task of throwing off such an entrenched grounding signifier within the

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<sup>169</sup> Park offers an interesting hypothesis that does tangentially address this issue. He postulated that Paul's position on the circumcision of converts was a product of escalating rhetoric and not Paul's final reasoned conclusion on the matter. He contends that the decision of the Jerusalem Council to accept two gospels, one of the circumcised and one of the uncircumcised, (37) was initially embraced by Paul. A "series of incidents at Antioch, Galatia, and Corinth" however, "forced Paul to be on the defensive with regard to his apostleship and the gospel he preached" (65). This, Park contends, accounts for the escalated, defensive rhetoric of *Galatians* and 2 *Corinthians* which had the virtual effect of revoking the agreement reached in Jerusalem (65). The nascent church subsequently broke into two factions and Paul, troubled by this disunity, stepped back from his "exclusive mentality" in an effort to regain "the original stance of mutual recognition" achieved at the Jerusalem Council (69). The Pauline corpus reflects the evolution of Paul's thought and his final acceptance of "two gospels that together welcomed new believers as either Jew or Gentile" (73). If this were indeed the case, one would not expect a discourse from Jesus on the subject of circumcision.

<sup>170</sup> Leaving aside the possibility that the episode was the author's invention.

Jewish *épistème*.<sup>171</sup> Paul doesn't appear in his Epistles to have been aware he was swimming against the considerable cultural tide indicated by the evidence. In fact the tone of *Galatians* strikes me generally as exasperated – at the visitors for failing to see what appeared to Paul to be obvious and at the converts for having been so easily persuaded. As *Galatians* is essentially a rebuttal, where, one wonders, is the pastor's safeguard – a composition to which his vulnerable congregations could refer in his absence, susceptible as they were to the influence of the visitors as they made their rounds?<sup>172</sup>

I am not arguing that it would have been impossible for a Jew of the late Second Temple period to conceive of a need to reshape aspects of their culture and work toward that end. I am rather contending that Paul's literary output – particularly addressing a longstanding, emotionally compelling, ground signifier of his culture – would seem not to indicate such a design on his part. Paul's discussion of circumcision simply does not read like a man presenting an epiphany, something he is eager to share and demonstrate the validity of. It rather reads like a man acknowledging an established fact he has long assumed. This suggests to me that Paul's position concerning the circumcision of the converts reflects a latent, preexisting expectation he held concerning the messianic age that was triggered in his *metanoia* concerning Jesus.

## CONCLUSION

All readings of the Pauline Epistles must contend with the question of Paul's conversion. From our late vantage point, shaped as it is by the patristic-rabbinic wars, the letters offer radically conflicting evidence as to how Paul related to his religious tradition. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the claim under scrutiny in this study. One must pick a point, decide a center, and attempt to explain the phenomena of the letters in terms of it.<sup>173</sup> The forceful certainty with which Paul offered his statements about circumcision would seem a natural choice on which to stake an interpretation. Given circumcision's role as a grounding signifier within the Jewish *épistème* of the first-century it is little wonder that Paul has historically been viewed as a convert from Judaism.

In this experiment, however, I have set my back against the wall of social psychology. Humans, after all, are creatures of culture, of instinct, of habit and emotion. We shrink from cognitive dissonance, holding slavishly to our inherited constructions. We prefer belonging, acceptance and certainty to isolation and ambiguity. As a rule we resist change. Accordingly, my governing approach to Paul has been to assume on his behalf all the normal trappings of human psychology, to suppose that he felt every bit of the irrational affection the vast majority of people the world over have felt for the

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<sup>171</sup> Romans 2:25-4:12 specifically.

<sup>172</sup> From Phil 3:2 Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν, it would seem that visitors with a similar agenda to those who visited Galatia also came to Philippi.

<sup>173</sup> See Boyarin, *Radical*, 5-6.

cultures of their birth. To suppose that Paul, socialized as a Jew, could not have easily escaped the constraints of this identity.

The historical tendency to see Paul in the role of prophet, of visionary, of cultural reformer, in all things has tended in praxis to obscure the fact that Paul himself did not claim all his teachings were the product of a divine revelation.<sup>174</sup> In reserving the term ‘revelation’ only for the statements/concepts which Paul himself overtly designated as such, I am holding out the possibility that Paul’s position on the circumcision of the converts was not novel, not an invention of the first century. If Paul’s position on circumcision was indeed the product of a latent expectation now realized in the messianic age, this would account for both the forceful, indeed dire, nature of his rhetoric as well as the troubling lack of exposition he offered. The question becomes then what in ancient Judaism gave rise to such an expectation?

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<sup>174</sup> For example, in answering the Corinthians questions concerning sexual abstinence, *This I say as a concession, not a command... I say to the unmarried and the widows... To the married I give this command – not I but the Lord... To the rest I say – I and not the Lord...* (1 Cor 7:6-12)

## CHAPTER 3

### The Precedent: The Book of Dreams 1 Enoch 83-90

*When the Messianic idea appears as a living force in the world of Judaism... it always occurs in closest connection with apocalypticism.*

Gershom Sholem<sup>1</sup>

There is little debate among scholars that the New Testament is heavily indebted to Jewish apocalyptic. Certainly *messianism*, in the identification of Jesus as the Christ, was the primary impetus and guiding star in the composition of the Pauline Epistles. If the classification of the uncircumcised converts as *children of Abraham* was for Paul a wholly expected consequence of the dawning of the messianic age, then this expectation must have been established in the apocalyptic milieu of the first and second centuries B.C.E. However, positing an apocalyptic backdrop for the Pauline Epistles is hardly an original tack; if anything, it has become common place since the work of Wrede and Schweitzer. To establish the plausibility of my thesis I am in need of something far more specific than the thematic parallels generally drawn in studies of Paul in and against Jewish apocalyptic literature. I am in need of a corroborating textual witness predating the Pauline Epistles that postulates the redemption of the gentiles *sans* becoming Jewish as a critical aspect of eschatological righting of the world. The fourth book of *1 Enoch*, the *Book of Dreams*, as it turns out, provides just such a witness.

#### THE BOOK OF DREAMS

##### *Rediscovery and Scholarship*

*1 Enoch*, preserved in translation by the Ethiopian Church, was rediscovered by Europe in 1773 when the Scottish explorer James Bruce returned from his adventures attempting to discover the source of the Nile with three copies of the text in the ancient language of Ge'ez.<sup>2</sup> Bruce gave two of the manuscripts; one to the Royal Library of France and one to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where they languished. Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy did publish excerpts with Latin translations based on the manuscript at the Royal Library in 1800, but a complete translation had to wait nearly fifty years for the work of Richard Laurence who produced an

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<sup>1</sup> Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1971) 4.

<sup>2</sup> James Bruce, *Travels to discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773: in Five Volumes*. (London: Ruthven, 1790). *1 Enoch* was widely known in late Second Temple Jewish circles (for discussion see; J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967 pp. 45-47). It was regarded as scripture at least by the author of *Jude* and many of the early Church Fathers. It fell out of favor in the fourth century and eventually was banned by “such authorities as Hilary, Jerome and Augustine, it gradually passed out of circulation and became lost to the knowledge of Western Christendom...” (R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch: Together with a Reprint of the Greek Fragments (1912)* Whitefish: Kessinger, 1995 p. 9). *1 Enoch* was known in antiquity by several names (for discussion see ‘Title’ in Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 7-8).

English translation in 1821 from the Bodleian text.<sup>3</sup> The first critical edition based on five manuscripts was produced some thirty years later still, 1853, by August Dillmann.<sup>4</sup> Dillmann published a German commentary on *I Enoch* two years after his translation which “has since served as the base for all Enochic scholarship.”<sup>5</sup>

It is generally held that *I Enoch* is a compilation of five shorter works, composed independently by different authors at varying times compiled by a later redactor. However the composite nature of *I Enoch* was not immediately recognized by early commentators thus discussion of the *Book of Dreams* was subsumed in broader discussions of *I Enoch* as a whole. With the work of Heinrich Ewald, scholarly opinion began to shift in the second half of the nineteenth-century toward viewing *I Enoch* as a series of “several small independent works.”<sup>6</sup> This, in turn, fostered a veritable cottage industry of scholarly works dedicated to particular books within what is considered the Enochic canon. While the *Book of Dreams* has been continually treated as part of larger commentaries on *I Enoch*, it has garnered comparatively little of this atomized attention.<sup>7</sup>

The *Book of Dreams* is the purported testimony of Enoch to his son Methuselah concerning two prophetic dreams he was granted as a younger man. The ‘Enoch’ of this apocalypse is the antediluvian patriarch in the line of Seth who famously *walked with God and was no more because God took him* (Gen 5:24). Every aspect of Enoch’s epigrammatic biography in *Genesis* – his lineage, his generation (the seventh from Adam), his great-grandson Noah, the twice mentioned comment that he *halakh* with God, his mysterious abduction to heaven – stress his virtue, making him a worthy recipient of divine revelation and a trustworthy prophet. The first of Enoch’s dreams was a brief vision concerning the dissolution of the world in the Noahic flood. The second is a sweeping view of biblical history up to the point of Judas Maccabee closing with a vision of the eschatological redemption of all things. The two visions as they currently stand are embedded in a brief narrative.

The general lack of scholarly interest in the *Book of Dreams*, I surmise, is due in large part to its brevity given the subject matter. The first vision deals with the most famous cataclysm in literature, the Noahic flood. Where the author of *Genesis* dedicated four chapters to this apocalypse out of eleven chapters concerning the primordial history of the world, the author of the *Book of Dreams*, by contrast, abridged this same story in a mere two sentences, *I saw in a vision the sky being hurled down and snatched and falling upon the earth. When it fell upon the earth, I saw the earth being swallowed up into the great abyss, the mountains being suspended*

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<sup>3</sup> Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, *Notice sur le livre d’ Enoch* (Lausanne: University of Lausanne, 1800) and later in German with annotation by Friedrich Theodor Rink (*Das Buch Henoch betreffend*. Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1801), see George Henry Schodde, *The Book of Enoch: Translated from the Ethiopic with Introduction and Notes* (Andover: Draper, 1882) 5. Richard Laurence, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet: An Apocryphal Production, Supposed to Have Been Lost for Ages; but Discovered at the Close of the Last Century in Abyssinia; Now First Translated from an Ethiopic Ms. in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1821) 5.

<sup>4</sup> August Dillmann, *Das Buch Enoch. Uebersetzt und erklärt*. (Liepzig: Vogel, 1853).

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of I Enoch* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993) 5.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Ewald, *Abhandlung über des Äthiopischen Buches Henókh: Entstehung Sinn und Zusammensetzung* (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1854) brought to my attention by Tiller, in *Commentary*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Modern standard treatments include: Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 1985); J. T. Milik, *Books of Enoch*; George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *I Enoch: A New Translation Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).



upon mountains, the hills sinking down upon hills, and tall trees being uprooted and thrown and sinking into the deep abyss (En 83.4). The narrative in which this oracle of disaster is embedded is similarly brief and uneventful. The reader learns only that Enoch was young, was at his grandfather's house when he had the vision, that the vision terrified him and that his grandfather urged him to plead with God to save humanity which he did. However, given the scope of the impending crisis, Enoch's prayer is rather short, only six lines, and adds seemingly little of interpretive significance.<sup>8</sup> With so little to work with in this first vision and prayer, commentators have largely ignored the first two chapters of the *Book of Dreams* opting instead to focus their considerable attentions on the allegorical vision immediately following known as the *Animal Apocalypse*.

The allegorical aspect of the apocalypse consists in the main of the demotion of the created order a single degree; thus angels appear as men and humans as animals. It traces the arc of the history from the creation of humanity through the deluge, the patriarchs, the Exodus, the establishment of the kingdom and Temple, the fall of Jerusalem, the return from exile, the Hellenistic period, the rise of the Maccabees, to the final, eschatological restoration. While the *Animal Apocalypse* is considerably longer (six chapters) than its predecessor (two chapters), it nonetheless runs quickly into the same problem, the subject – the entirety of Israel's sacred history – is simply too large for the space the author has allotted to its retelling. The abridgement is so severe it seems at first glance to have more in common with a plotted timeline than with rewritten history as we know it from *Jubilees*, the *Temple Scroll* or the *Antiquities* of Josephus. What appears to the character of Enoch as the mysterious future is but a thinly veiled, grossly truncated recounting of biblical history easily recognizable to any reader with a passing familiarity with the *Tanakh* and the *Book of the Watchers*.<sup>9</sup> The fact of the matter is that there is little in the *Animal Apocalypse* that is not told better and in greater detail elsewhere.

Where other books in the Enochic canon have proved veritable treasure troves of insight into complex ideas or obscure passages,<sup>10</sup> the *Animal Apocalypse* has remained the darling of a dedicated few. There have been a handful of monographs focused primarily on the *Animal Apocalypse*.<sup>11</sup> Shorter studies have tended to examine aspects of the apocalypse; its relation to the book of *Daniel*,<sup>12</sup> the identity of the beasts or of the seventy shepherds, the origin of

<sup>8</sup> Anthea E. Portier-Young in *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 349-381.

<sup>9</sup> Particularly the books of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *King* and, *Ezra*. For further discussion see Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 42-47.

<sup>10</sup> Given, for example, the contribution of the *Book of the Watchers* in illuminating *Genesis* 6 or the *Book of Parables* for elucidating the term "Son of Man," the *Book of Dreams* has seemed to have comparatively less to offer.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Assefa, *L'Apocalypse des animaux (1 Hen 85-90): une propagande militaire? Approches narrative, historico-critique, perspectives théologiques* (JSJ.S 120; Leiden: Brill, 2007); David Bryan, *Cosmos, Chaos and the Kosher Mentality* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995); Günter Reese, *Die Geschichte Israels in der Auffassung des frühen Judentums: eine Untersuchung der Tiervision und der Zehnwochenapokalypse des äthiopischen Henochbuches, der Geschichtsdarstellung der Assumptio Mosis und der des 4Esrabuches* (BBB 123; Berlin: Philo, 1999)

<sup>12</sup> Paul A. Porter, *Metaphors and Monsters: A Literary-critical Study of Daniel 7 and 8* (Coniectana Biblica Old Testament Series 20; Uppsala: Gleerup, 1983) 43-60. James R. Davila, "The Animal Apocalypse and Daniel" in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*. (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

particular phrases,<sup>13</sup> the attitude of the author toward the Temple,<sup>14</sup> what the apocalypse reveals about how Judaism coped with Hellenistic reform,<sup>15</sup> etc. Commentary on the apocalypse is often embedded in works on Jewish apocalyptic literature generally, or mined for things that elucidate other subjects entirely (much as I am doing for this study). The singular exception to this dearth of analysis is Patrick Tiller's work, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*.<sup>16</sup> It is a thorough, critical text which is regularly referenced in nearly all discussion of the *Animal Apocalypse* written after its publication.

### *Language of 1 Enoch*

Preserved by its incorporation into the Ethiopic canon, *1 Enoch* in its entirety is now extant only in a Ge'ez translation dating from the fourth – sixth century C.E.<sup>17</sup> The text however is “rébarbative... at times in not a little confusion and disorder, and where frequent corruptions tend to obscure genuine variant readings.”<sup>18</sup> Significant portions of *1 Enoch* have also survived in a Greek translation, known from papyri or cited by ancient authors. Black estimates the Greek fragments cover approximately a third of the complete text of *1 Enoch*.<sup>19</sup> The discovery at Qumran of fragments of *1 Enoch* in Aramaic confirmed a long held suspicion that *1 Enoch* had a Semitic *Vorlage*.<sup>20</sup> These however, “amount disappointingly to no more than 5% of the Ethiopian book, at times representing little more than an identifiable word or letter.”<sup>21</sup> The comparison of the fragments with the Ethiopic text has resulted in a general consensus among scholars that a Ge'ez translation was made from a Greek *Vorlage* which was itself a translation of an Aramaic and (possibly a Hebrew) *Grundschrift*.<sup>22</sup>

### *Date of Composition for the Book of Dreams*

The author of the *Book of Dreams* makes extensive use of the tale of the fall and

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<sup>13</sup> James C. VanderKam, “Open and Closed Eyes in the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85-90)” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*. (ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman; Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Devorah Dimant, “מדבר יהודה וירושלים והמקדש בחזון החיות (תנך החבשי פה-ג) לאור השקפות כח” [Jerusalem and the Temple in the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 85-90) in the light of the Ideology of the Dead Sea Sect],” *Shnaton* 5-6 (1982): 177-93.

<sup>15</sup> Beate Ego, “Hellenistic Crisis as Reflected by the Animal Apocalypse: Aetiological and Eschatological Aspects” in *Judaism and Crisis: Crisis as a Catalyst in Jewish Cultural History* (ed. Armin Lange, K. F. Diethard Römheld and Matthias Weigold; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> An exception to my exception newly published as I am about to submit this dissertation, Daniel C. Olsen's *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch: “All Nations Shall Be Blessed”* With a New Translation and Commentary (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 310.

<sup>18</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 310-11. The Aramaic fragments were first published by J. T. Milik and Matthew Black, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976.

<sup>21</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 1. Milik estimates 26% percent of the *Book of Dreams* is covered by the Aramaic fragments in *Books of Enoch*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 4. Edward Ullendorff contented that the Ethiopian translators of *1 Enoch* made use of an Aramaic *Vorlage* for large parts of their translation, “An Aramaic ‘Vorlage’ of the Ethiopian Text of Enoch?” *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici*, (Accademia Nazionale de Lincei. Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura 48; Rome: Accademia Nazionale de Lincei, 1960) 259-67.

judgment of the angels as found in the *Book of the Watchers*, c. third century B.C.E.<sup>23</sup> The *Book of the Watchers* is widely held to predate the *Book of Dreams*.<sup>24</sup> Thus if the *Book of the Watchers* served as the source material for the author of the *Book of Dreams* then the *terminus post quem* for the apocalypse can be set no earlier than the late third century B.C.E.<sup>25</sup>

The *terminus ante quem* is set by the dating of the earliest surviving Qumranic fragment of the *Book of Dreams*, 4QEn<sup>f</sup>, dated by Milik to 150 – 125 B.C.E.<sup>26</sup> As the 4QEn<sup>f</sup> fragment is likely a copy and not the actual autograph,<sup>27</sup> the actual date of composition is likely earlier still.

More specific dates have been proposed, however, deduced from the internal evidence of the apocalypse. As the *Book of Dreams*, specifically the *Animal Apocalypse*, is largely a historical review “it is possible to date it rather precisely by identifying the last historically datable incident recorded in the book.”<sup>28</sup> The question then turns on the identification of the sheep that sprouted a big horn (1 En 90:9) prior to the scene of eschatological judgment (1 En 90:17). Various candidates have been proposed; Dillmann suggested John Hyrcanus,<sup>29</sup> George H. Schodde theorized Judas Maccabee<sup>30</sup> and J. Pedersen advanced Elijah.<sup>31</sup> Presently the consensus lies with Schodde that the ram with large horn represents Judas Maccabee.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, Black dates the apocalypse to 165 B.C.E.,<sup>33</sup> Tiller between 165 – 160 B.C.E.,<sup>34</sup> Nicklesburg to 164 – 60 B.C.E.,<sup>35</sup> VanderKam to late 160’s B.C.E.,<sup>36</sup> and Milik, seeing a reference to 2 Macc 11:6-12, specifically to the early months of the year 164 B.C.E. “during the weeks that followed the battle of Bethsur.”<sup>37</sup> Daniel Assefa, arguing against viewing the apocalypse as a pro-Hasmonean military propaganda, dates the original work prior to the Maccabean revolt.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> While the tale of the fall of the angels recounted in the *Book of Dreams* bears a striking resemblance to the material contained in the *Book of the Watchers* there are some notable, if minor differences. For discussion see Tiller, *Commentary*, 83-95.

<sup>25</sup> Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 273. Also Michael E. Stone, *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha & Apocrypha with Special Reference to the Armenian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 189.

<sup>26</sup> Peter W. Flint, “Noncanonical Writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls; Apocrypha, Other Previously Known Writings, Pseudepigrapha,” in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*. (ed. Peter W. Flint with the assistance of Tae Hun Kim. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 97. Also Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 244.

<sup>27</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 61.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Dillmann, *Henoch*, 277.

<sup>30</sup> Schodde, *Enoch*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Johannes Pedersen, “Zur Erklärung der eschatologischen Visionen Henochs,” *Islamica* 2 (1926) 416-29. Brought to my attention by Tiller (*Animal*, 9).

<sup>32</sup> Assefa contests this identification contending instead that the horns in this pericope are symbolic of divine protection of the flock and not a specific military leader, *L’apocalypse*, 318-324.

<sup>33</sup> Black, *Enoch*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 61-79.

<sup>35</sup> George W. E. Nicklesburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1981) 93.

<sup>36</sup> James C. VanderKam. *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984) 161-63.

<sup>37</sup> Milik, *Enoch*, 44. See also François Martin, *Le Livre d’Henoch* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1906) 280 and Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 211.

For discussion of the implications the identification of the doublet (likely updating prophecy) in *1 En.* 90:9-18 has for the dating of the *Animal Apocalypse* see George Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of Enoch*,

The identification of Judas Maccabee as the horned sheep does appear to be the best fit for the context of the allegory. However, feeling subjectively along the narrative pulse of the *Animal Apocalypse*, I imagine this work was written rather later than generally supposed by commentators. Judas is clearly portrayed as a hero in the *Animal Apocalypse*, yet his lack of victory despite the historical reality of his many successful campaigns, is a neutral, possibly even negative,<sup>39</sup> assessment of the Hasmonean legacy. Given Judas' promising beginning, missional failure, angelic visitation and sudden, inexplicable departure from the narrative, I think it likely that the author was a rebel fighter under Judas, who admired him greatly and saw or heard of his death on the battlefield. Believing Judas to be righteous and the rebel cause just, Judas' death was likely theologically irreconcilable for him. I imagine the bleak tone of the book to be a result of the author's frustration over the concessions and alliances Judas' successors made with their erstwhile enemies. Given the pious hope of the rebel cause, the resulting state of affairs after the cessation of open hostilities with the Seleucids must have lent support to the author's conclusion that there was no justice in the second age and his longing to see God tear the whole thing down and begin again.

Whatever the case may have been, for the purposes of this study, it matters only that the *Book of Dreams* predates Paul's composition of *Galatians* by roughly 200 years.

#### UNITY AND THEME IN THE *BOOK OF DREAMS*

The unity, or lack thereof, of the *Book of Dreams* elicits little debate among scholars. The general sentiment is that the dreams – certainly the *Animal Apocalypse* and possibly the first dream – could have functioned as independent visions brought together by a later redactor but that *Book of Dreams* in its present form possesses an integrity of its own. In analysis, however, the *Animal Apocalypse* is routinely severed from the first two chapters of the *Book of Dreams* and treated as an independent composition. There is an inherent logic to this approach as the *Animal Apocalypse* as a vision received by Enoch forms a self-contained unit within the larger work. In addition the *Animal Apocalypse* is by far the majority of the text dwarfing the first dream vision and the accompanying narrative. Thus the historic domination of the *Animal Apocalypse* in all commentary of the *Book of Dreams* is understandable.

On one hand, the opening chapters of the *Book of Dreams* do seem superfluous. Granted, they establish the supposed antiquity of the prophecy as well as provide a neat rationale for Enoch's otherwise inexplicable biography in *Genesis* 4. Yet, in the grand review of world history that is the *Animal Apocalypse*, Enoch's heroic salvation of humanity as outlined in the first two chapters of the *Book of Dreams* is entirely omitted. This omission seem to support Tiller's reading that the scene of Enoch's first dream and intercession is the work of a redactor and of secondary importance to the interpretation of the *Animal Apocalypse*. On the other hand, it is difficult to dismiss as a tangent the first two chapters of a work that is only eight chapters long.

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*Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 360-61 and Tiller, *Commentary*, 63-77. Both conclude that the revision cannot be dated later than 160 B.C.E.

<sup>38</sup> Assefa, *L'apocalypse*, 232-32.

<sup>39</sup> See Reese, *Geschichte*.

Tiller, for his part, does actually make a case for reading the *Animal Apocalypse* as an independent composition.<sup>40</sup> His is a three-pronged rationale; he points first the odd switching of the narrative voice from first person to third and back again in 1 En 85.2, *And after this I saw another dream and I will show you everything my son. And Enoch raised (his voice) and said to his son Methuselah, "I will speak to you my son."*<sup>41</sup> This he takes as clear evidence of a redactor's hand. Secondly, he understands Enoch's statement in 1 En 83.2 that his visions were wholly different, *the one was quite unlike the other*,<sup>42</sup> as a type of editorial confession or signature, a redactor's acknowledgement of having married two originally independent texts. Finally, Tiller contends that the two visions have seemingly different polemical objectives: the first oracle serves to legitimate the heirs of the Enoch traditions and the second promoting a political agenda. With "no indications of common authorship" and "definite traces of redactional activity" Tiller concludes that the *Animal Apocalypse* was likely an autonomous work.<sup>43</sup> Tiller reserves judgment as to whether the first two chapters likewise circulated as an independent unit or were composed at some point as an introduction to the *Animal Apocalypse*.<sup>44</sup>

Tiller's strongest point by far is the insertion of the third person into an otherwise first person narrative which is, admittedly, odd. The oddity is not lessened, however, by his postulation of a redactor as this requires the redactor to have either missed this glaring discrepancy or intended it. Neither option makes obvious sense.

Tiller's other proofs for reading the *Animal Apocalypse* in isolation are comparatively weak. His second point as to the dissimilarity of the visions presents no necessary obstacle to reading the *Book of Dreams* as a unified composition. The dreams differ primarily in length, the first being so short it provides precious little opportunity for meaningful analysis. As opposed to an editorial confession, Enoch's admission as to the incongruity of his visions, situated as it is in the introduction to the *Book of Dreams*, is likely a rhetorical device. It appeals to the reader who, with the advantage of the knowledge of biblical history, has the tools with which to decipher the enigma of the two visions the protagonist sees as dissimilar. It is, in effect, an invitation for the reader to assume the role of interpreter. As Tiller himself suggests, "[a]lthough the allegory is not very subtle, it at least formally functions as a sort of riddle; only the wise who can make the proper inferences will be able to understand the true meaning of history."<sup>45</sup>

Tiller's third point, the differing political agendas of the two visions, seems largely the product of his *a priori* assumption that he is indeed looking at two independent visions. While it is plausible that the *Animal Apocalypse* could have functioned as an independent oracle, it is difficult to imagine the brief first vision functioning in a similar capacity. If the oracles were in fact two independent compositions with differing political agendas, one wonders why a redactor would have thought these visions belonged together. Alternately, if it was the case that a redactor composed the first vision and prayer as an introduction to the apocalypse, one wonders

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<sup>40</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 98-100. For additional discussion see; Philip L. Tite, "Textual and Redactional Aspects of the Book of Dreams (1 Enoch 83-90)," *BTB* 31 (2001): 106-120.

<sup>41</sup> Tiller's translation. All subsequent translations of the *Animal Apocalypse* will be Tiller's unless otherwise noted.

<sup>42</sup> Black's translation. All subsequent translations of the *1 Enoch* 83-84 will be Black's unless otherwise noted.

<sup>43</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 99.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 22

why the two visions are not then better fitted together. Even leaving aside the question of political agendas, if the first two chapters of the *Book of Dreams* are so inconsequential to the interpretation of the *Animal Apocalypse* as Tiller contends, one wonders why the redactor bothered with their composition at all.

By way of contrast, Portier-Young argues that the “thematic unity of the whole [of the *Book of Dreams*] militates against discussing either vision in isolation from the other or from the shared narrative framework.”<sup>46</sup> While conceding the visions may well have been composed independently, her primary interest is how the *Book of Dreams* in its final form functioned as a text of Jewish resistance against foreign empire in the late Second Temple period.

In Portier-Young’s reading, Enoch’s prayer for the doomed world which links the two apocalyptic visions is in fact the focal point of the *Book of Dreams*. It powerfully demonstrates the efficacy of intercessory prayer for the salvation of the righteous.<sup>47</sup> The primordial drama of the opening chapters – the apostasy of the angels, the impending wrath, the peril of righteous, Enoch’s intercession – prefigure both the crisis of Antiochus IV and its solution. Moses and Elijah are foregrounded in their dual roles of prophet and warrior providing “the righteous with a model for armed resistance against apostasy when the prophetic word fails.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, as the historical review of the *Animal Apocalypse* come abreast of the contemporary moment of its composition, the ancient reader was presented with a trifecta of heroes worthy of emulation: intercessors, prophets and warriors. In beginning the story with Enoch, the author re-contextualized the Seleucid threat and, perhaps more importantly for Portier-Young, Seleucid *propaganda* against a more totalizing primordial narrative of Enoch.

While not necessarily discouraged from armed resistance to the imperial threat, the primary call to action in the *Book of Dreams* is, as Portier-Young views it, a call to intercession. Enoch’s prayer, as effective as it was, was limited in scope to the righteous remnant spared from the flood. The apocalyptic crisis of the post-diluvian age demands the intercession of the righteous in the last generation. The responsibility of the future lies then with the readers of the *Book of Dreams* who must take up Enoch’s commission identifying “themselves not only as antitypes of the righteous Noah and the remnant saved from the flood, but also as heirs and antitypes of Enoch, whose righteous intercession helped to save them.”<sup>49</sup> Portier-Young interprets Enoch’s failure to offer a prayer of intercession at the close of the second vision as a narrative passing of the intercessory baton to Enoch’s righteous posterity who must pray in their turn if they hope to secure a similar outcome for the righteous of their day.<sup>50</sup> Intercession emerges then in the *Book of Dreams* as a key component, a primary line of defense against the threat of gentile empire. With the weapon of intercession, the righteous are “to seek deliverance for the faithful and punishment for their oppressors” in their “hour of persecution, as Enoch taught them.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 348.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

I am persuaded by Portier-Young that the *Book of Dreams* should be read as a unified whole. From a narrative critical perspective, the first vision, the prayer and the apocalypse are logical progressions of each other. Enoch wakes terrified from his first dream in which he saw the earth sinking into an abyss. He tells his grandfather, Malalel, who recognizes the dream as a prophecy and urges his righteous grandson to intercede with God on behalf of humanity so that a remnant might be spared from the impending doom. Heeding his grandfather's advice, Enoch petitions heaven. In response to his prayer he is granted the second prophetic dream in which the fate of the righteous, saved ostensibly by Enoch's intercession, is revealed to him. In fact the visions, as I will discuss below, fit so seamlessly together, I am skeptical either vision ever circulated separately.

I am, however, un-persuaded of Portier-Young's central thesis that intercession-as-resistance lies at the heart of the *Book of Dreams*. Enoch's intercession certainly forms the narrative hinge of the apocalypse making the post-diluvian content of the second vision possible. Yet, in all of Jewish history (as the author of the *Book of Dreams* presents it) Enoch is the lone human intercessory figure.<sup>52</sup> No mention is made of Abraham's intercession on behalf of Lot on the eve of the destruction of Sodom (Gen 18:20-33), a story rife with parallels to the intercession of Enoch in the *Book of Dreams*. Nor is reference made to Moses' intercession on behalf of the Hebrews after the casting of the golden calf (Ex 32:11-13, 31-32) though the author of the apocalypse devotes more time to Moses than any other biblical figure. In fact the *Tanakh* and Pseudepigrapha abound with examples of prophetic intercession which the author of the *Book of Dreams* willfully ignores. If a teaching on the power of intercession in the struggle against empire was indeed the impetus for the composition of the *Book of Dreams*, the author makes curiously little use of the legendary intercessory material at his disposal.

Leaving aside intercessory precedents, more odd still is the absence within the narrative of an intercessory figure in the eschatological vision of the second age. If the author was promoting the role of intercessor as the key component in the successful navigation of the crisis of the Seleucid oppression and coming apocalypse, one would expect an Enochic counterpart in the final sequence of judgment. Nor, more importantly, is it particularly clear where such intercession is required in the *Book of Dreams* to assure justice for the righteous if, as Portier-Young suggests, the *Book of Dreams* is fundamentally an invitation to the reader to imitate Enoch on this point. The eschatological scene moves purposefully to its resolution ostensibly without the demand for any particular contemporary act of intercession.

Prophetic intercession on behalf of the people in the face of a clear and present danger is a well-established motif in biblical literature. In the context of oppressive foreign regimes, intercessory prayer had arguably always been seen as the essential weapon in the Jewish arsenal of resistance, a means of assuring justice for the righteous. Of course the fact that the efficacy of intercession was well established in the Jewish literary tradition does not preclude the author of

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<sup>52</sup> The angelic auditor does intercede on behalf of the sheep at one point during the Persian period *And this one that was writing in the book brought it up and showed it and read (it) in the houses of the owner of the sheep. And he was beseeching him and asking him concerning them, as he was showing him every deed of the shepherd and testifying before him against all the shepherds* (1 En 89:76). However the owner of the sheep does not respond and the angel sets down the book and leaves.

the *Book of Dreams* from making it the focus of his work or expanding on it in service of his own rhetorical agenda.<sup>53</sup>

There is, however, a considerably more radical idea than intercession that vies for the distinction of the central teaching of the *Book of Dreams*. Beyond salvation from the political crisis *du jour*, the *Book of Dreams* casts a vision for a definitive solution to the problem of evil – salvation for the righteous from wickedness in perpetuity. In the end times the seer prophesies that God will transform the gentiles into righteous beings *sans* becoming Jewish – *righteousness* becoming a superordinate identity making enduring peace possible between Jews and gentiles and humanity and God.

#### TRANSFORMATION IN THE NARRATIVE ARC OF THE BOOK OF DREAMS

While the transformations of Noah, Moses and the gentiles in the *Book of Dreams* have certainly been noted, ‘transformation’ to my knowledge has not previously been proposed as the unifying theme of the *Book of Dreams*. What follows is a narrative critical reading of the apocalypse postulating *transformation* as the central issue in the author’s composition of the work.

There is considerable discussion among Enoch scholars concerning redactions, interpolations and textual corruptions in the *Book of Dreams* some of which is noted (where relevant) in the footnotes of this chapter. However, much of the text-critical debate, as well as the questions as to whether the *Book of Dreams* was intended to be Maccabean military propaganda, are beyond the scope and interest of this study. This study is focused exclusively on the broad narrative aspects of the *Book of Dreams* and the vision it cast in the centuries after its composition for the righting of the world; a vision the Apostle Paul was likely familiar with.

#### FIRST VISION AND PRAYER – 1 ENOCH 83-84 (seventeen verses)

The *Animal Apocalypse* is a rather faithful abridgment of biblical history. The opening chapters of the *Book of Dreams*, by contrast, appear to be an original contribution to the Enochic/biblical tradition. Taking the *Book of Dreams* as a unified composition, one would think the authorial agenda would be most clearly visible in the additions made to the established tradition. In a work like the *Book of Dreams*, the protracted, innovative prologue which the author felt compelled to add to the biblical narrative would serve as a guidepost for the reader enabling a reinterpreting of the well-known biblical material following the rhetorical agenda of the author. Following this line, Portier-Young’s focus on the action of the protagonist (Enoch) in this original material, identifying *acts of intercession* as central to the teaching of the apocalypse, is entirely logical. However, as discussed above, interest in intercession is not sustained in the text beyond the prologue. If, however, the focus is shifted from the *action* of the protagonist to the *reaction* of the protagonist, Enoch’s lament comes into focus and a subsequent pattern of lament emerges in the *Book of Dreams*.

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<sup>53</sup> If Portier-Young is correct, the invention of the *Book of Dreams* lies entirely in its placement of Enoch in the role as intercessory protagonist confirming/reinforcing an established principle of Jewish theology concerning intercessory prayer.



*Pattern and Function of Lament in the Book of Dreams*

Surely the greatest mercy granted us by Providence is our ignorance of the future. Imagine if we knew the outcome of our hopes and plans, or could see the manner in which we are doomed to die – how ruined our lives would be!<sup>54</sup>

In a perspective entirely missing from *Genesis*, concerned as it is with divine justification, the opening chapters of the *Book of Dreams* offer a human reaction to the cataclysm of the Noahic flood. Given Noah's haunting silence in *Genesis* upon receiving certain knowledge that everyone of his acquaintance will shortly be drowned outside of the hull of his ship, Enoch's violent reaction to the same revelation scratches a deep literary itch. Here is the lament, the protest, the bargaining that one hopes righteous individuals like Enoch might offer on behalf of the unwitting world should God seek their council prior to raining down catastrophe.

Enoch's lament and prayer draw out the raw terror of the revelation from the human vantage. Even as he petitions heaven in an attempt to negotiate the terms of the apocalypse, Enoch acknowledges the validity of the Lord's anger and his sovereignty over his creation.<sup>55</sup> He nevertheless suggests that divine justice might equally be achieved by dividing the wicked from the righteous for the destruction of the one and salvation of the other. His prayer is modest, that the Lord spare only a remnant, and touchingly personal, a favor asked against the credit of his own righteousness, *I pray and beg so that you may sustain my prayer and save me [a generation] that will succeed me in the earth* (En 84.5b).<sup>56</sup>

Further, it is the lament of Enoch in response to his first vision which drives the action of the *Book of Dreams*. *I saw a terrible vision... I lifted up (my voice) to cry aloud and said: 'The earth is destroyed' ... [Malalel] said to me: 'A terrible thing you have seen, my son, and horrible indeed is your dream-vision...' (1 En 83:2-7)*. Enoch's fear provokes his grandfather's concern, which elicits Enoch's disclosure, which gives rise to Malalel's advice, which prompts Enoch's intercession, which results in the revelation of the *Animal Apocalypse*.

Focused on Enoch's *reaction* to the divine intelligence he has received, the reader becomes aware of similar reactions throughout the *Book of Dreams*. There are, as it turns out, a total of eleven laments in the apocalypse, five of which are uttered by Enoch. In fact, every time Enoch is voiced in the narrative he laments. His longest laments, in the prologue and epilogue, serve to frame the apocalypse. The other nine laments found within the body of the text form an interpretive spine throughout the work.

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Harris, *Conspirata: A Novel of Ancient Rome* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009) 9.

<sup>55</sup> For discussion on the role statements of confidence/trust and vows of praise play in the rhetoric of lament see Leann Snow Flesher, "Rapid Change of Mood: Oracles of Salvation, Certainty of a Hearing, or Rhetorical Play," in *My Words Are Lovely: Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms* (ed. Robert L. Fosterand and David M. Howard; New York: T & T Clark, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> For discussion of the similarities between Enoch's prayer in *1 En 84* and that of the archangels in *1 En 9*, see Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 360-2.

The second and third laments of the *Book of Dreams* are of a kind: mothers weeping for their children. Eve laments the murder of her son Abel, *And that female cow, that first one, went forth from that first bull; she sought that red calf but did not find it, she wailed a great wailing over it, and sought it* (1 En 85:6), as the earth laments the violence and murder of the animals upon her, *And again I saw them, and they began to butt one another and swallow one another, and the earth began to cry out.* (1 En 87:1)

The fourth and fifth laments are also tied together. The fourth is that of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, *and those sheep began to cry out on account of their young... and I saw the sheep lamenting and crying out and asking their owner with all their might, until the owner of the sheep came down...* (1 En 89:15-16) which, when heard by God, results directly in the subsequent lamenting of the Egyptians, *And the owner came to the sheep, and he began to beat those hyenas, and the hyena's began to lament* (1 En 89:20).

The sixth lament is that of prophets over the apostasy of Israel and Judah and the looming catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem and exile. *And he sent many other sheep to those sheep to testify against them and to lament over them* (1 En 89:53). It falls, however, to Enoch to lament the realization of the prophets' fears in the seventh lament of the *Book of Dreams*, *And I began to cry out with all my strength and call to the owner of the sheep and show him concerning the sheep that they were being devoured by all the wild beasts* (1 En 89:57). Enoch goes on to lament the abuses of the sheep in the post-exilic period, *And each one of them was killing and destroying many more sheep than they had been instructed. And I began to weep and lament on account of those sheep* (1 En 89:69) as well as the abuse of the Hellenistic age, *And the sheep cried out that their flesh was being devoured by the birds. And as for me, I cried out and lamented in my sleep over that shepherd who was tending the sheep* (1 En 90:3). Unlike his first lament in the opening chapters of the narrative, Enoch's subsequent laments are not followed by prayers of intercession.

The tenth lament is that of the Maccabean rebels over the apathy of the sheep in the face of the Seleucid threat, *Yet for all this, those eagles and vultures and ravens and kites still were tearing the sheep apart and flying upon them and devouring them. But the sheep were silent while the rams were lamenting and crying out* (1 En 90:11).

The number *ten* is, of course, a number in biblical literature that often represents completeness and, in some instances, perfection. There are the Ten Commandments, the ten plagues visited on the Egyptians, the ten generations from Adam to Noah, the ten generations from Noah to Abraham, the ten testings of Abraham's faith (by tradition), the ten trials of Israel in the wilderness, ten is given as the lowest number of righteous people living in Sodom upon which God agreed to spare the city as a result of Abraham's intercession, etc. Here in the *Book of Dreams*, this tenth act of lament is at last answered by God. It comes after a long and disturbing divine silence in the face of the continued devastation of sheep. At the absolute nadir of Israel's political fortunes in 587 B.C.E., the Owner's (God's) response to Enoch's lamentation is not merely silence but rejoicing in the destruction of the flock (1 En 89:58). This tenth lament of the Maccabees which garners a favorable response from the Owner is the seventh (another

biblically significant number) lament from God's last direct intervention on behalf of the sheep against the Egyptians.<sup>57</sup>

The tenth lament uttered by the Maccabees triggers the final judgment in which the wicked are destroyed and the righteous restored. The series of laments having reached the number of completion and having garnered the desired divine response – the apocalypse should have ended here. But instead of concluding with Enoch's reintegration into the flock of the righteous, riding as it were off into the sunset, the author instead adds as a conclusion to the apocalypse an eleventh, unanswered lament; Enoch's gut wrenching grief over his vision of the future. Not only does this eleventh lament shatter the balanced, carefully constructed decagon of lament but it ends the *Book of Dreams* with a cliff-hanger instead of the neat conclusion the readers of Jewish apocalypse have long been conditioned to expect.

This is the vision which I saw while I slept, and I awoke and blessed the Lord of righteousness and gave him glory. Then I wept with great weeping, and my tears stayed not till I could no longer endure it: when I saw, they flowed on account of what I had seen; for everything shall come and be fulfilled, and the deeds of men, each according to his destiny, were shown to me. On that night I remembered the first dream, and because of it I wept and was troubled – because I had seen that vision.

1 En 90:40-42

Even if the reader has not been paying attention to the count, this final lament is arresting. Not only because it is the eleventh after a complete set of ten, but because it comes after Enoch's vision of the glorious eschatological restoration of all things. Given the nature of his visions, Enoch has had good reason to lament up to the point of the eschaton. And though he is careful here to bless God, this final lamentation seems inappropriate, an unsuitable end for the apocalypse.

At the conclusion of any narrative, a reader fully expects to find resolution to the conflict which has driven the story; a change in circumstance, the growth of the protagonist, an insight granted the reader, etc. something which justifies and demonstrates the contingency of the intermediary episodes within the narrative. As Ricoeur argued, a narrative conclusion need not be *predictable* to the reader; it rather needs to be *acceptable*, satisfying the narrative arc. "Looking back from the conclusion toward the intermediary episodes, we must be able to say that this end demanded those events and that chain of actions. Yet this backward look is itself made possible by the teleological oriented movement of our expectations when we were following the story."<sup>58</sup> This is not a prescriptive process "...but one that responds to the internal coherence of a story which conjoins contingency and acceptability."<sup>59</sup>

The expectation of a resolution, and a happy one at that, at the conclusion of a Jewish apocalyptic narrative is particularly justified as the genre's *raison d'être* is the promise to a community in acute crisis of better times to come. Having suffered with Enoch through the brutal, inglorious recounting of sacred history that is the *Animal Apocalypse*, one expects him to find some relief in the certain knowledge that eventually all will be made right. No doubt the

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<sup>57</sup> To press the pattern of numbers in the *Book of Dreams* still further, Enoch laments *three* (another number of significance in biblical literature associated with perfection and completion) times throughout the second age.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984) 150.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

inevitable establishment of divine justice would have been a point of keen interest for the author's intended audience living through the *gezerot* of Antiochus IV. Having seen a vision of the utter vanquishing of the Seleucids and their allies, Enoch's despondency after his glorious vision of the eschaton is perplexing to say the least.

This series of laments, ending as it does in despondency, functions to force the reader back to the beginning of the *Book of Dreams* in search of resolution or, failing that, an explanation for Enoch's inability to accept the balm of future eschatological justice. It ensures the reader takes a long second look at the eschatological resolution to the problem of evil embodied by the gentiles in what will prove an innovative amendment to the prophetic justification for Israel's political misfortune.

### *The Inordinate Attention Given the Noahic Flood*

Returning to the opening chapters of the *Book of Dreams* in search of a justification for Enoch's melancholy, the reader is struck by the amount of attention the author gives to the Noahic flood.<sup>60</sup> Collectively, the flood as a subject receives the longest treatment in the apocalypse at 26 verses and is the only subject on which the protagonist (Enoch) speaks at length.<sup>61</sup> It is also, oddly, the subject with which the author ends his apocalypse the last line of which reads, *On that night I [Enoch] remembered the first dream, and because of it I wept and was troubled – because I had seen that vision* (1 En 90:40-42).

From a narrative critical perspective, what makes Enoch's final lament more than a humanitarian's sorrow over the future suffering of humankind is the fact that the author ends the apocalypse with it. Had the author reversed the concluding events (having Enoch first lament and then bless God) or had he added a closing line indicating Enoch's peace with the will of God, the lament would read simply as an expression of compassion for the torments yet to unfold. As it stands the final lament is a powerfully discordant conclusion which turns the reader forcibly from the tidy eschatological resolution of history of the *Animal Apocalypse* the back to strife and failure of the first and second ages. As Enoch finds no comfort in his vision of the future, his final lament ensures his reader will not find it either.

Yet, for the ancient readers of the *Book of Dreams* the crisis of the flood lay in the mythic past, its literary *pathos* surely dulled by familiarity. Facing their own very real crisis in Antiochus' program of cultural assimilation, one imagines the original audience would have been most interested in the eschaton as it had direct bearing on the question of their own survival. It seems peculiar, then, that the author of the *Book of Dreams* would have dedicated such space and effort to expanding the well known, well rehearsed flood narrative and even more peculiar still that he again draws his readers' attention to back to this episode in the closing line of his apocalypse.

Looking to scriptural patterns of the past to predict the future was a particular specialty of the Jewish apocalyptists. Having developed the tale of the flood, one expects the author of the

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<sup>60</sup> "The importance of the prediluvian era is indicated by the inordinate length of its description." Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 354.

<sup>61</sup> Followed by Moses at 23 verses and the eschaton at 22 verses.

*Book of Dreams* to use the first apocalypse as a template, positing a similar fate for the Seleucids and their sympathizers as was enacted against the corruption of the first age on the order of an apocalyptic annihilation of the wicked (thus the salvation of the righteous) made possible by the intercession of the pious.<sup>62</sup> Such an argument would have been perfectly at home in the eschatological milieu of the first and second centuries B.C.E. – C.E. The reader, however, is quickly disabused of this idea.

Enoch's petition in response to his first vision is specific – that God might spare a *righteous remnant* from the coming deluge. One would then anticipate that the second revelation, granted in answer to his plea, would primarily address this issue of the remnant on whose behalf Enoch made his appeal. However, the vision Enoch receives in answer to his prayer, is considerably more than he ask for and not particularly comforting. Instead of the particulars concerning the salvation of Noah, Enoch instead is given a sweeping vision of human history beginning in the primordial garden (thus predating Enoch's own moment in time) and ending in the eschaton. The vision mentions Noah but he is only a minor character allotted 2 verses.

As the *Book of Dreams* unfolds it becomes clear that the attention the author gives to this tale lays the ground-work for what will prove a damning critique of the Noahic flood, as he cast a vision for the lasting success of the second apocalypse now on the horizon. In responding to Enoch's specific plea with a broad review of history, the author asserts that the granting of Enoch's petition lies well beyond the specific act of the Noah's salvation. As it is revealed to Enoch in the *Animal Apocalypse*, the salvation of Noah fulfills only half of Enoch's request - the *remnant*. The *righteous* component of the equation, as it turns out, will have to wait until the second apocalypse.

#### *The Flood and the Sons of Noah* 1 En 89:1-10

The secret of the coming destruction is revealed by *one of the four* white men (the angel Sariel 1 En 10.1-3) to *one of the [white] bulls* (Noah). Noah subsequently builds a ship saving himself and three additional oxen (his sons) from the deluge. As with every other story in the *Animal Apocalypse*, the episode of the Noahic flood is severely abbreviated when compared to the biblical account. The dimensions of the ark are not given; no mention is made of Noah's wife or daughters-in-laws; the gathering and boarding of the animals is completely neglected, etc. This, however, is not entirely unexpected as the author has covered the primordial history of the world – including the tale of the Watchers – in an impressive thirteen verses. What is odd, given the build-up of the opening chapters and the space allotted to this episode,<sup>63</sup> is how little Noah himself actually figures in the *Animal Apocalypse*. While his presence is certainly implied throughout the passage, he is mentioned overtly only twice, in the first verse of the pericope and the last. Framed by Noah's supporting role, it is the flood, the physical manifestation of divine justice, which has usurped center stage in this narrative.

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<sup>62</sup> This is in fact the reading of Portier-Young discussed above.

<sup>63</sup> The author devotes nine verses to the flood, by far the largest pericope dedicated to a solitary event in the *Animal Apocalypse*.

Over seven verses the author traces the water's movement; surging, cresting and final ebbing, each stage soberly marked by Enoch's witness, *and again I saw...* The flood's effect is carefully detailed; the sinking and perishing of the animals sharply contrasted to the floating and salvation of those on the ark. Drawn out in such a way, the flood is cast as the historical axis of meaning in sacred history, the certain promise of God's judgment of the wicked. The six preceding chapters<sup>64</sup> of the *Book of Dreams* openly anticipate this scene of divine reckoning. Once recounted (notably absent any divine promises to refrain from such action in future) the tale of the flood establishes a expectant the pattern for God's dealings with the world for a readership well acquainted with the sins of the second age.

As the water recedes and Noah exits the ark, the author offers two critical details concerning his three sons. They, like the sons of Adam, are black, *red as blood* and white and they, like the Watchers, beget unnatural offspring, *all manner of wild beasts* (1 En 89.9-10). The narrative leaves unspecified which of the sons is represented by which color. Given the detail provided in *Genesis*, Ham who saw his father's nakedness seems best assigned the color *black*, Shem the ancestor of Abraham *white*, leaving *red* by default to Japheth. This however is an ill-fitting correspondence as *red* in association with Abel is a clear reference to Abel's murder in the apocalypse. Japheth, by contrast, died unmolested of old age according to tradition. Granted the author is allowed certain allegorical liberties; yet, having so vividly established the tricolor scheme only nineteen verses before, its mismatched application to the sons of Noah is puzzling.

The application of the tri-color scheme to the sons of Noah cannot be entirely reconciled with the account in *Genesis* and this, I suspect, is by design. Here it becomes apparent that creating small-yet-glaring discrepancies with the biblical subtext, such as this one, is a preferred rhetorical strategy of the author – one he employs sparingly but to great effect in the *Animal Apocalypse*. It is an adroit technique as the unsuspecting reader proceeding through an otherwise prosaic abridgement of the biblical narrative is caught entirely off guard by these incongruities. The reader instinctively attempts to reconcile the discrepancy and failing that (as the discrepancies in the apocalypse are real) attempts to extract a workable concluding moral both explaining and excusing the discrepancy's inclusion in the narrative.

The reader can only conclude that the application of the tri-color scheme to the sons of Noah is a categorically negative assessment of the sons, which bodes ill for the new age. In a single reductive stroke, the tri-color scheme and the unnatural offspring reestablish the scenario which led to the first apocalypse; thus the inevitability of the second judgment.

As the story of the flood and its aftermath would have been well known to the readers of the *Book of Dreams*, the negative assessment of Noah's sons could not have come as much of a surprise. The reemergence of humanity from the ark starkly juxtaposed to the depiction of Noah's sons (possible only in an abridgement such as this) calls attention to the failure of the flood to accomplish its purpose: ridding the world of wickedness.<sup>65</sup> Even as the author creates

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<sup>64</sup> Though the chapter length in the *Book of Dreams* does vary widely, the shortest being 88 at 3 verses and the longest being 89 at 77 verses.

<sup>65</sup> “[T]he punishment of antediluvian evil, for all its decisiveness, remains incomplete, whereas the author expected eschatological judgment to eradicate injustice all together.” Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “‘Reading the Present’ in the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 85-90)” (*Reading the Present in the Qumran Library: The Perception of the*

the necessity for a second apocalypse he critiques the first and in doing so creates an expectation that the second apocalypse will accomplish the goal of the first though by different means.

*The Transformation of Noah* 1 En 89:1 and 9 (Ethiopic version only)

The story of Noah belongs to a frustrating class of biblical tales in which a central element of the story, some critical piece of actionable intelligence, is conspicuously missing. The stories of Cain (Gen 4) and that of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, (Lev 10, Num 3:3-4; 26:61, 1 Chr 24:2) are prime examples of this kind of story-telling. Both the stories of Cain and of Aaron's sons are tales of sacrifices offered by men and rejected by God. Both end in tragedy: Cain murdering his brother in a jealous rage and Nadab and Abihu struck dead on the spot. Yet one never learns the reason why God rejected the offerings of these men. The reader is left to puzzle out the possibilities: did the fault lie with the sacrifice or the man or the god?<sup>66</sup> The lack of some justifying claim for God's punitive action, particularly in the case of Nadab and Abihu, is a glaring and purposeful omission in a religious tradition at great pains to clarify the nature of and obligations resulting from Israel's covenant with God.

The story of Noah in *Genesis* likewise possesses a conspicuous vagueness; only the vaguery lies not with the reasons for God's destruction of the world but with the lack of details as to the crimes of humanity and virtue of Noah. The clear teaching of the Noahic flood is that the justice of God will not tarry indefinitely, yet a list of behaviors to avoid and merits to cultivate cannot be comfortingly extracted from this tale. There is an unsettling principle at work in these stories that destabilizes the certitude of Deuteronomistic theology. Thus the reader can gain no sure psychological distance from these episodes, as there is no sure way to avoid the specific sin(s) committed and therefore the threat of divine justice. Knowing there is indeed a limit to God's mercy, these enigmatic tales, threaded as they are through biblical literature, likely have kept successive generations of religious thinkers wondering if the atrocities of their own age might very well trigger a second apocalypse.

The brief biography of Enoch (Gen 5:22-24) belongs to a subcategory of this type of tale: that of the *inexplicably righteous*. Like Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20), radical claims for Enoch's righteousness are made with no supporting explanatory narrative. As there is no threat of judgment accompanying these terse profiles, the designation of Enoch and Melchizedek as *righteous* merely offers an interesting interpretive puzzle for readers of *Genesis*.

As the *Book of Dreams* opens with a back story for Enoch justifying his biography in *Genesis*, the reader cannot help but wonder if the author intends to shed a similar light on some of the other more pressing mysteries of the biblical narrative. Even as it becomes apparent that the *Animal Apocalypse* is an abridgement, there remains an expectation, given the way the author has focused the reader on the episode of the flood, that there will be some particularly relevant insight concerning the figure of Noah for an audience facing an apocalyptic crisis of their own.

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*Contemporary by Means of Scriptural Interpretations*, ed. Kristin De Troyer and Armin Lange; SBLSymS 30. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005) 92.

<sup>66</sup> There has been no small amount of speculation and interpretation attempting to solve these riddles. See James Kugel, *The Bible As It Was* Cambridge: Belknap, 1997 83-96.

Noah, however, is cast as a minor character in his own tale in the *Animal Apocalypse*. In the Aramaic version he is given a lone verse, [... *And one of] the [fo]ur went to one of the [white] bulls [and taught it. And] he [ma]de for himself a ship, an dwelt inside it...* (1 En 89:1). The Ethiopian text adds a single, inexplicable detail to this otherwise laconic narrative – that just before the flood Noah was transformed into an angel.<sup>67</sup> The claim reads, *And one of the four went to <one of> cattle and taught it a mystery without his trembling. That one was born a bull but became a man. And he hewed for himself a large vessel...*(89.1). The claim is reasserted in the closing line of the pericope, *and that white bull that had become a man came out from the vessel...*(89.9). Given the representation of *angels* as *men* in the allegory, there can be little doubt that the humanization of the bull is meant to indicate that Noah became an angel.<sup>68</sup>

Noah's angelic transformation occurs only in the later Ethiopian text and for that reason it is tempting to disregard it. If this were a study dedicated to uncovering the narrative agenda of the historical author of the *Book of Dreams* one could unhesitatingly leave the interpolation aside. However, this study is interested less in authorial intentions as it is in the interpretation(s) of the *Book of Dreams*. Interpolations are in themselves a type of commentary, an editor's attempt to clarify or amend a text, and on that level such insertions offer windows into ancient readers understanding of a given text. Granted, the insertion of the claim about Noah's transformation is a small portal indeed, but when one considers what has been left out or otherwise truncated in the *Animal Apocalypse* (the omission of Passover and the giving of the Law, the entire patriarchal saga reduced to four lines, etc.), gaps the Ethiopian redactor apparently felt no compulsion to address, his interpolation of this one detail concerning Noah's transmutation is all the more striking. That he felt the need to reiterate the claim in the space of 8 verses suggests to me that Noah's metamorphosis had particular significance in itself or pointed to something of significance within the narrative. As it is "impossible to say whether the recension represented by the Ethiopic version was also current in the first or second centuries B.C.E."<sup>69</sup> it would seem germane to this project to explore how this interpolation influences the interpretation of the apocalypse while keeping in mind its deuterocanonical status.

There exists some hagiography that Noah was semi-divine at birth (*1 En* 106-7; *1QapGen* ii) but there is no known parallel to his metamorphosis into an angel as an adult as portrayed in the *Animal Apocalypse*.<sup>70</sup> However, the portrayal of righteous people as angels or people who become angels is a widely-attested motif in Second Temple period literature.<sup>71</sup> As Noah's only

<sup>67</sup> The first reference to Noah's transfiguration at 89.1 is absent in the surviving Aramaic parallel, 4QEn<sup>c</sup>4 i. And while a lacuna exists at 4QEn<sup>c</sup>4 ii there is not sufficient space for the second reference to Noah's transfiguration in the Ethiopic text at 89.9. There is no Greek fragment extant for this section of the apocalypse with which to compare. See Black, *Enoch*, 262.

<sup>68</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 259.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>71</sup> Dan 12:1-3; *1 En* 104:2-6; *T. Moses* 10:9; *1QH* 3 :19-23, 11:3-13. For discussion see J. H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. J. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; Chico: Scholars, 1980). J. J. Collins "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 21-43. P. B. Decock, "Holy ones, Sons of God, and the Transcendent Future of the Righteous in 1 Enoch and the New Testament," *Neot* 17 (1983): 70-82. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology, and Soteriology* (WUNT 94. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 184-205; *idem*, "Some Reflections on Angelomorphic Humanity Texts Among the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 7 (2001): 292-312. *idem*, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven: In Jewish and*



known attribute from *Genesis* was his righteousness, it is possible that there may have existed a tradition claiming that Noah became an angel. A redactor or copyist of the *Book of Dreams* may have inserted these lines concerning Noah's transmutation into the apocalypse as a correction simply because he knew of the tradition. If the redactor was merely filling out the narrative with this claim, one struggles to explain why this is the only point he felt so obliged to embellish.

The idea of the transfiguration of righteous individuals into angelic beings is, however, innate to the *Animal Apocalypse*. The same claim is made of Moses and is attested both in the Aramaic and Ethiopic versions. Like the transformation of Noah, that of Moses is mentioned twice. Tiller reasons from this that Noah's transformation was likely a retrospective interpolation, "modeled after the transfiguration of Moses."<sup>72</sup>

The interpolation slips easily into the gap created by the reader's expectation of some forthcoming insight regarding the figure of Noah. The addition of Noah's transfiguration, however, does not seem to materially affect the immediate pericope. Noah becomes an angel, but the world immediately returns to its previous state. Why then insert this detail?

The first thing Noah's unexpected, positive transfiguration does for the reader moving diachronically through the text is that it retrospectively highlights the theme of *transformation*, which has, in fact, been present from the very beginning of the *Book of Dreams*. Up to the point of Noah, the transformations in the *Book of Dreams* have been universally negative – the dissolution of the world, the falling and subsequent transformation of the stars/Watchers – and have so closely paralleled the well-known tradition that they are hardly noticeable. It is not until Noah is transformed, an idea for which there is no precedent and no pressing justification for it in the narrative, that the reader is forced to notice the recurrent transformations as a theme and, in turn, begins to read the apocalypse with the expectation of transformations to come. The reader's attention, drawn to the Noahic saga from the opening chapters of the *Book of Dreams*, is, at its post-deluge conclusion, thrown forward in expectation of both a second apocalypse and future transformations. It is significant to note that without Noah's transfiguration the reader is brought to the same narrative pass in the Aramaic version with the transformation of Moses a mere 27 verses later.

The interpolation, however, does more than merely usurp the author's revelatory timetable. The author of the apocalypse will later draw a critical comparison between Noah and Moses. By claiming Noah was also transformed into an angel the redactor explicitly linked the

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*Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford, 1993). Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992): 1-31. Alan F. Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), Peter Schaféfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen* (DeGruyter: Berlin, 1975), William F. Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995):122-44. Kevin Patrick Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship Between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>72</sup> Tiller, however, does not speculation as to the redactor's motives. See Tiller, *Commentary*, 259. Black, on the other hand, maintains that it is entirely possible that the Ethiopic preserves a longer version of the Aramaic apocalypse. "These Eth. 'additions' to the text of En<sup>c</sup> seem at first to simply be translators' expansions of the shorter original text. But, in fact, Eth. could represent a longer recension of the Aram., in particular the addition 'he was born a bull and became a man'. An exact parallel text attested in the Aram. occurs at 89.36: '... I saw in this vision till that sheep (Moses) became a man (En<sup>c</sup> 4 10) 'was transformed and became a man' = אַתְּהָפֵךְ וְהָיָה אָנוּשׁ', and built a tabernacle for the Lord of the sheep.'" See Black, *Enoch*, 262.

tales thereby strengthening the existing correlation between the pericopae insuring the reader cannot help but see the connection.

*The Significance of the Shift from “Bulls” to “Sheep”* 1 En 89:12

From the subject of Noah and the flood the author moves rapidly through the patriarchal period in just three verses. Abraham is born a white bull and begets a wild ass (Ishmael) and a white bull (Isaac). Isaac fathers a wild black boar (Esau) and a white ram (Jacob) and Jacob in turn fathers twelve sheep (his sons from Leah, Rachel and concubines). One of the twelve sheep is handed over to the asses (Joseph sold to the Midianites/Ishmaelites and in due course to the Egyptians). The ram (Jacob) brings the eleven sheep to Egypt and the narrative focus is transferred to Moses.

This shift from *bulls* to *sheep* with Jacob and his offspring “represents the beginning of the nation of Israel and the end of the undifferentiated Shemite line.”<sup>73</sup> There is, of course, considerable biblical precedent for the use of *sheep* as a metaphor for *Israel/Jews*.<sup>74</sup> However, in the context of the *Animal Apocalypse*, this shift signifies more than homage to a cultural meme; it subtly underscores the particular privilege of Israel over and against a more totalizing portrayal of the otherness of the gentile beasts.<sup>75</sup>

The tri-color scheme, indicating *righteousness* (white), *wickedness* (black) and *futility* (red),<sup>76</sup> is only ever applied to the species of bulls in the *Animal Apocalypse*. The *beasts*, in contrast to the *bulls*, are aberrant, unintended beings, the product of the unholy mixing of the stars with the herd.<sup>77</sup> The tri-color scheme does not, and is in fact never is, applied to the beasts because they are categorically profane.

While the world is, in essence, rebooted by the Noahic flood, the same categories of being which characterized the first age are immediately reestablished: bulls and beasts. The tri-color scheme functions as before to distinguish the wicked from the righteous and the futile. With the birth of Jacob and the shift in representation from *bulls* to *sheep*, the tri-color scheme drops out of use altogether. The *sheep* of Israel are never said to be anything other than white. However, where *whiteness* had been the prime indicator of *favor* or *righteousness* up to this point in the allegory; among the flock of God, from this point on *righteousness* is indicated by the imagery of sheep *with their eyes open*.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>74</sup> James M. Scott, *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 96.

<sup>75</sup> Against Gabriele Boccaccini, “History thus witnesses a continuous expansion of evil, with no way for human beings to oppose its spread. Nobody is spared: in the metaphorical world of the *Animal Apocalypse*, even Jews, who are the noblest segment of humankind, bear the evil gene of degeneration; by the generation of Jacob, from “cows” they have become “sheep.” *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, From Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 167.

<sup>76</sup> As to how to interpret *red* in relation to Japheth; Bryan suggests “*ambiguity*,” *Cosmos*, 154; Fröhlich proposes “*neutral*,” “The Symbolical Language.” 360. Goldenberg theorizes, “The answer may lie in a statement by Philo that Noah’s sons are “symbols of three things in nature – of the good, the evil and the indifferent.” *Curse*, 153. Tiller contends that “Philo here is referring to the Stoic notion of ἀδιάφορα, and these three characterizations probably have no traditional basis.” *Commentary*, 267.

<sup>77</sup> For development of the holy/profane distinction in the *Animal Apocalypse* see Davis Bryan, *Cosmos*.

This shift from the tri-color scheme is subtle but significant. It suggests the sheep have an innate capacity for righteousness; the sheep need only open their eyes to realize their potential. The drama of Israel's history in the *Animal Apocalypse* is, in effect, the flock's struggle to achieve their latent capacity for righteousness. This makes their story one of redemption and restoration. The unholy beasts, by contrast, are represented as beings lacking the capacity for righteousness and therefore, the reader must conclude, redemption.

*The Slaughter of the Apostates and the Transformation of Moses* 1 En 89:15-38

The author devotes 23 verses to the career of Moses, by far the longest passage dedicated to a single figure in the *Animal Apocalypse*.<sup>78</sup> The pericope falls into two halves; the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt (1 En 89:15-27) and the forty years of wilderness wanderings (1 En 89:28-38).

The sheep are pastured among the hyenas of Egypt. The little flock multiplies greatly and the hyenas come to fear and oppress them throwing *their young in a current of much water* (1 En 89:15). One of the lambs (Moses) escapes to the wild asses. The sheep lament and cry out to the Owner of the sheep. The Owner commissions Moses to warn the hyenas not to touch the sheep. Moses joins forces with another sheep (Aaron) to confront the hyenas who respond by oppressing the flock more severely. The Owner beats the hyenas and the flock flees to a pool of water. The pool parts for the sheep and the hyenas pursue them into the pool. The Owner places himself between the sheep and the hyenas. The Owner reveals himself to the hyenas and they attempt to flee in terror, but it is too late; the water closes in over them and they are drowned.

Delivered from their slavery in Egypt, the sheep are pastured in the desert where they begin to open their eyes.<sup>79</sup> They gather around a large rock (Sinai) which Moses ascends. The powerful presence of the Owner is made manifest on the rock and the sheep are afraid. Moses ascends Sinai a second time and the sheep begin to *stray from the way which he had shown them* (1 En 89:32). The Owner is extremely angry at the wayward sheep and Moses descends the rock. On seeing Moses, the flock becomes fearful and trembling before him; they want *to return to their folds* (1 En 89:34). Moses, enlisting the help of some other sheep (Levites), begins to slaughter those who strayed. The terrified remnant of the flock returns to its fold. Moses is then transformed from a sheep into a man. He builds a house for the Owner and makes the flock stand in the house. The generation of sheep led out of Egypt dies and the flock comes to a river (Jordan). The author reiterates that Moses was transformed into an angel *that sheep that had led them, that had become a man...* and Moses lays down. The flock crosses over *into a good place and into a pleasant and glorious land* (1 En 89:40) without him.

The first section, the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery, is in the main an accurate summation of *Exodus* 1-14. The second half – dealing with the forty years of wilderness wanderings, however, is a rather brazen reworking of the biblical narrative. The revision is managed economically, accomplished in four stages; two pointed omissions, the stress of an otherwise minor scene in *Exodus* and the embellishment of a single detail.

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<sup>78</sup> Compared to Noah at 2 verses (9 verses total including the flood), Elijah at 1 verse and Judas Maccabee at 9 verses.

<sup>79</sup> VanderKam, "Open and Closed Eyes," argues the *Animal Apocalypse* is the source of this metaphor.

*The first omission: the giving of the Law*

Much of what lies on the cutting-room floor in the composition of the *Animal Apocalypse* can be explained via the strictures of abridgement. However, the last scene the reader might expect to find omitted in a compendium on Jewish sacred history would be that of Moses receiving the Torah on Sinai. Unparalleled in significance, the giving of the Law on Sinai is not merely iconic; but, by all accounts, was the very center of the Jewish religious identity. Yet the author of the *Animal Apocalypse* gives this most sacred moment only the barest of nods in his abridgment. In the strict context of the apocalypse, Moses' ascent up Sinai entirely lacks motivation; the flock arrives at the rock and Moses, for no apparent reason, climbs it. Nor is there any clear benefit to Moses' ascension as it appears that nothing is received at the summit. Thus, while purposely evoking the scene of Moses' reception of Torah, the author contrives never to specifically mention the Law in this pericope or, for that matter, anywhere else in the *Book of Dreams*.

*The second omission: the intercession of Moses*

The author similarly neglects to mention Moses' intercession on Sinai in which he persuades God to spare the idolatrous Hebrews. Not only does Moses' daring remonstrance avert the wrath of God in *Exodus*, without which there would be no further story, but this pivotal passage establishes the role of the *prophet* as *intercessor* and typecast the people as forever recalcitrant. All subsequent biblical narrative plays along this line; the obligation of the Law, the general failure of the people to adhere to the Law and the call of successive prophets for the people to return to the covenant and obey the Law. The omission of Moses' intercession is only slightly less startling than that of the giving of the Law.

*The stress of a minor scene: the slaughter of the apostates*

In place of the giving of the Law and the events surrounding Moses' intercession, the *Animal Apocalypse* focuses on Moses' slaughter of the apostates. The dramatic action is all here: the anger of God, Moses' descent, the fear of the people, their repentance in the face of the slaughter and the flock's restoration. While not insignificant, the slaughter of the apostates is a comparatively minor scene in *Exodus* allotted all of four verses. While the slaughter dramatically underscores the severity of the people's offence, the absence of this episode in the *Exodus* account would neither alter the plot nor significantly lessen the *pathos* of the pericope. In the *Animal Apocalypse*, by comparison, a third of the synopsis of the wilderness wanderings is dedicated to this one episode. It should be understood, therefore, as key to the text's meaning.

As an abridgement, the *Animal Apocalypse* relies heavily on its audience's familiarity with the biblical subtext. As it relates only selected highlights, it is left to the reader to supplement the necessary narrative detail. The association of Moses and Sinai with the giving of the Law is so familiar as to be virtually synonymous. No doubt the author expected his audience to infer from Moses' ascension of Sinai the giving of the Law and Moses' intercession on behalf of the people. In fact, the assumption of these underlying tales is necessary in order to justify both the Owner's restraint in the face of his extreme anger (his wrath toward the wicked

previously having resulted in the drowning of the world) and Moses' slaughter of the sheep (which otherwise can only be understood in the context of the apocalypse as an act of capricious savagery). So well-known are these stories that the reader might be forgiven for not even realizing, on first reading, that they are actually absent. However, absent they are, and thus by strategic omission and the attention given to the wrath of Moses on learning of the Hebrews' idolatry, the author of the *Animal Apocalypse* subtly but surely shifts the focus in his abridgement of the wilderness wanderings from the giving of the Law and Moses' intercession to the slaughter of the apostates.

*The embellishment: the transformation of Moses*

Though shifting the focus of the wilderness wanderings in this pericope, the author has nonetheless adhered to the biblical narrative. His reworking of the material has been a matter of stress in his retelling, the focus and development of one scene over others. It is only in the final scene of Moses' life that he suddenly and radically deviates from the biblical script claiming that after Moses slaughtered the apostates and before he built the tabernacle he was transformed into an angel.

While the transformation of Noah into an angel is textually suspect, attested as it is only in the Ethiopian, the transformation of Moses, attested in both the Ethiopian and Aramaic, is not. It is mentioned twice in short order, *I saw in this vision until that sheep became a man and built a house for the Owner of the sheep, and he caused all the sheep to stand in that house* (1 En 89.36) and again two verses later, *And that sheep that had led them, that had become a man, separated itself from them and lay down* (1 En 89.38a). Yet the transformation of Moses (as that of Noah in the Ethiopic text) does not appear integral to the plot. In fact, Moses is written out of the narrative almost immediately after his transformation: he is transformed, constructs the tabernacle,<sup>80</sup> causes the sheep to dwell in and lies down presumably to die.

August Dillmann theorized that the transformations of Noah and Moses in the *Animal Apocalypse* were motivated by practical concerns of the allegory. As Noah and Moses were builders, of boats and tabernacles respectively, and seeing how such undertakings in the literal world require hands, the author provides the means by which they might accomplish their appointed tasks via their transmutation into men.<sup>81</sup> Tiller points out the unlikeliness of this theory as other beasts in the allegory manage complicated tasks, building a tower (89.72-73) and wielding a sword (90.19) all without the aid of human appendages.<sup>82</sup> Dismissing the transfiguration of Noah as an interpolation, Tiller thinks Moses' transfiguration is likely an interpretation of his status as spokesperson for God.<sup>83</sup> Dimant suggests that Moses' transformation symbolizes a dispensation of divine wisdom enabling him for his task.<sup>84</sup> Tiller

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<sup>80</sup> Nickelsburg argues that "house" envisions the entire Hebrew camp including the tabernacle (*1 Enoch*, 381-82). Dimant contends the "house" in the *Animal Apocalypse* is not only a cultic structure but more importantly the place where Israel dwells ("Jerusalem and the Temple" 178-83).

<sup>81</sup> Dillmann, *Das Buch Enoch*, 257. Also Black, *Enoch*, 267.

<sup>82</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 255.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>84</sup> Dimant, "Jerusalem and the Temple," 183 n29.

concludes from this discussion that, “the significance of [Moses’ transfiguration] is not altogether clear.”<sup>85</sup>

Yet the author’s emphatic insistence on Moses’ the angelic promotion it is difficult to dismiss it as superfluous detail. Such repetition in this brutal abridgement of the singularly most defining episode in Jewish sacred history, strongly suggests that the transformation of Moses, for which there is no biblical precedent<sup>86</sup> and in fact some antithesis to,<sup>87</sup> is integral to the narrative. The key lies, as it so often does, in the details.

### *Moses v. Noah*

In the *Exodus* account, the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Sea of Reeds is firstly fitting recompense for the drowning of the Hebrew babies in the Nile. Beyond the realized justice of the immediate context however, stands a clear allusion to the Noahic flood. This parallel is drawn early by the author of *Exodus* who pointedly likens the baby Moses in his tiny ark of rushes set on the Nile River to Noah in his ark of gopher wood floating above the world. The echo is equally strong at the point of the crossing of the Sea of Reeds through which the Hebrews pass unscathed – as did Noah the flood – and the wicked Egyptians are drowned.

The author of *Animal Apocalypse* likewise draws this parallel by reappropriating the phraseology he used in describing the drowning world for the drowning of the Egyptian army. Of the flood, *I saw them sinking and drowning (being swallowed [Eth]) and perishing in that water* (1 En 89.5); of the Egyptians, *hyenas that had pursued those sheep perished and sank* (1 En 89.27).<sup>88</sup> The repetition of this verbiage coupled with the imagery of the water pouring from the heavens and pooling up from under the earth (1 En 89:2-3), closing in on the wicked from above and below as the Sea of Reeds closed in on the Egyptian army, links the tale of Moses to that of Noah, inviting an interpretative comparison.

Having passed through the Sea of Reeds, the Hebrews emerge on the far shore as Noah and his sons emerged from the ark, and, at first, the assessment is hopeful. Where the sons of Noah were quickly seen by their color (white, red and black) to be the same as the sons of Adam and (therefore doomed), the eyes of the Hebrew sheep are *open* as they enter the desert indicating that they, by contrast, are righteous.

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<sup>85</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 296.

<sup>86</sup> The deuterocanonical author of *Ben Sira* (c. 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.), however, does seem to suggest Moses did become an angel, ὁμοίωσεν αὐτὸν δόξῃ ἁγίων καὶ ἐμεγάλυνεν αὐτὸν ἐν φόβοις ἐχθρῶν. *He (God) made him (Moses) equal in glory to the holy ones and exalted him to the terror of his enemies* (Sir 45:2). That Moses was made immortal, not necessarily an angel see, Josephus *Ant.*, 4, 8, 48 and Talmud BT *Sotah* 13b brought to my attention by Yair Zakovitch, “*And You Shall Tell Your Son*”: *The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Hebrew University, 2009) 73-4. See also; S. E. Loewenstamm, “The Death of Moses,” in *Studies of the Testament of Abraham* (ed. Nickelsburg; Missoula: Scholars, 1976).

<sup>87</sup> Zakovitch comments on the “unease [biblical] writers felt about the immortality of some holy men.” “*And You Shall Tell Your Son*,” 74. also Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch, *From Gods to God: How the Bible Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths and Legends* (trans. Valerie Zakovitch; Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2012) 179-188.

<sup>88</sup> This imagery also anticipates the description of final battle of the eschaton in which all the beasts and all the birds of heaven sink into the earth and are covered over (1 En 90.18). See Tiller, *Commentary*, 286-87.

Both Moses and Noah receive special knowledge: Noah from an angel, Moses from God on Sinai. The reader is not made privy to the content of either revelation. Based on the fact that Noah builds a boat directly after receiving his missive, it is safe to assume the *mystery* consisted of a warning of the coming deluge and specifications for the ark. Similarly, Moses ascends Sinai and the reader is left to infer from the biblical narrative his reception of the Law and instructions for the construction of the tabernacle. While differing in the particulars, in the abstract, the revelations of Noah and Moses are both of a *kind*. Both men receive revelations as to what pleases God, *righteousness*, and what displeases God, *wickedness*; albeit Moses in considerably greater detail. Both revelations carry an explicit threat against the wicked. Both Moses and Noah receive detailed instructions for a building project.

In the case of Noah, the threat of divine justice is immediately realized as the world is drowned outside the hull of his ship. In the case of Moses, at the point he ascends Sinai, the threat of divine justice had both been realized in the recent past (the drowning of the Egyptians) and lay in his immediate future as the specter of the people's apostasy looms large in the mind of the reader familiar with the biblical narrative. Thus Moses on Sinai occupies the same narrative position as Noah; having survived the wrath of God against the wicked, Moses finds himself on the other side of the waters of judgment with a group of people of dubious character.

In *Exodus*, the intertextual link between the tales of Moses and that of Noah exists in the first half of the Mosaic epic. However, by shifting the focus of the wilderness wanderings to the slaughter of the apostates, the author of the apocalypse shifted the locus of the intertextual link between these tales in his recounting of the biblical narrative. The comparison in the *Animal Apocalypse* is drawn then between the second half of the Mosaic epic – the wilderness wanderings – and the Noahic flood.

Noah, having survived the judgment of God, emerges from the ark a second Adam. With him humanity has a fresh start, the ability to correct the abuses of the first age and live. Yet, as his tri-color sons enter the remade world, Noah does nothing to correct this ominous state of affairs. He does not expunge the black bull from the fledgling human community and thus world returns to its previous state of being. Moses, by contrast, knowing of the Lord's extreme anger over the idolatry of the Hebrews, purges the evil from the camp by slaughtering the apostates. In this Moses embodies the wrath of God. He descends Sinai like the rain that poured from the Noah's skies and the flock fears him as they previously feared the presence of God. Moses' devastating decisiveness in dealing with apostasy casts Noah, the permissive father, as a failure.

Moses' slaughter of the apostates *prior to his transfiguration* and the blessing which followed the purge (1 En 89:36-40) illustrates a critical component of theology under girding the *Book of Dreams*: the righteous possess the ability to deal with the problem of apostasy within the community *sans* supernatural aid. It is not a call to wholesale massacre the impious, it is rather a pointed demonstration that of the two evils facing the righteous, (the internal – apostates and the external – the gentiles) only one, the narrative will reveal, requires an apocalyptic solution. There is, thus, no intrinsic flaw in the system of Judaism which damns the flock to eternal failure, only a historic unwillingness on the part of the sheep to open their eyes, dwell in the house of the Owner and deal decisively with apostasy.

- *The transformation of Moses*

Immediately after the slaughter, Moses is transformed into an angel. In terms of biblical résumés, there is quite a lot to recommend Moses' promotion to the heavenly realm. Moses, after all, witnessed the miracle of the burning bush, was allowed private communications with God, personal miracles, public miracles, was granted power over nature, he was given an audience with God on a mountain fatal to others who would dare approach, he was allowed to see God pass by, his face shone after his encounter with God – if anyone were eligible for angelic advancement it was arguably Moses.

Having become an angel in the *Animal Apocalypse*, Moses constructs the tabernacle. His transformation imbues the project with significance. Yet the reader, conditioned at this point to draw from the biblical subtext, is well aware of the significance of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was commissioned by God, it was filled with the Lord's presence, it prefigured the Temple in Jerusalem. The revelation that newly-minted angel Moses was architect of the ancient project could do little more to further enhance the already considerable glory of the tabernacle. Nor is it clear why the tabernacle would have been in need of such promotion in the mid-Second Temple period.

In the Aramaic text (which does not include the detail of Noah's transformation) the commonality between Moses and Noah lies the fact they are both builders of divinely commissioned projects. Noah receives very specific knowledge of the coming flood and instructions for the ark which ferries him and his family to safety quite literally saving him from the wrath of God. Moses received the Law and instructions on the construction of a tabernacle facilitating the functioning of the cult. As Noah was saved from the wrath of God in the flood, so the sheep were saved from the wrath of God in Moses by returning to the fold, dwelling both literally and figuratively in house/Law of the Lord. The structures built by Noah and Moses have equivalent then functions; they provide the means of salvation from divine wrath. Where the ark was a refuge to Noah alone, tailored to the weather the specific and singular threat of the deluge, the tabernacle by contrast was a trans-generational sanctuary for the righteous against the continuing storm of the gentile world. Association with the tabernacle/Temple, and thereby the Jewish cult, in the second age promised salvation from the inevitable eschatological wrath of God against the wicked.

However, the need for such a tabernacle/Temple as a permanent a refuge tacitly acknowledges the threat the wicked gentiles continued to pose to the righteous in the second age. Given the objective of the deluge – a purified world – the tabernacle, in the context of the *Animal Apocalypse*, was a *locum tenens* in lieu of a final resolution to the problem of the gentiles.

The juxtaposition of the tales of Noah and Moses made the author's assessment of the first age, the flood and the prospects of the second age clear. The transformation of Moses into an angel remains a mystery at this point in the narrative. So non-essential is the transformation to its immediate context that had it been omitted by a later redactor, the reader would be hard pressed to imagine the claim had ever existed. Yet the reiteration in the space of two verses that Moses became an angel only for him to die as the flock enters the Promised Land is impossible



to ignore.<sup>89</sup> Thus one reads with this question in mind, searching for the meaning of Moses' transformation in the larger story arc of the *Animal Apocalypse*.

*Elijah and the First and Second Temple Periods* (1 En 89:41-90:5)

From the career of Moses, the author moves rapidly through the political history of Israel up to the point of the Maccabean revolt. The acme of the age is set early in the reign of Solomon, as the house (Jerusalem) is greatly expanded and the tall tower (the Temple) is built, on which the Owner of the sheep stands (1 En 89:50). This tranquil scene, however, is quickly shattered as the sheep stray from the house. Tiller notes, "From this point on, until 90.6, nothing good is said about the sheep."<sup>90</sup>

The Owner sends sheep (the prophets) among the flock to turn the flock from their apostasy but the flock kill the prophets. *But one of them escaped safely and was not killed* (Elijah). *And it <rose up> and cried out against the sheep, and they wanted to kill it, but the owner of the sheep rescued it from the sheep and brought it up to me* (1 En 89:52). The apostates' killing of the prophets in this pericope is an inversion of the Sinai episode in which the prophet (Moses) killed the apostates. Elijah is the only identifiable prophet in this section and his escape from the murderous flock draws an immediate parallel to Moses who similarly escaped the hyenas 36 verses prior. The parallel opens the way for the possible transformation of Elijah into an angel.<sup>91</sup> In fact, Elijah's fiery assumption into heaven in 2 *Kings* 2 makes him a

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<sup>89</sup> Moses' death after having become an angel is odd as it is generally assumed that such change of status would exempt such individuals from the common human fate. The general idea in the Second Temple period seems to have been that angels were immortal but were subject to judgment for their misdeeds and thus eligible for destruction (see; Ps 82, 148:2-6; Job 4:18; 1 En 15; Mt 25:41; Lk 20:36; 2 Pt 2:4; etc.). The death of the angel Moses in the *Animal Apocalypse*, however, can in no way be construed as a punishment. If anything his transformation appears on first reading to be a personal reward; consummate favor shown this most faithful servant. The incongruity of Moses' angelic transfer and his death serves instead to divert the focus of the transformation from favor shown to an individual to the boon his transfer brought the community; namely the establishment of the tabernacle as a place of refuge and strength for the flock. That the tabernacle was a benefit to the community was, of course, patently obvious from the *Exodus* narrative. The addition of the supernatural aspect to the tabernacle's construction in the *Animal Apocalypse* (seemingly a superfluous detail at this point in the narrative) will, however, come to serve a critical function as it is revealed later in the apocalypse that the wicked beasts receive supernatural aid in their campaign against the righteous from evil angels. As the righteous lament and cry out for help in their struggle against the wicked it is tempting to inquire as to why such help is withheld from the righteous, to wonder as to why their cries go unheeded. The observant reader, however, knows that the flock has already received angelic aid in the form of Moses' construction of the tabernacle. The commentary is subtle but clear: the sheep are not in want of additional supernatural assistance to combat their enemies, they rather need to return and dwell within the shelter which has already been established. This point, though, is still to be developed in the scenes which follow. The very clear death of Moses despite his angelic promotion in the *Animal Apocalypse* inhibits an interpretation of apotheosis and brings this narrative inline with the purposefully non-glorious death of Moses recorded in *Deuteronomy* 34. For discussion see Shinan and = Zakovitch, *From Gods to God*, 179-188.

<sup>90</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 318.

<sup>91</sup> Where I have read Elijah in contrast to Moses in the *Animal Apocalypse*, Portier-Young has understood the author to be comparing them, "[b]oth Moses and Elijah model for the book's audience militant defense of right worship" (*Apocalypse*, 351). Her interpretation necessitates importing the back story of Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18), "Awareness of the episode is implicit..." (369). It remains the case, however, that the scene is not actually recounted in the apocalypse. It is therefore difficult to see that Elijah could occupy a "central position in the *Animal Apocalypse*" as Portier-Young claims (369). So much is implicit in the *Book of Dreams*, that it is important

logical candidate for angelic advancement. Yet, surprisingly, the author of the apocalypse makes no such claim. Elijah is assumed to heaven but is not transformed into an angel. In contrast to Moses, Elijah's ministry is a failure, as is that of every prophet who comes after him; the people refuse to be turned from their apostasy.

The Owner sent many other sheep to the flock to testify against them and lament over them (1 En 89:53). The sheep continue to stray from the tower and their eyes became dark (1 En 89:54). The Owner *did much killing against them in their pastures* (1 En 89:54) but this slaughter has the opposite effect to that of the apostates had at Sinai. Instead of fearing the wrath of the Lord the apostates invite the slaughter and *betray his place* (1 En 89:54). As the sheep abandon the Owner's house and his tower and the Owner, in turn, abandons the sheep to the wild beasts (1 En 89:65). The ensuing destruction of the flock by the beasts is relentless and severe.

By way of explanation of this decimation, the author draws aside the apocalyptic veil; the reader is told that the Owner has not only cast off the flock but has given them over to seventy shepherds (angels) who are to tend the flock by killing off some of the sheep.<sup>92</sup> The flock does not respond to this winnowing any more than they had that done by the Owner. The shepherds allow the flock to be ravaged first by wild beasts, lions, tiger, boars (non-Greek regimes) and then the predatory birds of heaven vultures, kites and ravens (Greek regimes).<sup>93</sup> The destruction far exceeds the level intended by the Owner who, foreseeing the potential for such abuse, set an "angelic auditor"<sup>94</sup> to make a record of the misdeeds of the shepherds by which they would be judged in their turn. The flock, however, makes no lament; never expresses any longing to return to the safety of their fold and the protection of the Owner. At the absolute nadir of the flock's political fortune, with a final poetic flourish, the author describes how the birds pluck out the eyes with which the sheep are unwilling to see.

Like gathering storm clouds, the signs of the imminent judgment are clear. Despite the attempts of the Owner to arrest the downward spiral, the pattern of violence and abuse which characterized the first age takes root and flourishes in the second. The flock's murder of the prophets and their preference for the abuse of the shepherds over the rule of the Owner effectively sets the stage for the second apocalypse.

### *Judas and the Maccabean Revolt*

And behold lambs were born from those white sheep, and they began to open their eyes and to see and to cry out to the sheep.

1 En 90:6

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to give the full weight to the episodes the author actually includes in an effort to understand how he shaped the material in service of his rhetorical agenda.

<sup>92</sup> For discussion of the identification of and complexity involving the shepherds see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, Excursus on "the Biblical Sources of the Idea of Negligent Shepherds" 390-391; Tiller, *Commentary*, 51-60; and Jack W. Vancil, *The Symbolism of the Shepherd in Biblical, Intertestamental, and New Testament Material* (Philadelphia: Dropsie, 1975). S. B. Reid has proposed that 1 En 89:15-67 is a midrash on *Ezekiel 34*, see; "The Structure of the Ten Week Apocalypse and the Book of Dream Visions," *JSJ* 16 (1985): 195-99. Young S. Chae has proposed 1 En 89:59-90:39 is a midrash on *Zechariah 11-13*, see; *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament* (WUNT 216; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 105-6.

<sup>93</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 345.

<sup>94</sup> Tiller's term, *Commentary*, 326.

This extremely effective opening for the long-anticipated Maccabean pericope showcases the author's skill as an epitomist. Casting the Jewish rebels as *lambs* underscores their innocence, putting the reader in mind of the flock's young drowned in the Nile and of the generation born in the wilderness, who, innocent of apostasy, was able to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. The adjective *white* modifying the *sheep* to which the lambs were born reminds the reader of the flock's latent capacity for righteousness. The birth of these lambs is not a miraculous occurrence; the lambs are the natural offspring of the flock. While the flock has never been said to be anything other than *white*, this color was last mentioned in association with their ancient ancestor Jacob (1 En 89:12). That the lambs *began open their eyes* establishes that they are righteousness but also again puts into play the potential of the flock to access divine protection associated with their obedience to the covenant.<sup>95</sup> The lambs are not unusually sighted rather they merely elect to open their eyes and so employ a sense to which all the sheep have access. The distress of the lambs at what they *see* and their *crying out* to the flock mirrors the ministry of the prophets. However, unlike the crying out of Moses and Elijah who had been commissioned by God in their prophetic roles, the crying of the lambs is unbidden. The lambs' self-appointment to the role of prophets suggests that the Owner no longer seeks or for that matter expects the flock to turn from their apostasy.

That the young lambs cry out at all stands in sharp contrast to the generation of sheep enslaved in Egypt who cried for their young under threat from their Egyptian oppressors. It proves an ominous portent as, predictably, the flock refuses to heed the cries of the lambs, and as a result becomes even more deaf and blind. This preference for blindness given their potential for righteousness, powerfully demonstrates the flock's moral culpability precedent to the coming judgment.

The lambs are attacked by the ravens who, *seize those lambs and crushed the sheep and devoured them* (1 En 90:8).<sup>96</sup> This is widely understood as a reference to the persecutions of Antiochus IV; a provocation to which the lambs offer a militant response, *horns came forth on those lambs* (1 En 90:9). A big horn *sprouts on one of those sheep* (Judas Maccabee) *and their eyes were opened*.<sup>97</sup> Judas cries out to the flock and the rams (the pious, possibly hasidim) rally to him. As the birds attack, the rams cry out and lament but the flock, blind and deaf, remain silent in the face of this gentile onslaught.

The ravens attempt to *remove* (kill) Judas, but are unsuccessful. The abusive shepherds join the fray on the side of the birds and together they attempt to *break the horn of that ram* (1 En 90:13). As Judas battles the allied force of gentiles and evil angels, he cries to heaven for help. Seemingly of his own accord, the angelic auditor who had previously attempted to intercede on behalf of the sheep to the Owner (1 En 89:76) comes to the aid of Judas.

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<sup>95</sup> Michael E. Fuller speculates that the "reference to seeing may allude to the apocalyptic character of the community." See *The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Judaism and Luke-Acts*. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 68; also Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 398-400. This stretches the imagery, however, which has only been employed to indicate the flock's adherence, or lack thereof, to the expectations of the Owner.

<sup>96</sup> Tiller disputes the majority of interpreters reconstruction of this verse to read, "the ravens flew upon those lambs and seized one..." For further discussion see Tiller, *Commentary*, 352-4.

<sup>97</sup> The MS aa reads "and it opened their eyes" implying that Judas became a religious reformer. The majority reading only indicates that there was a general religious reform. Tiller, *Commentary*, 355.

Milik has contended that this episode bears a strong resemblance to the battle of Bethsur recounted in *2 Maccabees* 11:6-8 in which Judas prays for a good angel to come and save Israel. In that story an angel does come, appearing as a horseman wearing armor. The rebels, knowing God is on their side, fearlessly advance and, in an utter rout, lay waste to the Seleucid forces. God is given the glory for the victory by both the Jews and also their enemies who realize with such a God on their side the Jews are not defeatable.

That Judas prays for help and that an angel comes to his aid, however, seem to be that only points of similarity between these passages. More remarkable to my mind are the differences. In *2 Maccabees* the angel is clearly a warrior, while in the *Animal Apocalypse* he is a scribe.<sup>98</sup> In the *Animal Apocalypse*, Judas prays for heavenly assistance against his enemies but the help offered by the angelic scribe takes the form of a revelation not a sword, *he* (the angel) *helped it* (Judas) *and showed it everything; he came down for the help of that ram* (1 En 90:14). This is a striking offer of assistance considering Judas' rather pressing problem of the attacking gentile hordes. That the author mentions the revelation twice in the same verse makes it apparent that the revelation *was* an answer to Judas' plea. *How* the revelation was a help to him, however, is not immediately clear as it is not until the entrance of the Owner onto the field of war that the enemies of the righteous are finally vanquished. In *2 Maccabees* there is a victory; Judas prays for aid in a battle and the angel who comes secures the Jews' triumph over the Seleucids. In the *Animal Apocalypse*, Judas wins no battles, is afforded no victory of any kind; rather he is relentlessly pressed from every side. Having finally received divine aid in the form of a revelation Judas is abruptly written out of the narrative, "Judas is given no role whatsoever in ushering in the eschaton."<sup>99</sup> The expected triumph of the lambs at the angel's arrival – ostensibly the purpose of Judas' plea for heavenly assistance – is never realized. It seems unlikely then that 1 En 90:14 is a reference to any specific battle, but is rather a critical narrative assessment of the success of the rebel movement.

The type of aid the angel offered Judas is, however, like that offered to Noah earlier in the apocalypse. By the reckoning of the *Animal Apocalypse*, Noah and Judas stand in similar proximity to their respective ages; Noah at the end of the first age and Judas at the end of the second. Both receive angelic visitations and accompanying revelations just prior to the unleashing of God's wrath against the wicked. But where the angelic visitation and accompanying revelation began Noah's story, the angelic visitation ends that of Judas. Unlike the revelations of Noah and Moses, there is no action required of Judas' vision, nothing to be built. The reader is left to believe that Judas' revelation of *everything* was a vision of the eschaton and the final righting of the world. Having seen this, Judas retires, or is retired, from the field of battle.

Had the author claimed at this point that Judas had become an angel or was assumed into heaven, the reader would hardly have blinked an eye. After all, Judas and his compatriots had fought the good fight, had attempted to turn the flock from their apostasy, and, failing that, at least defended the flock from their gentile oppressors in an age the Owner had seemingly abandoned. The Owner had sent many prophets to the flock (1 En 89:53) with no lasting

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<sup>98</sup> Theoretically, the angel's vocation as a scribe does not necessarily negate his ability to act as a warrior in a contest against humans; however, there is no indication in the narrative that he did so.

<sup>99</sup> Stuckenbruck, "Reading the Present," 101.

corrective effect. Of the three namable prophets of the second age, Judas, self-appointed to the task, was the last. Like Elijah, Judas, despite his noble intentions and pure heart, cannot bring about lasting change. The bright flare of the Maccabean revolt is but a final righteous attempt to stave off the inevitable destruction. Judas' conspicuous lack of success, despite his righteousness, necessitates the apocalyptic remaking of all things which follows.

#### THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT: ESCHATOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF DREAMS

Through the *Animal Apocalypse's* scathing review of Israel's sacred history it becomes apparent that the author of the *Book of Dreams* is not looking to the past as a model to negotiate the contemporary crisis, but is rather using history as a foil demonstrating the necessity of a radically new solution to the problem of evil, namely the transformation of the gentiles in the age to come.

#### *Final Judgment* 1 Enoch 90:17-27

Up to this point, the events depicted in the *Animal Apocalypse* have been references to biblical or pseudepigraphical-historical events, albeit most of them symbolic, simplified and often conflated. From this point on, the apocalypse shifts into a prophetic vision of the future.

The angelic auditor presents the *book of destruction which those twelve shepherds had caused* (1 En 90:17) to the Owner. Having seen the scale of abuse, the Owner takes the staff of his wrath and beats the earth with it. [*And the earth was torn apart, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell (away) from those sheep and sank in the earth and it covered over them* (1 En 90:18). The imagery of the wicked being swallowed by the earth is, of course, reminiscent of the first apocalypse in which the wicked sank and were covered by the waters of the flood.<sup>100</sup>

The sheep are then given a great sword with which to kill the outlying gentile beasts. The flock pursues the beasts and the beasts flee before them in fear. The sheep being given the upper hand against the beasts in the waning minutes of the second age looks initially to be a vengeful postscript, not unlike the final act of the book of *Esther* in which the Jews are granted permission to murder those who had previously sought their destruction. This celestial giving of weaponry, however, has a direct parallel in the events immediately preceding the Noachic flood: an angel gives a sword to the beasts that they might smite each other (1 En 88:2). The elephants, camels and asses of the first age promptly used the sword offered by the angel to war against each other. The reckless savagery of the beasts serves as a verification of their degeneracy, a final proof of the justness of God's wrath yet, as the Owner was about to drown the world, it seems a rather pointless exercise.

The author has had nothing good to say about the sheep throughout the second age. Had he written that the entire flock was swallowed by the earth along with their tormentors, the reader would hardly have been surprised. Thus, as the second age draws to a close, the presentation of the great sword to the sheep is ominous. Upon receipt of the sword, the balance

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<sup>100</sup> As Tiller points out, this selective purging of the wicked from among the flock is akin to the judgment of Korah and his compatriots who were similarly sucked down to Sheol as the earth opened beneath their feet (Num 16) though the author of the apocalypse does not develop this parallel. *Commentary*, 365.

of power between the sheep and beasts abruptly shifts. Having robbed Judas Maccabee of his victories, the reader fully expects a bit of compensatory carnage from an author who has highlighted the slaughter of the sheep point at every turn up to this.

While the *great sword* is a superior weapon more than capable of killing the beasts, intriguingly no slaughter ensues. It is wielded not by a righteous, specially gifted leader on behalf of the sheep but by the flock itself. Given their sudden and clear martial advantage, the restraint of the sheep stands in sharp contrast to the vicious abandon of the elephants, camels and asses of the first age. As the oppressive, evil beasts have been purged from the midst of the flock, the beasts which remain in the world for the flock to attack with the great sword are suspect for their class but not directly implicated in the abuse of the sheep. The flock's possession of the great sword strikes fear in the hearts of the beasts, but the sheep do not press their advantage. The restraint of the sheep in sparing their potential enemies is an act of mercy not unlike that shown to them at Sinai by the Owner, a testimony to their realized virtue. The giving of the great sword provides a final test which the flock passes.

With the gentile threat contained by the flock's possession of the great sword, the throne of the Owner is set up and the judgment proper begins. The Owner sits and the sealed books are opened before him. Given the level of violence in the apocalypse heretofore, one is rather struck by the judicial order of this scene. Evidence has been gathered, recorded and presented. The defendants, manifestly guilty, are called before the judge to be sentenced. The Owner begins with the fallen stars of the pre-diluvian age. Found guilty, they are cast into a pit of fire. The seventy shepherds are next and they too are found guilty and cast into an *abyss of fire* (1 En 90:25). A second abyss of fire is opened in the midst of the land and the blinded sheep are brought before the Owner. They are found to be wicked and are cast into the newly opened pit. *And I saw those sheep burning and their bones burning* (1 En 90:27).

It seems odd at first that the judgment of the second age should revisit the crimes and criminals of the first. By beginning the judgment with the fallen stars, however, the author makes clear that what is envisioned here is not the mere judgment of an age but the judgment of creation itself. This is not an exercise in punitive remuneration or *lex talionis* but rather an attempt to find the solution for problem of wickedness itself. To this end, the sentence of burning is particularly well-tailored.

The *Animal Apocalypse* makes no mention of God's promise to Noah not to destroy the earth again by water. In the strict context of the apocalypse, the choice of fire, the diametrically-opposed element to water, in the judgment of the wicked further underscores the critique of the failure of the first apocalypse to accomplish its purpose.

The abyss is clearly an inferno, *full of burning fire and full of a pillar of fire* (1 En 90:24) meant to utterly consume its victims. The author emphasizes this point by claiming that even the bones of the sheep were burned. The mention of the bones of the sheep in the context of judgment brings to mind the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. Standing among the dry bones the prophet is asked "Can these bones live again?" He is commanded to prophesy,

This is what the Lord God says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people... They will not again defile themselves any longer with their idols and their vile images or with any of their transgressions for I will save them from all the apostasies in which they dwell and will cleanse them and they will be my people and I will be their God.

Ez 37:12-13, 23

With his vision of burning bones, the author of the *Animal Apocalypse* categorically rejects Ezekiel's vision of restoration, envisioning nothing but utter annihilation for the blind sheep.

### *The Redemption of Israel* 1 Enoch 90:28-32

From the annihilation of the wicked gentiles and apostate Jews, the author of the apocalypse turns to the redemption of righteous Israel. The vision at this point is nationalistic, adhering to restorative prophetic expectations; "reversal of fortune for those who were previously captives to the nations,"<sup>101</sup> redemption via inversion of the world order.

Enoch sees the old house (Jerusalem) folded up and taken away in its entirety to the south. The Owner brings a new house and unfolds it on the very spot the old had occupied. This house, new in every aspect, is larger and, at long last, all the sheep dwell in the midst of it. With Jerusalem gloriously reconstituted and the sheep reconciled to the Owner, the remaining beasts and birds fall down and bow before the sheep. They beseech the flock continually and obey them in everything.

Where the beasts had feared the flock's possession of the great sword, their reconciliation with the Owner causes the beasts' complete obeisance. The humiliation of the gentiles was a classic component of the restorative eschatological vision.<sup>102</sup> More than retribution for an age of oppression and abuse, the beast's submission to and beseeching of the flock signals the beasts' acceptance, at least for the moment, of the reorientation of power; an attempt to exist within the new world order, demonstrated their "adherence to [the new] eschatological theocracy."<sup>103</sup>

Enoch is then taken by the same three angels who had originally transported him to heaven and deposited back with the flock, *all those sheep were white, and their wool was great and pure* (1 En 90:32). Enoch's assumption into heaven preceding the first apocalypse was fundamentally a separation of the holy from the profane. The world now purged of evil beasts and apostate sheep is deemed fit for Enoch to again inhabit. His return to the terrestrial plane and integration into the now gleamingly white flock is an avowal not only of the flock's righteousness but of the success of the second apocalypse adding a touching symmetry to the narrative.

The first phase of the redemption complete, the author prophesies, *all who had been destroyed and scattered and all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven assembled in that house* (1 En 90:33a). The *destroyed* in this verse is widely interpreted to be a reference to the

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<sup>101</sup> Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*, 73.

<sup>102</sup> Isaiah 11:1, 14:1-2, 45:14, 49:23, 62:2; Jeremiah 16:19; Micah 4:1-2.

<sup>103</sup> To borrow a phrase from Tiller, *Commentary*, 381.

resurrection of the righteous dead,<sup>104</sup> the *scattered* to the homecoming of the Jews in the Diaspora and the *wild beasts* to the submissive<sup>105</sup> eschatological pilgrimage of the gentiles to Jerusalem.<sup>106</sup> That the physically dead head this list suggests that, for the author, these categories are of a type; that, for the gentiles and the expatriate Jewish community, being in a state of separation from Jerusalem and the Temple of God was akin to being dead. The assembly of these types in the new house is a resurrection for both the literally and symbolically dead. This is well in line with the simplified symbolic world of the *Animal Apocalypse* in which the tabernacle/Temple (sheepfold) is likened in function to the Noah's ark; it is means of salvation from the wrath of God.

This gathering of the beasts into the new house, it should be noted, does not represent the conversion of the gentiles to Judaism as Black would have it.<sup>107</sup> As Terence Donaldson has noted, "the general tendency" among scholars has "been to talk vaguely about the end-time 'conversion' of the Gentiles without giving any consideration to the nature or terms of such conversion."<sup>108</sup> The eschatological pilgrimage of the gentiles to Jerusalem in the *Animal Apocalypse* indicates the profound level of the gentiles' political and religious subordination to both the Jewish people and the Jewish God.<sup>109</sup> The gentiles remain beasts and therefore, according to the logic of the allegory, remain profane.

*And the owner of the sheep rejoiced with great joy because they had all become gentle<sup>110</sup> and they had returned to his house* (1 En 90:33b). Though the *Animal Apocalypse* omits the *Genesis* 6 reference to the sorrow of God over the wickedness of humanity prior to the flood, the reader cannot help but hear its echo here in the context of the second apocalypse. The Owner surveys humanity and at long last is pleased with what he sees.

The gentleness of the beasts allows the sheep the luxury to relinquishing the great sword. Without the threat of an external gentile adversary, the great sword becomes irrelevant in the new age. The sheep seal the sword in the presence of the Owner ostensibly so it cannot be employed again<sup>111</sup> and thereby establish peace between sheep and beasts.<sup>112</sup> It is interesting to

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<sup>104</sup> This interpretation was challenged by Goldstein who argued that 'destroyed' can also be translated 'perishing' or 'lost.' Tiller counters "Goldstein is correct that *tahag<sup>lu</sup>* may mean "they perished" but in view of the fact that it is also the passive of "destroy" and *'ahg<sup>lu</sup>* ("they destroyed") is very frequently used in *An. Apoc.* to describe the actions of the shepherds against the sheep (89.60-70), it is natural to take the verb here as a true passive, "they were destroyed," parallel with the following verb ("they were scattered") This was debated by Goldstein who argued that 'destroyed' can also be translated 'perishing' or 'lost' see Jonathan A. Goldstein. *I Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 41. Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 42 and Tiller, *Commentary*, 380.

<sup>105</sup> "In their pilgrimage to the Land, the Gentiles demonstrate their contrition and subservience to God and the Jewish people." Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*, 75.

<sup>106</sup> See: Charlesworth, James H. and C. D. Elledge, J. L. Crenshaw, H. Boers, and W. W. Willis Jr. *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine*. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Black, *1 Enoch*, 279.

<sup>108</sup> Terence Donaldson "Proselytes or 'Righteous Gentiles'? The status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought" *JSP* 7 (1990), 3-27.

<sup>109</sup> Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*, 74.

<sup>110</sup> Translation *OTP*.

<sup>111</sup> Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch*, 286; and Tiller, *Commentary*, 381.

<sup>112</sup> Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (1912) 215; and Tiller, *Commentary*, 381.



note however that the sword is not destroyed in the *Animal Apocalypse* as envisioned in *Isaiah* 2:4, but rather is given back to God for safekeeping.

*All the sheep were enclosed in that house, but it did not contain them. And all the eyes of them were opened, and they saw well, and there was not one among them that did not see. And I saw that that house was large and spacious... (1 En 90:34b-36).* Tiller reads this as “the definitive statement of the righteousness of surviving Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>113</sup> The gentiles, however, are not in view here. The sheep are the clear subject; they lay down the great sword, they are corralled in the house, their eyes are at last opened. These three details, the house, the open/closed eyes and the sword have pertained only to the flock throughout the allegory. So while the gentiles are depicted as having streamed to Jerusalem according to prophetic expectation, this vision of the new, expanded house overflowing with sighted sheep is a statement of the perfection and completion of Israel’s restoration. Israel’s reconciliation with God is not, then, the *catalyst* to the eschatological in-gathering of the gentiles; rather, the pilgrimage of the gentiles is here a *by-product* of Israel’s reconciliation with God.

### *The Reclamation of the Gentiles*

And I saw how a white bull was born, and its horns (were) big, and all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven were afraid of it and entreated it continually. And I looked until all their species were transformed, and they all became white bulls; and the first one among them was a wild-ox [*nägär*], and that wild-ox was a large animal and had black horns on its head. And the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over them and over the bulls.<sup>114</sup>

These last two verse of the *Animal Apocalypse* have drawn the lion’s share of scholarly interest expended on the *Book of Dreams* and have focused almost entirely on the identification of and theories surrounding the white bull and the *nägär*.<sup>115</sup>

The *white bull* is commonly identified as the *messiah*, “mainly because [scholars] suppose that an eschatological scenario demands a Davidic Messiah.”<sup>116</sup> Often this interpretation is simply presumed by commentators who have cause to cite the *Book of Dreams* in pursuit of some other interest.<sup>117</sup> However the late arrival of the white bull onto the

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<sup>113</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 382.

<sup>114</sup> Michael Anthony Knibb and Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1978) 338-39.

<sup>115</sup> Reese has argued the *Animal Apocalypse* is principally concerned with history and fate of Israel and that 90:37-38, concerned as it is with the fate of gentiles, is an interpolation, *Geschichte*, 48-49.

<sup>116</sup> Nickelsburg, “Salvation With and Without a Messiah: Developing Beliefs in Writings Ascribed to Enoch,” in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1987) 55. This idea was popularized by Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 215. Goldstein contends that “[t]he commanding figure of 1 Enoch 90.37-38 is surely royal and rules over Jews and gentiles...” *Semites, Iranians, Greeks and Romans: Studies in Their Interactions*, (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 226. see also James Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problem and Perspectives” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 8-19; J. J. Collins, “Messianism in the Maccabean Period” In *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*. Ed Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1987). 100-101.

<sup>117</sup> Donald E Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (New York: T & T Clark, 2000) 39. A. F. J. Klijn, “From Creation to Noah in the Second Dream-Vision of the Ethiopic Enoch,” in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica: Studia Ad Novum* (ed. Tjitze Baarda, Albertus Frederik, Johannes Klijn, Willem Cornelis Unnik; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 150.

eschatological stage (post battle and judgment), and therefore its lack of agency in the deliverance of the righteous, has caused others to doubt the applicability of the title *messiah* in the case of the white bull.<sup>118</sup> Many have noted a possible parallel between the role of the white bull in the *Animal Apocalypse* and that of the *בַּר אֱנוֹשׁ* in *Daniel 7* who likewise appears after the scene of divine judgment and plays no role in the deliverance of the righteous.<sup>119</sup> Milik has argued that, in the narrative context of the *Animal Apocalypse*, the white bull is better understood as a more glorious second Adam.<sup>120</sup> Black has countered that the primary identification of the bull as the *second Adam* does not necessarily negate a messianic association.<sup>121</sup>

Commentators following the interpretation of the white bull as an Adamic figure have focused on the function and symbolism of the bull in the eschaton. “The great bull of the eschaton is important not for what he does, but for what (or who) he is. He is... a reversion to the white bulls of primordial times... the first fruits of a humanity returned to primordial purity and vitality. His importance lies in this patriarchal status and not in any explicit messianic function.”<sup>122</sup> This patriarchal dominion is conferred on the white bull by the fearful subjection of the beasts and birds. The willing subjection of the beast and birds proves the catalyst for their own transformation into white bulls; they become the new patriarch’s offspring by transmutation.

Opinions have diverged, however, as to whether the author envisions the great eschatological transformation to effect *beast, birds and sheep* alike or just the *beasts and birds*.

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John Turner, “The Gnostic Seth,” in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, (ed. Michael Stone and Theodore A Bergren; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1998) 36. etc.

<sup>118</sup> Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 148. J.J. Collins, *Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday 1995) 34. Helge S. Kvanvig, “Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch,” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 194. Tiller, *Commentary*, 384.

<sup>119</sup> “There is a closer analogy to the Son of Man in Dan 7, who appears after the great judgment. The description of the bull is quite colorless, and the emphasis of this final section of the Apocalypse is not on this figure in itself, but on its symbolic value as the goal of history, namely, the transformation of humanity into the image of man as originally created by God.” Kvanvig, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man*, 210. also James R. Davila, “The Animal Apocalypse and Daniel,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Matthias Henze, “Enoch’s Dream Visions and the Visions of Daniel Reexamined,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Klaus Koch, *Vor der Wende der Zeiten. Beiträge zur apokalyptischen Literatur – Gesammelte Aufsätze 3*; (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996); Tiller, *Commentary*, 384.

<sup>120</sup> Milik, *Enoch*, p. 45; also Kvanvig, S. Helge, “Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch,” and Koch, “Messias und Menschensohn. Die zweistufige Messianologie der jüngeren Apokalyptik” *JBTh* 8 (1993): 73-102.

<sup>121</sup> Black, *Enoch*, pp. 20-21, 28; also Kelley Coblenz Bautch, “Adamic Traditions in the Parables?” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 354.

<sup>122</sup> Nickelsburg, “Salvation With and Without a Messiah,” in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1987) 56; also Matthew Black, “New Creation in 1 Enoch,” in *Creation, Christ and Culture: Studies in Honor of T. F. Torrance* (ed. R. W. A. McKinney; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976) 18-20; Terence Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135CE)* (Waco: Baylor, 2007) 88; Mark Stevens, *Annihilation or Renewal?: The Meaning and Function of New Creation* (WUNT 307; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 65; Tiller, *Commentary*, 388.

Nickelsburg and Tiller have viewed the transformation as universal, the realization of a utopian ideal as the circle of history closes with the reconstitution of the original Edenic species.

This transformation reverses the two most significant negative developments in human history. The first being the birth of cattle of various colors... The second...was the birth of various animals. This gave rise to grave violence against Israel with all the nations being represented as predatory or scavenging animals and Israel represented as sheep, the classic victims in the animal world. All this is reversed so that in the restored race of humanity there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, but one Adamic race.<sup>123</sup>

Such an eradication of ethnic distinction, Nickelsburg aptly summarizes, is “daring and perhaps without parallel in pre-Christian Jewish literature”<sup>124</sup>

Donaldson has countered, however, that this of reading of the passage is strained.<sup>125</sup> “[T]he most natural reading of v. 38 is that the group indicated by personal pronouns (“all *their* species”; “*they* all became”) is the same group introduced in v. 37, that is ‘all the wild beast and bird of heaven.’”<sup>126</sup> He notes the author employed a similar phrase, *there came from them species of every sort* (1 En 89:10) earlier in the text to describe the gentiles as something wholly distinct from Israel. He points out that the description of the Owner post-transformation as *Lord of the sheep* makes little sense if in fact all the sheep have been transformed into bulls. He concludes that it is more likely that “vv. 37-38 deals with Gentiles exclusively, just as vv. 33b-38 deals with Israel exclusively.”<sup>127</sup>

The translation and interpretation of the *nägär* by contrast seems hopelessly confused. The debate breaks along whether the clause “first one among them” is a reference to the white bull or to something else entirely; a point over which there is considerable ambiguity. “If one assumes that ‘first’ is meant to go with the following clause (as seems most likely), then presumably it is reference to the white bull of vs 37. If one assumes that ‘first’ goes with the preceding clause, then a new subject is introduced: ‘There was a thing in their midst’”<sup>128</sup>

The position the majority of scholars hold is that the *nägär* and the *white bull* are the same creature. Accordingly the *white bull* either is additionally identified as a *nägär* (*the first one among them was a nägär...*)<sup>129</sup> or was transformed into a *nägär* (*the first one among them became a nägär...*).<sup>130</sup> *Nägär* however is Ge’ez for “thing” or “matter” or “word;” a translation which, in either case, makes precious little sense in the narrative arc of the *Animal Apocalypse*. As this portion of the text survives only in Ge’ez, it is the consensus among scholars who take the *white bull* and the *nägär* to be the same creature that *nägär* represents a corruption of the

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<sup>123</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 385 also Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 110. Loren L. Johns *The Lamb Christology in the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT 167; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 97. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 407; Christopher Rowland, *Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982) 163; Eckhard J. Schnabel, (*Early Christian Mission*. Vol. 2. New York: Crossroad, 2004) 97-8.

<sup>124</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 407.

<sup>125</sup> Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 89.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Tiller, *Commentary*, 385-6.

<sup>129</sup> Knibb’s translation.

<sup>130</sup> Tiller’s translation.

original reading. The speculative restoration of the word *nägär* has been an exercise in academic creativity.<sup>131</sup> Dillmann suggested ‘wild ox;’ רַאם or רַיַם transliterated ρῆμ which the translator mistook for ῥῆμα (“word”).<sup>132</sup> Goldschmidt proposed the Hebrew ‘lamb;’ מַלְה misread as מַלְה (“word”).<sup>133</sup> Nickelsburg advocated the Aramaic “leader;” דַּבַּר was vocalized as though it were the Hebrew דַּבַּר (“word”).<sup>134</sup> These suggestions each pose particular difficulties.<sup>135</sup>

Given the difficulty of the *white bull* either being or becoming a *nägär*, Knibb has argued that they should be read as distinct creatures. Taken as such, he postulates, this text may represent a belief in two Messiahs; a priestly leader and a military leader respectively.<sup>136</sup> Assefa has suggested that Knibb’s theory may find a kind of backhanded support for reading the *bull* and *nägär* as distinct creatures in the traditional Ethiopian commentary the *Andämta*.<sup>137</sup> The ancient Ethiopian commentators understood the *white bull* to be Christ and the *nägär* to be his adversary.<sup>138</sup> Interpreting the *nägär* as ‘evil adversary’ does make sense of the detail that the *nägär* was in possession of large *black* horns, the color ‘black’ having been employed throughout the apocalypse as an indication of evil or corruption.<sup>139</sup> But, as is so often the case with this conundrum, while solving one problem this ancient reading creates another by complicating the interpretation of the closing line of the apocalypse, *And the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over them and over the bulls* (1 En 90:38) It is difficult to see what precisely the Lord is rejoicing over if the messiah and his evil adversary, equipped for war, are now pitted against each other at the dawn of the long awaited third age.

In discussions on the conclusion of the *Animal Apocalypse*, however, the inordinate focus given the *white bull* and the *nägär* have obscured, if not all but eclipsed, the final *transformation* of the gentiles. There seems to be a tacit agreement that the ending of the *Animal Apocalypse* is

<sup>131</sup> For a lucid and concise discussion see Daniel Assefa, “The Enigmatic End of the Animal Apocalypse,” in *Light of Traditional Ethiopian Commentary*,” in *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies Hamburg 2003* (ed. Siegbert Uhlig; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006) and Tiller, *Commentary*, 385-89.

<sup>132</sup> Dillmann, *Henoch*, 287-88, was followed by Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 258-59; Martin, *Le Livre d’Henoch*, 235-36 and Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 216; F. Corriente and A. Piñero, “Libro I de Henoc (etiopico y griego),” in *Apócrifos del Antiguo Testamento*. (ed. A. Diez Macho; Madrid: Cristiandad, 1984) 123; Siegbert Uhlig, *Apokalypsen: Das äthiopische Henochbuch*. Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 5.6; Gütersloh, 1984, 704; Black, *Enoch*, 1985. 83.

<sup>133</sup> Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Das Buch Henoch aus dem Aethiopischen in die ursprünglich hebräische Abfassungssprache zurückübersetzt, mit einer Einleitung und Noten versehen* (Berlin: Heinrich, 1892) 90-91. Charles followed in 1912, *Commentary on Revelation*, 452. Barnabas Lindars agreed postulating that the Greek translators deliberately mistranslated the original in order to make the vision a prophecy of Christ. Barnabas Lindars, “A Bull, a Lamb and a Word: 1 Enoch 90:38,” *NTS* 22 (1976): 485.

<sup>134</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 402-3. Tiller as come to agree with Nickelsburg’s assessment since the publication of his commentary, see; “George Nickelsburg’s ‘1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of Enoch: Chapters 1-36; 81-108,’” in *George W. E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* (ed. J. Neusner and A. J. Avery-Peck; JSJSup 80; Leiden: Brill 2003) 367.

<sup>135</sup> See Tiller, *Commentary*, 383-389 for discussion.

<sup>136</sup> Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2:216.

<sup>137</sup> Daniel Assefa, “The Enigmatic End of the Animal Apocalypse,” 557-60.

<sup>138</sup> “Of course one should not expect a modern exegesis from the *Andämta*. Christian and Christological interpretations are abundant... Sometimes the commentaries retain a literal interpretation of the text.” Assefa, “The Enigmatic End of the Animal Apocalypse,” 558.

<sup>139</sup> Assefa reminds us how Charles was troubled by this detail, “I cannot understand the epithet <black> here. It seems wrong.” Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 280.

an enigma, an operating assumption that the narrative actually reached its resolution in the scene of Israel's redemption immediately preceding the birth of the *white bull*. Not generally viewed, then, as the *telos* of the narrative, the final *transformation* in practice is categorized as an interesting incidental detail, an imaginative postscript.

However, the *Book of Dreams* has, in fact, been arcing toward this final transformation from the first chapter. The groundwork has been carefully laid by the author. The opening series of negative transformations establishes in short order the drastic downward trajectory of the apocalypse. The harsh assessment of the failure of the Noahic flood to arrest this spiral all but damns the second age. The long series of laments threaded through the narrative act in a nimshalic capacity demonstrating at every turn the reaction the author means to elicit from his audience. The laments serve to guard against the temptation of the biblically literate reader to allow the biblical back-story to bleed through the narrative of the *Animal Apocalypse*, subliminally filling the gaps of the abridgement with stories of righteous glory in an attempt to offset the author's unmitigatedly negative recounting of Israel's history. Against this dreary, stripped-down account the author offers a single bright and completely unexpected ray of hope; the *transformation of Moses into an angel* (and Noah in the Ethiopic). Given the trajectory of the apocalypse, Moses' transformation into a higher order of being can only be taken as a positive development; yet it is seemingly devoid of purpose in its pericope, as it brings no clear boon to the community, nor does it seem to confer any personal benefit for Moses (he is not made immortal, etc.). The reader however, obliged to look to the larger narrative to justify Moses' radical promotion, finds no resolution in the tales of the other identifiable prophetic warriors in the narrative; Elijah's ministry is quickly dismissed as a failure and Judas is stripped of victory. The bright ray of Moses' transformation signaling the reversal of fortune for the righteous is reduced by the eschaton to a guttering candle; the reader all but gives up on ever discovering the reason behind the author's insistence that Moses became an angel. A reader with no knowledge of the Tanakh could only conclude from the *Animal Apocalypse* that the second age was a dismal failure, and would, no doubt, puzzle over the fact that the experiment was allowed to run as long as it did before the Owner came in judgment.

As the *Book of Dreams* is a Jewish apocalypse and not a Greek tragedy, however, the hopelessness which characterizes the narrative has the effect of heightening the expectations of the great, inevitable reversal with which the text must conclude. Given the author's blistering critique of all that has come before, one expects him to deliver a radical solution at the eschaton, something that makes sense of the failure of the first two ages (as he has portrayed them) and ensures the utopian vision of the third. After the unremitting disaster of the second age the reader anticipates the redemption of the righteous will in fact be epic.

The great moment arrives on cue post-judgment, and follows along prescribed lines: the evil angels and apostates are destroyed; Jerusalem is restored; Israel is reconciled to God. For their part the gentiles cower in fear, beg for mercy and make their expected pilgrimage of submission to Jerusalem, the navel of the world and seat of earthly power. Yet, while possessing all the required elements of a proper Jewish eschatological vision, this scene utterly fails to deliver the promised emotional or theological pay-off.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> For discussion of pilgrimage texts see; Terence L. Donaldson "Proselytes or 'Righteous Gentiles'? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought" *JSP* 7 (1990): 3-27 and Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*.

There is mention made in *I Enoch* 90:33 that the sheep and beasts peacefully co-habit the Owner's house possibly suggesting commingled worship, but the reference is so laconic it is unclear if what is envisioned even poses a challenge to kosher *Weltanschauung*. The continued existence of the profane beasts in the eschaton is untidy, their peaceful co-habitation with the sheep a bit saccharine, but it is hardly the pioneering theological innovation the reader has been led to anticipate, making it difficult to see this as his revolutionary finale. Rather the eschatological innovation comes in the last two verses of the apocalypse exactly where one might expect to find it; a bold re-envisioning of the solution to the problem of evil in the transformation of the gentiles.

The birth of the *white bull* is indeed the catalyst for the transformation of the beasts. The author reveals three details concerning it; that it was *white*, that it was *born* and that it had *large horns*. As has been pointed out by nearly every commentator, the fact that it is *white* and a *bull* likens it to Isaac and Abraham, to Noah and ultimately Adam; its birth marks the division of the ages and the restoration of humanity to primordial purity. However the identification of the *bull* as eschatological *patriarch* in commentators' musings about the bull has obscured the second detail present in the text – that the bull was *born*.

As the birth of the sighted Maccabean lambs to the blind sheep testified to the flock's potential for righteousness, so the birth of the *white bull* to the beasts demonstrates the recessive potential of the beasts for righteousness. The metaphor of fantastical breeding has been present throughout the *Animal Apocalypse*; white bulls beget colored offspring who in turn beget wholly different species. In fact, the bizarre progeny of the first bulls of both ages has served as a sign of degeneracy throughout the apocalypse. The significance of the *white bull* in the eschaton is that it was born *to* the beasts. Now correctly oriented in the eschaton to the Owner and the flock the gentile beasts are able again to *produce* a white bull.

By virtue of the designation *white*, the bull is automatically cast in opposition to the wicked and profane – the beasts by definition. The birth of the white bull, therefore, represents a clear threat to the beasts, and they duly fear it. The beasts entreat the bull as they had the flock in possession of the great sword, begging for their lives. The sheep may have sealed away the great sword in peace but the white bull is born with horns and thus the capacity – and quite possibly the mandate – for war.

If the white bull is the third Adam, he is also a seconded Noah, and the scenario of the righteous bull among the wicked revisits Noah's failure to deal effectively with his tri-colored sons. The incompatibility of the continued existence of the profane along-side the holy in the final righting of the world is clearly at play here demanding either the annihilation of the beasts or their transformation.

The beasts are transformed into *white bulls* and here we have our first real surprise: if the objective is to eliminate the wicked/profane through the transformation of the remaining beasts, the natural expectation is that the beasts would become *sheep*; their transformation representing the conversion of the gentiles to Judaism and their absorption into the community of the

righteous. The beasts are transformed but not into sheep. The tri-color scheme of the *Animal Apocalypse*, however, leaves the reader in no doubt that the beasts, now bulls, are righteous by virtue of their *whiteness*. Here is the author's pioneering innovation – his vision that in the end of all things, the gentiles will be made righteous without first becoming Jews.<sup>141</sup>

The transformation of the beasts, of course, solves the problem of evil in one fell swoop. And while this is ostensibly the goal of the eschaton – the elimination of evil and establishment of the righteous in peace – the transformation of the gentiles remains an unsettling resolution. For starters, the world has seen *white bulls* before – the beasts, after all, were the progeny of white bulls – but what is to keep the new herd from corruption? Anticipating this concern, the author reveals that the *white bull* is in fact a *nägär*, a *wild ox*.<sup>142</sup>

The movement of the *white bull* to a *nägär* has been overplayed in commentators' discussion. The reference is better understood as the additional signification of the *white bull* as opposed to an additional transformation in the narrative. The question then is not “Why was the *white bull* transformed into a *nägär*?” but “What is the significance of the secondary identification of the *white bull* as a *nägär*?”

As the author surely meant his work to be understood, and as the occurrence of *nägär* has no accompanying explanation in the narrative, presumably the reference was already known or would have been readily apparent to the author's intended audience. *Nägär* has no antecedent in the *Book of Dreams*; therefore, the primary allusion must be intertextual. Given the subject matter of the apocalypse, the likely source for the reference is the Tanakh, clearly known to the author and heavily presumed by him to have been equally familiar to his readership. If, as Dillmann theorized, *nägär* was indeed a translation of אַנְי 'wild ox,' then we are left with two possible references in the Tanakh, *Numbers* 23-24 and *Deuteronomy* 33 to which the author of the apocalypse may have been alluding.

*Deuteronomy* 33 records the blessing Moses spoke over the Israelite tribes prior to his death. Of Joseph he says, *A firstborn bull, majesty is his! His horns are like those of a wild ox (אֲנִי) and with them he gores the nations, even those at the ends of the earth* (Deut 33:17a). While this establishes the אֲנִי as a violent metaphor of defense against gentile enemies, it is a poor fit for the context of the *Animal Apocalypse*. The second reference, however, is considerably more promising.

*Numbers* 22-24 is the story of Balak's attempt to have Israel cursed by the gentile prophet-for-hire, Balaam. Balak attempts the curse three times, each time building seven altars

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<sup>141</sup> The Tanakh does include tales of individuals deemed “righteous” prior to the giving of the Law (which Paul makes use of for his own rhetorical ends in *Galatians*) and after the giving of the Law there are an odd handful of virtuous (or at least better than average) gentiles who are labeled in secondary literature as “righteous” but it remains the case that the Torah was understood to *outline and codify righteousness*. To appreciate the magnitude of the author's claim it must be remembered that it was likely self-evident to the original audience of the *Book of Dreams* that to be *righteous* was to be a *Torah follower* which, by default, was to be or become a *Jew*.

<sup>142</sup> I side with Dillmann, Knibb and others in translating *nägär* as *wild ox*. I have no special insight into the puzzle of *nägär* but I believe the translation of *nägär* as “wild ox” best fits the imagery and logic of the narrative of the *Animal Apocalypse*.

and offering seven bulls three different sites in an attempt to get the result he is looking for. Instead, much to Balak's consternation, Balaam blesses Israel, each blessing grander than the last. In the midst of his blessings Balaam twice describes Israel's God to the king of Moab as a  $\square\aleph\aleph$ , *God who brought them out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox on their behalf. There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel possible now. It will be said of Jacob and Israel, 'See what God has done!' ....* (Num 23:22-23) and again, *God who brought them out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox on their behalf. He devours the hostile nations breaking their bones piecing them with arrows* (Num 24:8).

The immediate challenges to seeing the *nägär* as an allusion to the  $\square\aleph\aleph$  in *Numbers* 22-24 are two fold; first, that that the  $\square\aleph\aleph$  in the biblical passage is a metaphor for *God* while the *nägär* in the apocalypse clearly represents a *gentile human*. Secondly, the  $\square\aleph\aleph$  in the biblical context is a *violent* metaphor, a purposed threat to the wicked gentiles while the transformation of the gentile beasts into righteous bulls not only eliminates the wicked beast and so the wild ox's adversaries but seemingly is meant to establish *peace*.

To the first point: the application or reappropriation of characteristics of God to his human or angelic proxies (messianic or otherwise) enabling the enactment of divine will on the terrestrial plane is not an invention of the *Book of Dreams*. Nor is the assignment of metaphors generally reserved for God to specially commissioned gentiles, though admittedly this is extremely rare. The prophet Isaiah, for example, has God calling the Persian king Cyrus a *shepherd*, a particularly enduring metaphor for God in Jewish literature. *He [Cyrus] is my shepherd, and he shall accomplish all I desire* (Isa 44:28). A righteous *bull* assigned the role of the *wild-ox* to ensure the success of the future eschaton is arguably less of a theological leap than that of Second Isaiah's drafting of the unwitting Cyrus, who does not even know God, but is nonetheless forced to do God's will in the original audience's present (Is 45:4).

To the second point: the metaphor of the  $\square\aleph\aleph$  is indeed violent. More puzzling still is the fact that the *white bull* is said to be a *nägär* after the transformation of the beasts into righteous beings. This secondary signification of the white bull, seems as mentioned above, to be a moot point. This scenario, however, has a rather direct parallel in the roughly contemporary text of the book of *Daniel* where the  $\square\aleph\aleph$  appears as the *rider of the clouds*, an ancient warrior image for God, only to arrive on the scene after all the action has taken place (Dan 7). Like the *wild-ox* the *rider* possesses extreme power but has no cause to deploy it.

The question, then, is why did the author of the apocalypse bother with the secondary signification of the *white bull* if there is no remaining gentile menace for it to address in the eschaton? The likely answer is that the *white bull/nägär* is a safeguard, an insurance policy, against the potential future corruption of the newly transformed beasts. Seen in this capacity, the *white bull/nägär* placed in the midst of the herd, the represents a warning; a promise of certain destruction if the herd should again become degenerate.

### *Conclusions Concerning the Conclusion of the Animal Apocalypse*

Against the success of the transformation of the gentiles and the establishment of the



*nägär*, the significance of Moses' ineffectual transformation in 89:36 finally comes into focus. The two transformations stand in stark opposition to each other. The transformation of Moses was that of one righteous *leader*, while the transformation of the gentiles, a transformation of the wicked *masses*. Moses was transformed into a being of a *higher* order, while the gentiles were *returned* to the state of being from which they had fallen. The transformation of Moses was arguably *merited*, that of the gentiles was wholly *undeserved*. The transformation of Moses had no measurable effect on or for the community of the righteous; the transformation of the gentiles, by contrast, healed the world.

The author of the apocalypse, likely a pious compatriot of Judas Maccabee, seems to struggle with the argument of the Jewish prophets that the ascendancy of the gentiles in the second age was primarily a result of failed Jewish leadership and the impiety of the Jewish populace. He does not deny Jewish apostasy complicated, and perhaps even exacerbated, the problem but he seems reluctant to endorse the prophetic party line on this point. Enoch's revelation that the gentiles had semi-divine accomplices in the 70 shepherds, who enhanced the level, range and duration of their abusive power, reads to me as the work of an author who is no longer able to make sense of the gentile menace in terms of divine punishment for the people's covenant infractions. His counter-theory that the gentiles had supernatural help, creates an acute imbalance of power, however, and not an insignificant challenge to justice of God. How could God allow supernatural aid for the beasts in their oppression of the flock and leave the sheep without a similar means of defense?

The transformation of Moses into an angel prior to the advent of the 70 shepherds directly addresses this inequity. Moses' only deed, once transformed into a semi-divine being, was the construction of the house of the Owner (tabernacle) for the sheep. Modeled on the function of Noah's ark, the tabernacle was a refuge, a place of safety for the righteous against the gentile torrent. Moses' transformation prior to the construction of the house of the Owner stresses the tabernacle's (later Temple's) strategic importance as the means by which the flock might escape divine judgment, and it also functions as a shield and weapon in the war against the wicked. The flock was not vulnerable to the beasts by virtue of their being sheep,<sup>143</sup> rather, their color and their invitation to dwell in the *house of the Owner* permitted the flock not merely to survive the gentile storm but to thrive within it if they would only keep their eyes open (1 En 89:41-50). Once the house of the Owner was constructed, the flock had no additional need for angelic leadership; they were perfectly equipped for the age in which they were born. The author needed to strike a careful balance here. Keeping the final judgment in view he avoids turning his apocalypse into a tale of cosmic war in which humans are puppets and victims of demigods no longer morally culpable for their actions all while explaining how the wicked have so thoroughly and for so long triumphed over the righteous.<sup>144</sup>

This oblique challenge to the prophetic rationalization for Israel's political misfortune is an important point in the apocalypse as it separates the strands of ethical dependence. The disaster of the second age as portrayed in the *Animal Apocalypse* is not wholly the result of Israel's failure to adhere to the covenant, a failure of their witness in the world and thus their inability to bring the gentiles into submission by persuasion or force of arms. Rather, as *Jewish*

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<sup>143</sup> Against Tiller, *Commentary*, 385.

<sup>144</sup> Against Gabriele Boccaccini argument in *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 126-60.

apostasy within the covenant community is a *Jewish* problem, so, the author postulates, *gentile* wickedness is ultimately a *gentile* problem.

The author freely admits Jewish apostasy was epidemic in the second age. However, the righteous possessed the means, the mandate and the model for dealing with the problem of apostasy; namely, the call to repentance and, if that should fail, the slaughter of the wicked as exemplified by Moses and Elijah. Naturally the plight of the righteous was greatly aided in the eschaton by the God's destruction of the apostates from within the community. Yet the divine eschatological destruction of the Jewish apostates did not make *apostasy* an *apocalyptic problem* necessitating divine intervention. Nor was God's intervention in this instance an *apocalyptic solution*; after all, God had interceded in a similar fashion before, purging the community of the wicked in texts which would not be classified as "apocalypses."<sup>145</sup> By contrast, the problem of the gentiles had proved historically intractable. The extreme depravity of the gentiles is a problem the author realizes at some point during the Maccabean War, or shortly after, that the righteous will never be able to fully fight, legislate or purify their way out of. The wickedness of the gentiles *is* the apocalyptic problem of the *Book of Dreams* which demands an apocalyptic solution; a situation only God can transform.

This disengagement of the effect of Jewish apostasy *vis-à-vis* the wickedness of the gentiles resolves three extraneous details of the apocalypse: 1. why the beasts were not transformed into sheep; 2. why the *nägär* is a gentile and not a Jewish overlord; and 3. why the author insisted that Moses was transformed into an angel.

If I am correct in interpreting that the author is reassessing, subtly challenging, the prophetic explanation of the triumph of the gentiles in the second age; then from his postulation that *gentile* wickedness is fundamentally a *gentile* problem, he may well have drawn the corollary that the issue at the heart of the problem is not that the gentiles are not *Jews* but that they are *bad gentiles*. It follows, then, that the solution to a *gentile* problem would envision the redemption of "gentileness" as a category of being. Hence in the *Animal Apocalypse*, the gentile beasts are transformed not into white Jewish sheep, but into white gentile bulls. It follows still further that the means of securing this restoration of "gentileness" would not be an agency of Jewish enforcement, but as some form of gentile self-regulation; and internal gentile solution. Hence the *nägär* is a gentile.

Given the fundamental nature of the problem, the author connects the last dot; there is no, nor will there ever be, a *Jewish* leader capable of fully resolving the issue of *gentile* wickedness: not a brilliant military leader like Judas Maccabee, not a prophet capable of radical demonstrations of God's supremacy like Elijah, not even a supernaturally empowered Moses. Such leaders may succeed in checking the threat of the gentiles for a time, but getting at the cancerous core of the problem is beyond the scope of any Jewish leader, no matter how gifted or supernaturally blessed. However the righteous may dream of a messiah to rescue them, the only possible solution to the problem of the gentiles is their transformation by the God who created

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<sup>145</sup> One thinks God's removal of the apostates the community after the incident of the golden calf (Ex 32), his removal of Korah and his followers (Num 16) and the poisonous snakes the Lord sent among the people (Num 22), to name but a few.

them. Hence, the futility of the transformation of Moses to ensure lasting peace for the righteous and the radical success of the transformation of the gentiles.

With the transformation of the beasts into white bulls, *righteousness* (signified by whiteness) becomes a super-ordinate identity, sublimating the historically problematic categories of otherness: Jew and gentile. Lasting eschatological peace in the *Book of Dreams* is envisioned as a shared ethic, not a merged identity. *Sheep* and *bulls* remain categories being, the final sentence of the apocalypse reads, *and the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over them [sheep] and over the bulls.*

As the Lord of the Sheep gives no new or secondary eschatological law code, the reader is left to assume that *righteousness* in the eschaton continues to be defined in terms of Torah observance. This state of affairs, however, raises the question: if the Jewish sheep and the gentile bulls are both observing the statutes of the Jewish Law, what continues to distinguish them in the eschaton? The medium of allegory affords the author of the apocalypse the luxury of vagueness on this point. Within the narrative world of the apocalypse he has created, he can claim that the sheep and bull are both righteous (Torah observant) yet remain distinct species (as in neither the real world nor that of the apocalypse do whole species, no matter what their patterns of behavior, mutate into wholly other types of species). However, de-allegorizing the *Animal Apocalypse* for claims the author is making about the human world greatly complicates this scenario. What would continue to distinguish Jewish humans from gentile humans if both were equally Torah observant? After all, isn't a "Torah-observant gentile" the very definition of a convert?

As the eschaton was still in the future from the author's perspective and his intended audience, I doubt such questions could have occupied him long. The vagueness, however, may well have forced the readers of later generations, such as Paul who believed the eschaton was underway, to puzzle out the possibilities, working out the implications.

The distinction of righteous Jew and gentiles could theoretically be maintained in the eschaton by *segregation*. It could be accomplished either by a geographical separation of Jews and gentiles to prevent cross contamination, a separate but equal existence of two righteous communities, or a prohibition in perpetuity on intermarriage. The author, however, has played fast and loose with the basic rules of genetics and animal husbandry for his own rhetorical ends; the mixing of species in the *Animal Apocalypse* is commonplace. While he resolutely denounced the mixing of the stars (angels) with the herd (humans), he has devoted no space to the condemnation of interspecies mixing (interracial marriage) among the animals (humans). There is, therefore, no established interpretive precedent in the apocalypse which would necessitate reading the intermingling of the sheep and bulls as problematic once the blight of wickedness has been removed. The lack of a safeguard against the possibility of the integration of the species in the third age strongly suggests that segregation is not the means by which he envisioned the distinction of the species would be maintained.

A far more likely solution to the riddle is that at the eschaton the remaining gentiles would adopt the *mishpatim*, the commandments governing moral behavior, but not the *khukim*, the commandments without rationale which include the laws of Jewish particularity –

circumcision, dietary laws, etc. which so came to identify the faithful of the late Second Temple period. In this scenario, the gentiles could paradoxically be at once *righteous* (white) and yet *not Jewish* (not sheep). For their part the Jews, minus the apostates, would be able at long last to perfectly observe Torah in it's entirety.<sup>146</sup> Thus in the third age the gentiles, who become righteous, and the Jews, who continue be Jewish, secure peace via a new social contract, in a shared eschatological *ethic* not a shared *ethnicity*. This vision has the distinct advantage of avowing the deeply meaningful identities ensuant from the second age while addressing the problem of evil – identities which would be expunged in a world returned to Eden. If the *Book of Dreams* is read in this manner, we have an unmistakable precedent for Paul's broad argument in *Galatians* that the converts need not become Jewish to be righteous: they need only be transformed.

The author of the *Book of Dreams* did not make Paul's specific claim that the redeemed gentiles of the eschaton are the *children of Abraham*. Nonetheless, the transformation of the beasts into white bulls offers a suggestive parallel to Paul's radical assertion. Abraham, the patriarch of the righteous, is depicted in the *Animal Apocalypse* as a *white bull*. The redeemed gentiles of the eschaton become *white bulls* in effect becoming the same as Abraham. Had the author of the apocalypse further claimed that the new herd of white bulls had, by their transformation, become the children of the *white bull* Abraham alongside the flock of gleaming sheep, it would not have violated the logic of the narrative.

### *Enoch's Final Lament*

And I slept in their midst, and I woke up, and I saw everything. And this is the vision which I saw while I slept; and awoke and blessed the Lord of righteousness, and gave him praise. And after that I wept greatly, and my tears did not stop until I could no longer persevere; those that were coming down were on account of that which I had seen, because everything will come to be fulfilled, and every action of men appeared to me in its respective part. On that night I remember the first dream and I wept on account of it, and I was disturbed because I saw that vision.

1 En 90:39-42

As has already been noted, Enoch's final lament concluding to the *Book of Dreams* is odd. It is the eleventh lament after a complete set of ten; it is uttered following a vision of the restoration of all things but, more striking still, it is set in direct opposition to the Lord's rejoicing.

It has been postulated that Enoch's final lament was a postscript added by a later redactor in order to link the originally independent first and second visions. Even if this were the case, a lament is an awkward choice. A redactor could just as easily had Enoch upon waking remember his first vision and rejoice with God at the redemption of creation.

It has been suggested that the final lament represents a touching moment of human solidarity between the seer and victims of history. This idea is appealing, as sympathy in the

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<sup>146</sup> Against Tiller, "Only one imperfection remains: humanity is still divided into separate nations, and the people of God remain in the degenerated form represented by the sheep instead of cattle. The birth of the white bull initiates the removal of this final imperfection." *Commentary*, 20; and Boccaccini "The circle closes: by restoring the original integrity of human nature, the new creation recovers the goals of the first creation that angelic sin had disrupted." *Roots*, 168.

midst of struggle generally is. Yet, for the original audience of the *Book of Dreams*, the tragedies for which Enoch weeps lay in the past, and most of it the ancient past. From the perspective of the apocalypse, the appearance of Judas Maccabee heralded the immanent arrival of the coming judgment, and with it, the redemption of the righteous. For the original audience, life was forecast to get radically better in the near future. Enoch's lament on their behalf would have made little sense in light of their hope of an imminent apocalyptic reversal of fortune.

However, Enoch is not just sad or disturbed upon awaking from his vision, troubled by a lack of comprehension as was the prophet Daniel (Dan 7:28, 8:27, 12:8): Enoch is hysterical. He weeps uncontrollably, so much so he cannot bear it, not because he doesn't understand what he has seen, but rather, I would argue, because he does understand it.

While Enoch's lament is not impious (he is careful first to bless God before unraveling), his extreme sorrow nonetheless smacks of defiance, and as such puts the reader in mind of the Tanakh's other disgruntled prophet – Jonah. Jonah, of course, disliked his prophetic assignment from the outset. When it could not be avoided, though he did try, he discharged his duty reluctantly and with the least possible expenditure of effort.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, much to his chagrin, the evil city to which he was called as a prophet repented, and subsequently was spared judgment and annihilation. To the radical success of his mission, Jonah responds with extreme anger, morosely sitting outside the city, keeping vigil in hopes of its eventual destruction. The reader, in the position of arbiter, can indeed sympathize with the prophet, as the Assyrians were a particularly nasty type of gentile. Given their role in the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, their annihilation would not by any measure have been unjustified. And while the reader may secretly even agree with Jonah, one must in the end concede the Lord's point, *Should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who can not tell their right hand from their left and many animals?* (Jon 4:11).

This discourse addressed a fundamental issue of Jewish monotheism; if there is only one God and the world is his dominion, at some point the outstanding issue of the gentiles must be resolved. They must either be brought into some kind of reconciliation or annihilated. Arguably, the debate over the fate of the gentiles was the inevitable destination of Jewish eschatological theology, a trajectory fixed at the point it was first postulated and accepted that there is only one God. In the case of the *Book of Dreams*, the extreme pressure of the persecutions of Antiochus IV and the ensuing war simply forced the issue.

Of course, the question arises: even if they could be reformed, why bother to redeem the gentiles? Why not simply annihilate the lot and be done with it? After all, what would the redemption of a remnant of the gentiles in the eschaton matter to pious Jews living through the *gerezot* of Antiochus?

The reconciliation of the gentiles was never conceived in scripture as an event unto itself, a thing done on behalf of the gentiles primarily for their benefit. As Donaldson points out, "For the most part, this future blessing of the Gentiles is dependant on the vindication and restoration

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<sup>147</sup> "It is interesting that there is a statement in verse 3 about the size of Nineveh: "Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' [sic] walk across" (מִתְהַלֵּךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים - 3:3b). This detail matters only to the degree that, in spite of the large size of the city, Jonah took *only a day's walk* (מִתְהַלֵּךְ יוֹם אֶחָד) to deliver the message (v. 4!)." Park, *Either Jew or Gentile*, 15.

of Israel; the expectation seems to be that the blessing poured out by God will spill over to benefit at least some of the Gentiles in the world to come.”<sup>148</sup> The reconciliation of the gentiles was for the direct benefit of Israel; to secure their peace, to be witness to their glory. This understanding is clearly visible in the *Animal Apocalypse*, as the last line states that God rejoiced over the sheep *and* the bulls but pointedly refers to God as the *Lord of the Sheep*.

The transformation of the gentiles in the *Book of Dreams* was not predicated on their merit, something earned and therefore owed them. The author of the apocalypse has literally nothing good to say about gentiles. Those that survived the winnowing of the final judgment do so because they were not directly implicated in the latest abuse of the flock. The author cannot explain, nor does he speculate, as to why God is intent on salvaging something of the gentiles. It is a conclusion the author arrives at after much perturbation as the only possible explanation for God’s continued allowance of their unchecked existence.

This being said, the prophetic view of the gentiles as tools of divine discipline for the ethical molding of Israel did not *require* the redemption of the gentiles. As tools they could be used and disposed of as God saw fit. At the point at which the author of the *Book of Dreams* could no longer accept the prophetic rationalization for the continued abuse of the righteous at the hands of the nations, the gentiles lost their *raison d'être*. If there was nothing of the gentiles to salvage and they were destined to be consigned to the fire in the eschaton – a thing God in his wisdom would certainly know – it becomes exceedingly difficult to reconcile the gentiles’ continued cruel existence throughout the second age in terms of the economy of divine justice. The salvation of even a remnant of gentiles, therefore, is a radical affirmation both of creation and linear history.<sup>149</sup> The rehabilitated gentiles are, in short, a product; something to show for the tumultuous age, a testimony that the suffering and shame of the righteous was not in vain but that something came out of it. The author’s theory that God will redeem gentileness as a category of being is an amendment to the prophetic model tailored to account, however uncomfortably, for the centuries of gentile dominance following the return of the exiles from Babylon.

The eschatological vision of the *Book of Dreams* ends where all Jewish apocalypses end; with the destruction of the wicked, the restoration of Jerusalem, the redemption and vindication of the Jews and the reclamation of the gentiles. *How* the author envisions the people will arrive at this conclusion, however, proves a bitter pill to swallow.

The author was a realist. Assessing the pious efforts of the Maccabean resistance, evaluating the religious rhetoric interpreting the war, he was unconvinced. His apocalypse pushes back against the theology of the burgeoning Pharisaical movement, which seem to have held that the coming of the messiah and the resultant establishment of divine justice hinge on the piety of the people. He contends that the problem of gentile wickedness is so severe, so intractable, as to defy solution by classical means. There will be no messiah to lead the righteous into battle against the wicked; in fact, there will be no great war. God will establish his throne in the midst of the ongoing warring chaos that defines the second age and to judge creation. He alone will deal with the remnant of the gentiles; transforming and recreating them. Until that

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<sup>148</sup> Donaldson, *Judaism*, 505.

<sup>149</sup> This vision of the redemption of the world is built *on* the second age not as a return to Eden..

time, the righteous may resist, piously struggling against the gentiles, but in the end, in true apocalyptic fashion, it will be God who must break into history and set the world right.

This releases the Jews from a great moral responsibility but at a considerable cost. The vision of the *Book of Dreams* ultimately de-centers Israel as the means through which the world will be reconciled to God. Powerless to directly impact the fate of the gentiles, they are left to endure and await the apocalypse. This, as Enoch's lamentation graphically testifies, is a difficult vision of the future to accept. The author anticipates the frustration of his audience at the non-violent resistance in the face of oppression, and at the redemption of their enemies (whatever the logic behind it) after the long and bitter contest of the second age. It is this frustration that is given voice in Enoch's final lament. It is a cathartic exercise. Like the endings of *Jonah* or the *Parables of the Lost* (Lk 15), the unresolved ending of the *Book of Dreams* invites the reader to supply the correct response for the prophet which, as we have always known, is to bless God and rejoice in the healing of the world.

Thus the *Book of Dreams* ends.

## CONCLUSION

This reading of the *Book of Dreams* offers a clear precedent for Paul's argument in *Galatians*. Such a statement is, of course, also an admission that other readings are possible. Here we reach an impasse though, as to date, to the best of my knowledge, there are no other narrative-critical assessments of the *Book of Dreams* with which to compare and critique my reading. I do think it likely 'transformation' was the principle teaching of the apocalypse as it accounts for the detail, the structure, the reason for the interpolation of Noah's transformation and the conclusions<sup>150</sup> efficiently within the grand narrative arc. Nonetheless, my reading accounts for the detail and structure of the *Book of Dreams* as it has come down to us, the final product of what Enochic scholars theorize might well have been a process of compilation and redaction. Thus my reading, if persuasive, would represent the agenda of the final redactor not necessarily the historical author.

This, however, is where I part company with dedicated Enoch scholars. My argument does not rise or fall on correctly identifying the historical author of the *Book of Dreams*' narrative agenda. In fact, it is of little consequence, for the purposes of this study, whether the historical author or any subsequent redactor ever intended to postulate the transformation of the gentiles *sans* becoming Jewish as an eschatological solution for the healing of the world. My interest lies entirely with the *readers* of the *Book of Dreams* and thus not with what the author intended the apocalypse to mean but how it could have been read 200 years later. To that end, it matters only that the reading offered above is both *possible* and *cogent*.

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<sup>150</sup> By "conclusions" I mean that of the *Animal Apocalypse* (the transformation of the gentiles) and that of the *Book of Dreams* (the lament of Enoch).

## CHAPTER 4

The Solution: A Theory as to the Evolution of Ideas c. 160 B.C.E. – c. 60 C.E.

### THE THREAT OF CIRCUMCISION

Look, I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you.

Galatians 5:2

It is clear that Paul considered the circumcision of the gentile converts a first-order threat to the messianic age. No other subject, not even the Corinthians' denial of the bodily resurrection, provoked a rebuttal in the tenor or, for that matter, on the scale of Paul's letter to the Galatians. His warning could not have been more dire – should the converts submit to being circumcised, the work of Christ to *free [them] from the present evil age* would be negated (Gal 1:4, 2:18-21, 4:11, 5:1-10).

With no literary precedent, how and why Paul considered the prospect of the converts' circumcision a catastrophic threat has been historically less clear. In the decades following the destruction of the Second Temple, the metonymic significance of circumcision virtually ensured the rabbi's interpretation of Paul's argument against the circumcision of the converts as a wholesale repudiation of Judaism.<sup>1</sup> The gentile converts, for their part, came to much the same conclusion. Given the level of Paul's distress, it hardly seemed possible that a bit of excess skin on a generally concealed organ possessed by only half of the population could be the entirety of the issue to which Paul was responding with such *pathos*. As a means of rationalizing the severity of Paul's alarm Christians came to read circumcision in Paul's discourse as a cipher for the entirety of Jewish Law. The effect of these interpretations was to cleave Christian identity cleanly and irreparably from its Jewish roots.

However, if Paul was of the eschatological school which produced and preserved the *Book of Dreams* – believing namely that the healing of the world would be completed through the redemption of “gentileness” as a category of being – then his distress over the Galatians desire to become circumcised, i.e. the Galatians' desire to become Jewish, would be greatly clarified. The converts had, after all, adopted the Jewish God, the Jewish scripture, a Jewish messiah and the Jewish ethic, and thus were only a minor surgery and a Sabbath observance away from being indistinguishable from any other Jew. The circumcision of the converts would have eradicated the remaining point of theological distinction thereby threatening the very goal of the messianic age: the creation of a contingent of righteous gentiles as the eschatological complement to righteous Jewry. The panicked imperative of *Galatians* forbidding the rite of circumcision to the

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<sup>1</sup> Boyarin, *Boarder Lines*, 62; Segal, *Paul*, 205.



converts was aimed not at negating Judaism – the validity of which it never occurred to Paul to defend – *but rather at preserving the otherness of the gentiles*.

Thin indeed was the theological line distinguishing a righteous gentile from a righteous Jew. Drawn carefully along the *khukim*, it was a vision of the two distinct peoples, Jew and gentile, correctly orientated in the eschaton to God and to each other, bound in a shared ethic which secured their mutual peace and security. The invention of this school of eschatology lay not then in the subjugation of the history, tradition and particular identity of Judaism to a universal ideal but in the valuing of the previously worthless category *gentileness* within the Jewish *Weltanschauung*. It was not a *supplanting* of Judaism but an *amendment* to Judaism. Instead, it was an attempt to rationalize the gentiles' continued political ascendancy within the theological framework of radical Jewish monotheism.

#### THE *BOOK OF DREAMS* AND THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Other studies have suggested a link between the *Book of Dreams* and the Pauline Epistles. Such intimations, however, have been generally confined to passing comments on gentile inclusion and the noting of the possible link between the eschatological white bull and Christ as a second Adam ending with a call for further analysis.<sup>2</sup> An analysis of such disparate texts, however, is not without significant challenges.

As series of situational responses, the Epistles assume a great deal of previous information.<sup>3</sup> The questions and exigencies which Paul addressed were of a considerably higher order than the comparatively basic questions (from the perspective of Paul and his intended audiences) modern scholars bring to the Epistles such as: “What was Paul’s gospel?” or “When did Paul expect the *parousia*?” or, as I am inquiring, “What was Paul’s eschatology?” Paul had already done his primary theological teaching among the communities he wrote – the churches were the product of that teaching. What appears obscure to modern scholars was likely self-evident to Paul and his intended readers. In his letters, Paul corrected misunderstandings, adjusted timetables, explained nuances, rebuked behavior and encouraged his readers to greater acts of piety and sacrifice.

It is the bane of Pauline scholarship that Paul failed to write a gospel. Where the author of the *Book of Dreams* presents straight forward narrative sequence for the eschaton, Paul’s eschatological expectations, to the degree they are evident, must be cobbled together from various, unrelated letters, distilled as it were from discussions on other issues entirely. To complicate matters further, the end-of-the-world does not emerge in Epistles as a pressing concern for Paul. In the extant, undisputed corpus, the eschaton proper never appears as an independent topic of interest. It is clear Paul had

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<sup>2</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry on the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 105; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 85. Olsen, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch*, 243.

<sup>3</sup> This is precisely the case in *Galatians*. Paul’s midrashic *tour de force* in chapters 3-4 was clearly not his primary argument but a rebuttal addressing the particulars of the no doubt formidable case the visitors from Jerusalem made in favor of the converts circumcision. Far from teaching the Galatians, Paul was admonishing them, calling them back to an understanding of the gospel he had assumed they previously held in common.

ideas and beliefs about the eschaton and that those conceptions informed his correspondence but those ideas come to us as light seeping around a door, clearly present but knowable only indirectly.<sup>4</sup>

Where the *Book of Dreams* was theoretical, the Epistles were practical. The author of the *Book of Dreams* had *speculated* that the remaining gentiles would be transformed into righteous beings at the end of the eschaton. His focus was on the theological justification for gentile supremacy; the transformed gentiles were themselves an abstract, future possibility. Paul, by contrast, was addressing the very real, newly transformed gentiles directly. His concern in the Epistles was to define the gentile transformation, to explain how gentiles should live in light of their baptism, not explain its apologetic necessity within the schema of Jewish history.

These technical differences of genre, audience and authorial agenda aside, the *Book of Dreams* and the Epistles further differ on what would seem two crucial material points; namely the role of a messiah as a catalyst in the healing of the world and the timing of the transformation of the gentiles. The author of the *Book of Dreams* had no role for a messiah. As presented in the apocalypse, the gentile problem was wholly insoluble by conventional means. No divine proxy, however capable, even Judas Maccabee himself, was capable of ultimately resolving the gentile problem. If the gentiles were not to be destroyed after fulfilling their purpose as tools of chastisement, it fell then to God and God alone to transform them, essentially recreating them, restoring the gentiles to their intended state prior to the sin of Adam and Eve. In the *Book of Dreams*, the gentile transformation is God's final eschatological act in the righting of the world. This position is diametrically opposed to that of the Epistles. It goes without saying that for Paul, the messiah was the imperative, essential, game changing element in the divine restoration of creation. The messiah was the agency by which the transformation of the gentiles was made possible, ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἶς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον (2 Cor 5:14). It is further clear in the Epistles that the transformation of the gentiles, far from the final element of the eschaton, preceded it entirely in Paul's schema (as demarcated by the commencement of the final judgment) and involved not only a messiah but the active participation of the *messiah's proxies*, believers, in accomplishing it.

Given these differences, the *Book of Dreams* would seem at most to offer a tangential witness to the theory of gentile transformation but not a direct antecedent for the radical program of gentile proselytization found two centuries later in the Epistles. Certainly Paul never quoted the *Book of Dreams* or otherwise seems to have alluded to it. Understandably then, scholars to date have only seen a murky link between and the *Book of Dreams* and the Epistles. However, the relationship between these texts, I suggest, is far more extensive than previously imagined.

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<sup>4</sup> This state of affairs naturally leaves considerable room for differing interpretations and constructions of the evidence and, as one might expect, the treatises on the subject are duly legion. This, however, need not concern us, as this study is only interested in the broad picture of Paul's expectations concerning gentiles and how they align with the *Book of Dreams*.

That Paul changed his mind and that the Christ event was the catalyst for this change is a fundamental premise of all readings of the Epistles. With the rise of the New Perspective, scholars have variously debated the *subject* of Paul's *metanoia*; traditionalists holding he changed his mind as to the efficacy of Judaism while those of the New Perspective contend he reversed himself only on the question of the gentiles. In an effort to repatriate Paul more fully, a second wave of New Perspective scholars have set about a program of shrinking the chasm between Paul's position on gentile inclusion and that of late Second Temple Judaism in an effort to make Paul look less alienated from his tradition. Yet, from the beginning of this study, I have been dogged by the impression that Paul – particularly on the subject of gentile circumcision – simply does not read like a man who has had an epiphany which invalidated the most sacrosanct, longstanding, emotionally compelling, ground signifier within the Jewish *épistème*. Paul's confidence, his lack of explanation, the level of his frustration at the Galatians' failure to understand the importance of their foreskins, could only be born of a mind long acquainted with and already convinced not merely of the possibility but the *necessity* of the redemption of gentiles *qua* gentiles.

There appears then to be a gap in the textual record, a perceivable absence, the impression of which is nonetheless clearly visible in Paul's thought. That Paul, and for that matter the authors of the New Testament, never felt compelled to make the primary argument for the transformation of the gentiles strongly suggests they were the product of an established school of thought which had already adopted and adapted the thesis of the *Book of Dreams*. A school for which the death and resurrection of Christ was not the *revelation* concerning the reclamation of the gentiles but the *means* by which the salvage could take place; a school of thought which at the point Paul composed the Epistles may well have existed for centuries.

But what is the evidence for the existence of such a school?

Among the cache of manuscripts recovered from cave 4 at Qumran, the *Book of Dreams* was explicitly linked to the *Book of the Watchers*. Eleven scrolls contained material from four of the five books which now comprise *1 Enoch*. Two of the manuscripts were copies of the *Book of the Watchers* (c. 200-150 B.C.E.), one was of the *Book of Dreams* (c. 150-125 B.C.E.) and three of the eleven scrolls were compilations pairing the *Book of the Watchers* with the *Book of Dreams* (c. 100-1 B.C.E.).<sup>5</sup> For all the wealth of cave 4, it is nevertheless difficult to ascertain to what degree this sample of texts is representative of wider cultural trends concerning how ancient interpreters understood the relation of the *Book of Dreams* to the *Book of the Watchers*. The evidence from Qumran would seem to suggest that once the *Book of Dreams* became associated with the *Book of the Watchers* they remained uniquely linked in the Enochic catalogue.

The presence of the *Book of Dreams* at Qumran lends creditability to the hypothesis that Paul and the New Testament writers would have had access to the *Book*

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<sup>5</sup> 4Q204 En<sup>ear</sup> also included the *Epistle of Enoch* as a third text in addition to the *Book of the Watcher* and the *Book of Dreams*. See James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 91.

of *Dreams*. That the *Book of Watchers* was known to the authors of the New Testament<sup>6</sup> and tangibly link with the *Book of Dreams* in the three compilation scrolls recovered in cave 4 further strengthens the probability that Paul would have had direct knowledge of the *Book of Dreams*. That the *Book of Dreams* was not quoted by Paul or any of the other New Testament authors is likely due to the nature of the allegory. There is nothing an author could have pulled out of the apocalypse which would not have required considerable explanation in another composition.

The reason for their pairing is largely credited to their shared *nom de plume* and the role of the Watchers in both narratives. The evidence of the compilation scrolls discovered at Qumran is generally cited in discussions pertaining to the formation of the Enochic canon. There remains, however, the distinct possibility that there was an additional rationale as to why these two texts should have constantly been copied together; a thematic reason for their pairing. They are very different texts and, at first glance, there appears little beyond their shared pseudonym and use of the Watchers myth which would suggest a deeper analogue between them. However, if the focus of our inquiry is shifted to the *method* by which these authors addressed their specific exigencies, a deep, creative correlation is revealed in the way they appropriated and adapted the stock motifs of Jewish eschatology. Both authors of the *Book of Dreams* and the *Book of the Watchers* share a distinct lack of interest in the final battle (final battle is absent in the *Watchers* and downplayed in the *Book of Dreams* 1 En 90:9-14), both stress the final judgment (1 En 10-27 and 90:15-38), both made innovative use of the idea of resurrection (1 En 25 and 90:33) and both discard a role for a messiah in the eschaton (messiah figure is absent in both texts).<sup>7</sup>

The identification of this tetrad of distinctive features in these authors' approach to their respective exigencies begs comparison with the book of *Daniel*. As an apocalyptic text written during or shortly after the Maccabean Revolt, the *Book of Dreams* is reflexively compared to the apocalypse of *Daniel*. Studies have generally compared discrete apocalyptic elements of the texts and contrasted theologies of resistance in an effort to define the ever illusive idea of the 'apocalyptic.'<sup>8</sup> Here, as with the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Book of Dreams*, if one steps back from a myopic focus on textual detail and theological conclusions in favor of a broader appreciation as to the *way* the author of the apocalypse of *Daniel* addressed the crisis of Antiochus IV, the same inclination is revealed; the author of *Daniel* disavowed the final battle, stressed the final judgment, innovated the theory of resurrection and denied a role for a messiah figure in the eschaton.

The *Book of the Watchers*, *Daniel* and the *Book of Dreams* were a cluster of texts troubled in a similar way by the exigence *de l'époque* – the longevity of gentile political

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<sup>6</sup> It was directly quoted by the author of *Jude* (Jude 6), referenced by the author of *2 Peter* (2 Pet 2:4), and alluded to by other New Testament writers including Paul (1 Cor 11:10 for example).

<sup>7</sup> These connections are explored in sections which follow.

<sup>8</sup> Rainer Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (trans. John Bowden; 2 vols.; Louisville: John Knox, 1994) 594. Assefa, *L'Apocalypse des amimaux*, 239-217. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*.

ascendancy.<sup>9</sup> All three sought to buttress the prophetic argument with supplemental information and reinterpretations of existing texts within an evolving, creative conversation. In navigating the centuries old prophetic apologetic around the theological obstacle of gentile supremacy, they formed a strong and distinct eddy within the larger current of late Second Temple Jewish thought; a type of school in their own right – less in their particular conclusions as in their approach to the problem.

What follows is an experiment in reading these seminal texts as participants in overt, purposed dialogue actively seeking a new and creative solution to the problem of the gentiles within the confines of the prophetic apologia. In juxtaposing arguments of the aggregate narratives of the *Book of the Watchers*, *Daniel* and *Book of Dreams* with the anthology of undisputed Epistles; in looking beyond the specific exigencies of these texts to how these authors engaged the exigence *de l'époque*; in defining their connection less by their conclusions and more by the similarities in their approach to the problem, I hope to sketch the logical series of half steps which connected and compelled their innovations and in doing so the probability that there is more than a fascicle connection between the *Book of Dreams* and Paul on the point of gentile transformation. I will argue that these texts are related in *call and response* arching over the two closing centuries of the Second Temple period which culminated in Paul's grand experiment applying what, up to the Christ event, had only been a theory.

CALL AND RESPONSE REGARDING THE PROBLEM OF THE LONGEVITY OF GENTILE POLITICAL ASENDENCY: POINTS OF ESCATOLOGICAL CONTINUITY IN THE *BOOK OF THE WATCHERS*, *DANIEL*, THE *BOOK OF DREAMS* AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES

*Disavowal of the Final Battle*

The eschatological war pitting the forces of righteousness against the forces of evil was one of the “salient features”<sup>10</sup> of Jewish apocalypses. Given the *Book of Dreams*

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<sup>9</sup> I am not making a grand claim by this grouping as to the nature of the apocalyptic genre as resistance literature, only that these three texts appear similarly distressed by the longevity of gentile political ascendancy.

<sup>10</sup> Michael E. Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writing, Philo, Josephus* (ed. Michael E. Stone; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 426 in reference to the War Scroll specifically. He notes earlier that Is. 24-27, Ez. 38-39, Deutero-Isaiah and Deutero-Zechariah (particularly ch. 14) have war imagery and have subsidiary influence on the shift from prophetic to apocalyptic eschatology (p. 386). He states regarding ch. 14 of Deutero-Zech. “the eschatological war has taken on a fully cosmic dimension (p. 387). Stone also gives 4 Ezra 13 as an example that war is a “salient feature” of Jewish apocalypses (p. 426). On this point see also; Florentino Garcia Martinez, “Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls” in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* ed Bernard J. McGinn, John J. Collins and Stephen Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003).. Martinez cites Ps. 2, Ex. 38-39 (Gog and Magog), and Joel 3 9-16 as biblical proto-apocalyptic texts with the eschatological war theme along with Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 90), Martinez cites the following texts as having an eschatological victory over the nations: 4QFlorilegium (4Q174) interprets Ps. 2 in the context of the end of days and the time of trial; 4QpIsa with the Branch of David, the Davidic Messiah, who participates in the eschatological battle; Damascus Document (CD 7:20-21) the Davidic Messiah (called the Prince of the Congregation) appears as the scepter of Balaam who will smite the children of Sheth (p. 106). Martinez argues that in the Scrolls the eschatological battle is not only a victory against foreign enemies, but will include victory over all evil forces (p.106). (4Q161) refers to

unrelenting theme of the martial humiliation of Israel, the reader fully expects an epic final battle in which the righteous, with the aid of heaven, at long last achieve crushing victory over the wicked. Indeed, as the eschatological scene begins to unfold the narrative seems poised to deliver just such a reversal. The sighted lambs (the Maccabeans) face off against the birds (the Seleucids) and the battle ensues. As expected, the struggle is indeed titanic (1 En 90). The wicked gentile nations and evil angels quickly ally to defeat the few righteous rebels. Judas pleads for divine aid against this superior force and an angel comes to his aid. The reader expects the tide to abruptly turn at the good angel's descent, but instead of joining the fray, the angel offers Judas a revelation. Without warning, Judas suddenly disappears from the narrative, having won not a single victory let alone the war. Abruptly, the scene shifts from the chaos of war to the settled order of court and the final judgment commences. Despite the rather classic set-up, the battle is simply discontinued.

For an author whom commentators generally believe lived through, and was likely involved in the Maccabean War, the war as a subject does not seem to have interested the author of the *Book of Dreams* much. Judas and the rebels are portrayed as pious and their cause just but, as they never win a victory, their armed struggle is revealed to be ultimately futile. Judas' plea for help is heard and answered but the ascendancy he seeks over his enemies comes in the form of their condemnation before the judgment seat of God. While there is a final battle in the *Book of Dreams*, its finality is a technicality; it is simply the last armed conflict prior to the judgment in a long series of conflicts which has characterized the second age.

Where the author of the *Book of Dreams*, true to his laconic style, simply ignored the final battle, the author of the apocalypse of *Daniel*, for his part, actively taught against it. The apocalypse opens with the dramatic scene of the four beasts (steno-symbols for the gentile kingdoms) emerging from the sea of chaos, each more terrible than the last. At the emanation of the fourth beast, the throne of God is set up and the divine court sits to judge the oppressors of the righteous. The books are opened, the record consulted and the fourth beast is summarily executed for its arrogance, its body consigned to the fire. The remaining beasts, stripped of their dominion, are granted a stay of execution for a time. It is at this point in the vision one *like a son of man* comes riding in the clouds. His description as the "cloud rider" pointedly evokes the ancient warrior epithet ascribed to YHWH in the Tanakh and to Ba'al in Canaanite mythology (Ps 18:9; 68:4; 104:4; Nah 1:3; CTU 1.4 VII 29-35, 101.1-4; EA147.13-15). Intuitively ascribing purpose to such a description, the original audience of *Daniel* likely anticipated the cloud-riding-son-of-man to have a warrior's agenda, to engage the remaining beasts exacting some measure of vengeance for their misdeeds. Yet where YHWH and Ba'al fought the enemies of gods and men, the warrior of *Daniel 7*, by contrast, has nothing to do. At his late arrival, post

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Magog and the war of Kittim together with the Branch of David, the Davidic Messiah, who participates in the eschatological battle; Damascus Document (CD 7:20-21) the Davidic Messiah (called the Prince of the Congregation) appears as the scepter of Balaam who will smite the children of Sheth (p. 106). Martinez contends that in the Scrolls the eschatological battle is not only a victory against foreign enemies, but will include victory over all evil forces (p.106).

judgment, he passively receives the dominion stripped from the other beasts in judgment from the Ancient of Days, power he would conventionally have won in battle.<sup>11</sup>

This overt abrogation of the final battle is reinforced at every available turn throughout in the apocalypse. *Daniel* is replete with violence (or the threat of violence) and war but all hostilities are perpetrated either by gentiles or bad angels (Dan 10:13, 20). At no point do the righteous retaliate or even defend themselves beyond appealing to God. As in the *Book of Dreams*, an angel comes to the hero Daniel but, instead of armed assistance to throw off the gentile oppressors, Gabriel offers Daniel revelation, a corrected understanding of history and prophecy assuring him he (and by extension the righteous) will be saved on account of his piety (Dan 10:19). When the wicked are ultimately brought low, the author prophesied it will be sudden and by divine intervention *not by a human hand* (Dan 8:25 also 11:45; 12:1). Thus the author forcibly points his readers from anticipation of vindication in a final battle to the final judgment. Emphatically underscoring the efficacy of personal piety even to the point of martyrdom in this new eschatological economy, the author insured his readers that if at the final reckoning their names were inscribed in the book they would be saved from eternal destruction (Dan 12:1).

Paul, however, was a messianist. In its quintessence, the figure of the messiah, the scion of David, was a warrior, the defender of the righteous against their enemies.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For example; *Psalms of Solomon* 17; *2<sup>nd</sup> Baruch* 39-40, 72-73; *4<sup>th</sup> Ezra* 11:37-46, 12:31-34, 13.

<sup>12</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins in *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) conclude the “son of man” in 4Q246 is a Davidic/royal messiah. They write, “He functions as a warrior to subdue the Gentiles” (p. 73). Collins and Collins state that the messiah figure in 4 Ezra 13 is a warrior (p. 98). In Al Wolter’s article “The Messiah in the Qumran Documents” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* he cites a number of documents that have Davidic/royal messianic expectations. These include: *pesher* of Isaiah (4QpIsa<sup>a</sup>) where the messiah is called the “Branch of David” and he will help defeat the *Kittim* (Romans) in an eschatological battle; 4Q285 describes an eschatological battle and calls the messiah “Branch of David”; 4QFlorilegium (4Q161) calls the messiah “Branch of David”; 4Q252 calls the messiah “Branch of David”; Damascus Document (CD) calls the messiah “Prince of the Congregation” and is a “scepter” which is a messianic fulfillment of the Balaam oracle (p. 77). Wolter states “these texts seem to reflect a fairly uniform exegetical tradition (also attested outside the Qumran documents) that saw the Messiah as the Davidic king predicted in a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible. The portrait of this king that emerges is fairly consistently that of a warrior figure who will smite the wicked and restore the Davidic dynasty (p. 77).” David Aune in the *Word Biblical Commentary Revelation* comments on the figure of an eschatological warrior king coming to wage war on the nations in Rev. 19:11-16. He says there is biblical precedent for this, Is. 63:1-3 (p.1048). Aune states Wis. 18:15 is similar in theme. Aune states Wisdom 18:15 is in part dependent on Exodus 15:3-4 (p.1048-1049). Aune cites Mek. De-Rabbi Ishmael, Shirata 1 has God depicted as a warrior (p. 1049). Aune lists a number of Targums that have warrior messiah figures. The first is MS Paris, Bibliotheque nationale Hébr. 110 (M. L. Kline, *Fragment-Targums* 2:31), “He (i.e. the King Messiah) girds his loins, [and] goes out to battle against those who hate him, and he kills kings and rulers, and reddens the mountains from the blood of their slain (p.1049).” Second is MS Vatican Ebr. 440, folios 198-227, “How beautiful is the King Messiah who will arise from the house of Judah. He girds his loins and goes to battle against those who hate him, and he kills kings and rulers; he reddens the mountains from the blood the their slain; and he whitens the hills from the fat of their mighty ones; his garments roll in the blood; and he is like one who presses grapes (p. 1049-1050).” Third is *Tg. Neof.* Gen 49:11 (Macho, *Neophyti* 1:635), “How beautiful is the King Messiah who is to arise from those of the house of Judah. He girds his loins and goes forth to battle against those that hate him; and he kills kings

The battlefield was the messiah's natural arena, the gentiles his traditional enemies. Even as he challenged the convention concerning gentiles, one imagines Paul, steeped in Jewish messianic tradition, would have instinctually associated Jesus in his role as messiah with a final eschatological battle of one form or another; that the designation *messiah* would have rather demanded it. Paul, however, seems reluctant or at least uninterested in developing this typology. In the whole of his surviving corpus, Paul only twice cast Christ in the traditional role of the warrior; once as the rider of the clouds and once as the consummate subjugator.

For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain behind will be snatched up into the clouds together and meet the Lord in the air to be with him forever.

1Th 4:16-17

Then comes the end, when he [Christ] hands over the kingdom to our God and Father, after he has brought low every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Cor 15:24-26

The martial language of these passages ostensibly suggests conflict yet a final battle is not actually mentioned. Both portrayals are fleeting and occur in passages dealing with questions concerning the nature and timing of the resurrection of believers.<sup>13</sup> Apropos of the exigencies in Corinth and Thessalonica, *death* is cast as the messiah's archenemy (as opposed to Rome or the wicked more generally). This shift from the corporeal, local, temporal enemy to that of the universal human experience of death makes the theater in which the contest between the rivals was projected to take place irrelevant in Paul's eschaton.

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with rulers, and makes the mountains red from the blood of their slain and makes the valleys white from the fat of their warriors. His garments are rolled in blood; he is like a presser of grapes (p.1050).” Aune cites Philo (Praem. 95 [LCL, 423]), “For there shall come forth a man,’ says the oracle [viz. LXX Num. 24:7], ‘and leading his host to war, he will subdue great and populous nations (p. 1050).” Aune claims Is. 11:4ff which talks about a king from the “shoot of Jesse” and will destroy the wicked was interpreted messianically in Judaism. He cites Tg. Isa. 11:1-6; Pss Sol. 17:24-25; 4QpIsa<sup>a</sup> 8-10; 4 Ezra 3:9-11, 37-38 (p. 1053) 65. See also; Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: New Press, 2012) and Stanley Porter, ed. *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The primary goal of the *1 Thessalonians* 4 passage was to encourage the beleaguered Thessalonians not only of the certainty of the resurrection but also of its glory. To this end, Paul employed the ancient image of the powerful rider of the clouds who will come with the warriors of heaven. While the descent of the rider and his host is menacing – an army marching to war – their objective in this passage is singular, to summon the dead from the exile of the grave. There is no battle envisioned. The *1 Corinthians* 15 passage served to clarify the timetable as to when the resurrection of believers will take place. To that end, Paul orders, briefly, the messianic tasks of the eschaton. Before Christ defeats death (hence before the resurrection of believers can occur) Christ must first vanquish and subjugate all rulers, authorities and powers. The subject being believers' resurrection from the dead, *death* is cast as an enemy of the messiah, an enemy which the messiah will battle and ultimately defeat on behalf of the righteous. For discussion see; Hans Clemens Caesarius Cavallin, *Life after Death: Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Cor 15. Part I: An Enquiry into the Jewish Background* (ConBNT 7:1; Lund: Gleerup, 1974).



The irrelevance of a final battle to Paul's eschatological schemes is further evidenced by his depiction of believers as combatants not in a future physical conflict but in an ongoing war of personal piety.

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

1Th 5:8

The night is nearly over and the day is near. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Rom 13:12

For though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our campaign are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for tearing down of fortresses, pulling down arguments and every other lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God. Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ we are ready to requite all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

2 Cor 10:3-6

For He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, on the day of salvation I have come to your aid." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation!" Giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in distresses, in difficulty, in beatings, in prison, in tumults, in trouble, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in wisdom, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right and the left...

2 Cor 6:2-7

The image of the armor of righteousness comes from *Isaiah 59* in which the prophet describes God dressing for battle in anticipation of laying waste to the wicked, *He put on righteousness like a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on garments of vengeance for his clothing and wrapped himself with zeal as a mantle.* (Isa 59:17) Where the prophet imagined a physical enemy for the divine warrior, *unrighteous people*, Paul envisioned a metaphysical enemy, *unrighteousness* distilled from the people who classically embody it – namely gentiles. In Paul's eschaton, the people were called to war alongside God and the messiah, wearing the armor appropriate for the nature of the conflict against their mutual enemy *wickedness*.

This re-envisioning of the conflict as a moral struggle was the realization of *Daniel's* program of piety discussed above and the theological interpretation given to the Maccabean War. The authors of the *Maccabees* had contended that the rebels prevailed against the Seleucids by virtue of their piety. Having identified piety as the only effective weapon against oppressive gentile regimes, later evolutions of the theology in tandem with *Daniel* predictably saw piety as the only issue of consequence in the struggle against the wicked. In its more extreme distillations, the military success of the pious rebels caused later Jewish theorists such as Paul to view a final military contest as largely inconsequential to the righting of the world. A military contest could only be the macabre outplaying of the moral contest already won or lost in the hearts and minds of

the people. If there can be said to be a battlefield in Paul's eschatology it is that of the individual gentile heart, territory captured in baptism and held in pious devotion to God and the community.

### *Stress on the Final Judgment*

For this fraternity of texts which downplayed or even dismissed the final battle, the final judgment became the centerpiece of their eschatological visions. Neither the historical review of the *Book of Dreams*, the *ex eventu* prophecy of *Daniel* or, for that matter, the transcendental *Book of the Watchers* imagined anything positive would come from historical processes. The only hope of reversal in these texts was pinned to the judgment; the only advice given the reader is to be on the right side when that great and terrible day comes.

The shift away from the final battle evidenced in this school may well have been pragmatic. Many of the gentile empires slotted for some form of Jewish retribution and divine judgment had been conquered and absorbed by other gentile empires over the course of the Second Temple period. As one oppressing gentile empire after another disappeared, it likely became more difficult for some to imagine a final battle scenario involving all these adversaries.<sup>14</sup> Certainly some like the author of the *War Scroll* attempted to muster such an amalgamation of the historic adversaries, but it seems that the authors of this school simply thought the divine tribunal a more feasible venue for justice. In the case of the *Book of Dreams*, the practicality of the final judgment over a final battle may have been additionally motivated by the author's own fatigue, a sense of the futility of war evidenced in his inability to muster any excitement about the Maccabean revolt despite the manifest justness of the cause.

Where the final battle – righteous Jews v. gentile nations – was the scene of *Israel's* vindication and glory, the final judgment was *God's*. The merkabah depictions of the judgment focused on the splendor of God's throne as the symbol of power and justice in unrivaled majesty. The court sits, the miscreants of humanity are arrayed, the record consulted and sentence pronounced. The righteous receive their reward and the wicked are consigned to perdition. Where the final battle evidenced the turning at long last of fortune's wheel in favor of the righteous, the final judgment declared the wheel fixed in perpetuity with the righteous on top and the wicked firmly and forever on bottom. The final judgment thus stood as the fulcrum of the ages promising a secured peace for the righteous not in an armistice or in the subjugation of the adversary but in their enemies' annihilation.

Even if the result was a foregone conclusion, the final battle was, however, a contest, two forces struggling against each other for supremacy. The final judgment in

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<sup>14</sup> *Oppression* encompassing specific acts or programs of violence but also the exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, indeterminacy and cultural imperialism more generally. For further discussion see; Iris Young, "Five Faces of Oppression" in *Oppression, Privilege, and Resistance: Theoretical Perspectives on Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism* (ed. Lisa Heldke and Peg O'Connor; New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004) 37-63.

the absence of the final battle was, by contrast, a radical, unfettered display of divine power. Dispensed with was the *appearance of competition*; the divine judge sits in the presence of his enemies and feels no threat; he passes judgment and the wicked are destroyed.

The final judgment in which humanity would be made to stand in the dock and be either acquitted or condemned by their actions was the only logical place for a War of Piety to conclude.<sup>15</sup> For the zealots of this worldview like Paul, acquittal at the final judgment inevitably became the *goal of the eschaton*. The enemy was not ultimately the embodied, wicked other (gentiles and apostates) – the true menace lay within. It was the individual's own, unchecked evil impulse capable of thwarting an individual's effort at righteousness which posed the real threat. Consequently, the final judgment runs as a leitmotif through Paul's correspondence. Repeatedly he warns of the coming wrath, encouraging his readers to be ready for the Day of Judgment.<sup>16</sup>

It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not judge before the appointed time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things hidden in darkness and reveals the purposes of the heart. Then each person will receive commendation from God.

1Cor 4:4b-5

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ in order that each person may be recompensed for their deeds in the body, whether good or bad.

2Cor 5:10

But because of your hard and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to everyone according to their deeds; to those who, by perseverance in doing good, seek glory and honor and immortality he will grant eternal life but to those who are selfishly ambitious and disobey the truth, but adhere to unrighteousness, there will be wrath and indignation. Tribulation and distress for every soul of humanity who works for evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to all who work for the good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Rom 2:5-10

### *Resurrection of the Dead and the Loss and Recovery of the Messiah*

#### Origins of Resurrection in the Tanakh

*Resurrection from the dead* was an ancient metaphor of reversal in Jewish literature.<sup>17</sup> The Psalmist(s) repeatedly expressed hope that God would, and even claimed that God had already, redeemed him from death/Sheol (Ps 9:13-14; 16:10; 23:3-

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<sup>15</sup> "War of Piety" being the definition of the conflict in which the righteous were engaged, a war in which piety was the only effectual weapon and the goal of which was acquittal before the throne of God on the day of judgment.

<sup>16</sup> For discussion see; David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Chris Van Landingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Henderson, 2006); Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale, 2006).

4; 40:3; 49:15; 71:20; 107:10-14). The author of *1* and *2 Samuel* twice made similar claims to God's ability to redeem from the grave; Hannah extolling the power of God to rescue after the birth of Samuel and David's song of thanksgiving after being delivered from Saul (1 Sam 2:6 and 2 Sam 22:4-21). In these contexts *resurrection from the dead* was a metaphor of healing, of restoration underscoring the radical nature of great reversals, things beyond the power of mortals to effect; the escape from mortal danger, the healing from a fatal illness or the gift of a child to a barren woman.<sup>18</sup> It spoke to a quality life, a diminished or otherwise threatened existence now expanded to its fullest potential within the bounds of a natural human lifespan. It was language which testified to the power and character of God who had called creation into being from chaos and life from Sarah's dead womb, a deity which, in affirmation of life, blessed the righteous with health and peace.

While the strange tale of Saul's successful employment of a necromancer to call Samuel back from the dead (1 Sam 28) suggests that ancient Israelites may have considered the veil of death permeable under the right conditions, it was in the work of the prophets where the idea of *resurrection from the dead* took a bold step beyond poetic hyperbole to something much more literal.

The Babylonian War with all its attendant horrors brought Jerusalem decisively to its knees politically the summer of 587 B.C.E. but it was the exile of the Jewish civic and religious aristocracy which threatened the erasure of the culture all together. Exile was a lingering but nonetheless fatal malady, the slow but sure decapitation of a culture. The prophets' use of *death*, then, as a descriptor of consequence of Judah's catastrophic defeat was particularly apt. The eradication of the northern tribes as a result the Assyrian exile provided a frighteningly reliable predictor of Judah's future at the hands of the Babylonians. The hope that God might revive Israel from the death of exile, that he might bring them back to reconstitute the now extinct kingdom, was nothing short of the hope for a literal national *resurrection*. The aspiration for the exiles' return from Babylon invited, indeed begged for articulation the in terms of *resurrection from the dead*.

Your dead will live, your corpses will arise! You who dwell in the dust awake and shout for joy! For your dew is as the dew of the dawn and the earth will give birth to the dead.  
Isa 26:19

Come, let us return to the LORD for He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has wounded us, but He will bind our wounds. He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will restore us that we may live in his presence.  
Hos 6:1-2

"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'See, your bones are dried up, our hope is gone, we are cut off!' Therefore prophecy to them saying, 'this is what the Sovereign LORD says: See, I will open your graves and bring you up from your graves my people and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am LORD when I open your graves and when I bring you up from your graves my people. I

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<sup>18</sup> "[G]iven the construction of personal identity in the Hebrew Bible, infertility and the loss of children serve as the functional equivalent of death." Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 119.

will put my spirit in you and you will live and I will settle you in your land and then you will know that I LORD spoke and I have done it, declares LORD.”

Ez 37:11-14

The prophetic assertion that God would surely resurrect Israel from exile was a confession not only in God’s *ability* to bring this miracle to pass but, perhaps more importantly at the historical juncture in which the prophets wrote, in God’s *willingness* to do so.

### Three Tales of Resurrection in *1* and *2 Kings*

There are only three stories of bodily resurrection in the Tanakh. They are embedded in the author of *1* and *2 Kings*’ account of the demise of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (1 Kng 17; 2 Kng 4:8-37; 13:20-21). Within the narrative arc of *Kings* the tales had a rhetorical function akin to that of parables. Through a progression of contrasting protagonists, the tales served to establish the feasibility of national reversal – Israel’s resurrection from exile. Set against the impious arrogance of Ahab and Jezebel, these tales of humble peasants addressed four pressing concerns for the exiles: 1. the precision of divine justice and power of personal piety, 2. whether the righteous retained access to justice amidst the chastisement, 3. the ability of God to revive from death and 4. the feasibility of restoration given the recalcitrant nature of the nation. The nameless, never-heard-of-again, commoners so carefully drawn in these stories were positive ciphers onto which the plight of the pious within the national drama could be projected, explored and managed, setting forward a clear prescriptive subtext: God loves and blesses the pious. As prequels to the crisis, these resurrection minuets seem to serve as handholds of hope in a narrative sliding inevitably toward destruction and exile casting a compelling vision for the possibility of life for Israel after death.

The tales, however, were told of individuals resurrected to their *mortal* lives and thus, eventually, a second death. As such, the tendency has been to view these resurrection stories as a different species than that of *resurrection to an eternal fate* at the final judgment which began to surface in the second century B.C.E. Understandably, the *Kings* tales have rarely factored into discussion on the evolution of the concept of *resurrection to an eternal fate* in Judaism.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless these tales offer suggestive theological parallels to Paul’s arguments concerning the rehabilitation of gentiles.<sup>20</sup>

The first tale was of a Sidonian widow, a *gentile* and self-professed sinner (1 Kng 17). She was blessed with two miracles, that of the inexhaustible flour and oil and later the resurrection of her son from the dead. Interestingly, neither the widow nor her son convert or otherwise come to affiliate themselves with Judaism as a result of their experience of these miracles. The widow and her son were saved from death twice *qua* gentiles and gentiles they remained. The continued gentileness of the widow and her son

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<sup>19</sup> With the notable exception of Jon Levenson in *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel* who discusses *2 Kings* 4 at some length.

<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed reading of these tales see Appendix B.

was, of course, far from the point the author of *Kings* was attempting to make,<sup>21</sup> it was, nonetheless, a fact of his narrative that the first act of physical resurrection from the dead was performed on behalf of a gentile who did not subsequently become Jewish. The tale of the Sidonian widow thus offers a precursor, if wholly unintended, to Paul's program of gentile salvation *qua* gentiles.<sup>22</sup>

The second resurrection tale is that of Elisha's encounter with the barren Shunammite woman who is given a son in return for her extreme hospitality, a son who later dies and is resurrected by the prophet (2 Kng 4:8-37). It is a story suffused with allusions to the legend of Abraham's hospitality at Mamre and the *akedah*. It served as a vivid reminder for the original readers of *Kings* of the power inherent in Israel's myth of origin, a story which from its inception was one of reversal. The author of the *Book of Dreams*, and subsequently Paul, employed a similar strategy in casting vision for the redemption of gentleness. Evoking the *myth of gentile origin* as the wayward children of Adam, the author of the *Book of Dreams* and Paul held out the possibility that gentiles might realize their latent potential for righteousness as the creations of a righteous God. In the *Book of Dreams*, the gentiles are transformed by God into white bulls like Adam returning them to their divinely intended righteous state of being. Similarly, Paul likened Christ to a second Adam, transforming gentiles, dead in their estrangement from the one true God, into righteous, living beings.<sup>23</sup>

The third tale of resurrection in *Kings* was that of the accidental resurrection of the unidentified dead man thrown into the grave of Elisha and on contact with the bones of the prophet is resurrected (2 Kng 13:20-21).<sup>24</sup> I suggest the principle of this tale as it functions in the narrative arc of *1* and *2 Kings* was to underscore the fact that God heals those who do not, even cannot, seek their own restoration. The sentiment of this tale bore striking similarity to *Isaiah* 65:1 ff.; a passage which Paul adapted to describe the gentile believers, a people who had not sought their own restoration and, yet, had nevertheless been offered it. *Then Isaiah boldly says said, "I was found by those who did not seek me, I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."* (Rom 10:20).

To be clear Paul never explicitly quoted *Kings*. The theological principles expressed in the resurrection tales of *Kings* had ample cognates in the prophets.<sup>25</sup> In noting these parallels I am not contending that either the author of the *Book of Dreams* or Paul drew on the resurrection tales of *Kings* specifically for their respective programs of gentile rehabilitation. I am rather pointing out these theological assertions found throughout the prophets are found here in *Kings* embedded in *resurrection* tales; the only resurrection tales in the entirety of the Tanakh. These tales demonstrate the existence of

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<sup>21</sup> The tale of the Sidonian widow may function in the narrative of *1* and *2 Kings* as an elaborate *qal va homer* argument; if God was able and willing to bring about reversal in the case of this poor, nameless, gentile widow in return for a lone act of hospitality how much more so repentant, exiled Israel?

<sup>22</sup> While Paul never directly referenced this tale, his protégée the author of *Luke* did (Lk 4:25-26).

<sup>23</sup> *It has also been written that the first man, Adam, became a living soul and the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.* (1Co 15:45).

<sup>24</sup> This passage is, however, ambiguous and can be read to mean that Elisha was resurrected. See Shinan and Zakovitch, *From Gods to God*, 186.

<sup>25</sup> For example; Neh 9:7-8; Isa 30:15, 51:1-3, 64:5; Ez 18:5-9; Mic 7:18-20.

a loose but nevertheless ancient, native connection between a set of *theological assertions*, the idea of *resurrection from the dead*, and *gentiles*; a connection already five centuries old at the point Paul exploited it for his own purposes in *Galatians*.

### Resurrection in the Book of the Watchers

Though the motif of resurrection in the prophets and the books of *Kings* was focused exclusively on the redemption of the nation of Israel, like the first gossamer thread spun into the air by a spider constructing a web, the winds of history blew the suggestion of resurrection onto unexpected points of theological purchase. One such later point of anchor was the *Book of the Watchers* written roughly three centuries after the return of the exiles from Babylon.<sup>26</sup>

Set in the primordial first age and dealing primarily with a transcendental cast of characters, the *Watchers* does not offer the same kind of discreet clues to its exigence tendered by texts dealing more directly with the history of the second age. While theories vary, the *Watchers* can be cogently read in the vein of *Daniel* and *the Book of Dreams* outlined above, as a text similarly troubled by the continued political ascendancy of the gentiles and seeking a supplemental explanation to that offered by the prophets capable of accounting for the experience of the righteous in the centuries following Israel's return from Babylon.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Nickelsburg dates the *Book of the Watchers* at the latest 200 B.C.E. as early as the end of the fourth century (*1 Enoch 1*, 169-171); VanderKam, third century (*Enoch and the Growth*, 111-14); Collins, late third or early second century B.C.E. ("Apocalyptic Technique: Setting and Function in the Book of Watchers," *CBQ* 44 (1982), 98) also David Suter "Fallen Angels, Fallen Priests: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch." *HUCA* 50 (1979) 131); Roger T. Beckwith, c. 250 B.C.E. ("The Earliest Enoch Literature and Its Calendar: Mark of Their Origin, Date and Motivation," *RQ* 10 (1981): 365-72); Milik, end of the third century B.C.E. (*Books of Enoch*, 2).

<sup>27</sup> The lack of historical touch points in the *Book of the Watchers* has left it open to an unusual variety of proposed exigencies. Nickelsburg reads the apocalypse as a commentary on the Diadochi who claimed divine ancestry but were unmasked to the readers of the *Watchers* as really demons, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977), 397. Dimant argues against the interpretation of the Watchers as demons, "1 Enoch 6-11: A Methodological Perspective," (*SBLSP* Missoula: Scholars, 1980) 330. Paul D. Hanson contends the myth of the Watchers was a derivation of Hurrian and Ugaritic myths about rebellion in heaven, the revelation to women a derivation of the Greek myth of Prometheus, in affirmation of God's control despite the evil forces in the world, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977): 202-18, 226-32; also VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth*, 126-28 and Nickelsburg "Scripture in 1 Enoch and 1 Enoch as Scripture," in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (ed. T. Fornberg and D. Helholm; Oslo; Scandinavian, 1995) 136. David Suter argued the myth of the *Watchers* was a polemic against the marriages of priests to inappropriate women, "Fallen Angels, Fallen Priests." Collins challenges the idea that *Book of the Watchers* was addressing a specific historical situation but argues the apocalypse was intended more broadly as a "consolation of the righteous... and conversely, intimidation of sinners" with the general exhortation for readers to avoid sin and practice righteousness, "The Apocalyptic Technique," 100. Michael Stone, "Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century B.C.E.," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 487 and Ronald S. Hendel "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6.1-4." *JBL* 106 (1987): 16 contend the myth of the *Watchers* was concerned with the origin of evil while Dimant "Methodological Perspective," argues it was not a myth about origin of evil but a midrash in Genesis 6 – 9, the sin of the Watchers a transgression of the Noachide commandments and thus it was "a story of Sin and Punishment *par excellence*."

The *Watchers* supplied its readers an ancillary aetiology of evil seemingly aimed at explaining why the experience of the righteous in the later Second Temple period was at odds with the promises of the prophets. Deftly exploiting a gap in the text of *Genesis*, *When humanity began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and took wives for themselves from any whom they chose* (Gen 6:1-2), author the created a supplemental back-story which provided a secondary source of chaos in the created order.<sup>28</sup>

Significantly expanding on this suggestive passage in *Genesis*, the author of the *Watchers* posited that the illicit sexual relations of the Watchers with human women was the portal by which all manner of evils was introduced to the world corrupting the created order. Focused as it was on the struggle of the demigods, the trials and tribulations of mortals, when mentioned at all, were portrayed as the pygmy struggles of lesser beings, the unfortunate fallout of the Watchers' *Machtgelüst*. It was a boldly innovative move developing a critical set of second players which helpfully complicated the terrestrial equation of sin and evil the prophets had so carefully collaborated. The Watchers as aggressors if not rapists in this tale, revealed an ancient, dangerous enemy not only of righteous Israel but of humanity generally.

The enemy in the *Book of the Watchers* was entirely external, the supernatural other. The *Watchers* offered its human readers no actionable intelligence, no means or level of piety by which they might exempt themselves from the destructive fallout of the angels' will to power. The inherent power imbalance between humans and demigods removed any possibility of meaningful human resistance against their victimization. For humanity, the only plausible solution to the threat posed by the Watchers (thus the sole consolation of the narrative) lay with God, who would set all things right at the final judgment. Consequently, the author of the *Watchers*, like the authors of *Daniel* and the *Book of Dreams*, envisioned no final battle in which righteous humanity would war against the evil angels.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> That the *Book of the Watchers* was intended as a supplementary text to Torah seems evident to me from what the author left out of his account. The classic human struggle of the righteous against the wicked is wholly absent in this work; the narrative makes no overt mention of second age and thus no mention of Israel or the Law. The significance of these omissions in addition to the differing aetiology of sin have given rise to the increasingly popular theory that the *Book of the Watchers* was an early anti-Zadokite salvo in the Enochic community's bitter contest against their Torah centered priestly rivals. I find this theory unpersuasive for many of the same reasons I found it unconvincing when applied to the *Book of Dreams* (see the appendix particularly on the point of *judgment*).

<sup>29</sup> While acknowledging the reality of war and violence, both angelic and human, the author makes mention of such conflict only abstractly; that the Watchers taught the art of war to humanity (8:1), that the Watchers and their children battle each other (10:10-12), and that the children of the Watchers delight in the murder of those they love (12:6). Each of these statements is an observation cited as a proof of corruption, evidence gathered against the wicked for the impending judgment. There is, pointedly, no final battle in the *Watchers*. Similar to *Daniel* 7 in which the rider of the clouds approaches the scene of judgment to find there is no battle to be fought, the *Watchers* opens with a vision of God coming as a warrior from his dwelling with his army, his enemies terrorized at his approach, *The Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling, And the eternal God will tread upon the earth, (even) on Mount Sinai, [[And appear from His camp]] And appear in the strength of His might from the heaven of heavens. And all shall be smitten with fear, And the Watchers shall quake, And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth. And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones To execute judgment upon all...* (1 En



The timing of the comprehensive restoration of righteous at issue in the later Second Temple period was contingent in the *Book of the Watchers* on the restoration of the world more broadly. This recontextualization of the problem served as an apologia for the anemic nature of Israel's post-exile rehabilitation; an explanation as to why the repentance and piety of the Jews in the post-exilic centuries had not achieved the renewal and reinstatement foretold by the prophets (a nation which had indeed returned from exile but not regained sovereignty). It was an explanation which validated the efforts of righteous to hold to the covenant while deferring their hope for complete restoration to the final judgment at the end of time.

The author of the *Watchers* took great care to tack his supplementary aetiology of evil to the established biblical narrative the least obtrusive way, by slipping his ahistorical tale into the sacred history of Israel at a single point. While attempting to minimize his intrusion, the gap he exploited, however, had been purposed by the author of *Genesis*. The author/redactors of *Genesis* had included a skeletal impression of the tale of the Watchers in a bid to suppress or at least mitigate the influence<sup>30</sup> of the tale which, at the time of the composition of *Genesis*, had directly challenged the axiomatic principle of human culpability which lies at the heart of Jewish Law; the fundamental belief humans are free agents. Reduced to two verses, the tale Watchers in *Genesis* was nearly unrecognizable.

To insure this two-verse acknowledgement of the tale of the Watchers in *Genesis* was read in conjunction with the aetiology of evil as a result of human agency preferred by the author/redactors, the divine decree to radically truncate human lifespan was placed directly after the abbreviated reference to the Watchers ...*and took wives for themselves from any whom they chose. Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days shall be one hundred twenty years."* (Gen 6:2-3). The proximity of the decree to the tale of the Watchers strongly inferred human culpability in the sin of the *benei 'elohim* thereby sowing the tale theologically to those preceding it (Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel).

The author of the *Watchers* depiction of humanity as the prey of the angels, however, inadvertently recast God's decision to limit human life-span as a result of the human-angel congress as capricious, harshly punishing the victims for the crimes of their abusers. This gap was immediately apparent to the author of the *Watchers* who set about creatively patching it with an expanded theory of the resurrection borrowed from the books of *1* and *2 Kings*. Accordingly, it is revealed to the seer Enoch that, at the final judgment, the victims of the angels would receive back the life which had been denied them.

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1:3-5, 9). As per expectation, God rewards the righteous for their piety with wisdom and condemns the wicked for *transgressing the convent* (1 En 6:6:4 21:6 [Isaac]). There is therefore no pressing need for the righteous to obtain what amounts to a largely symbolic victory on the field of battle and consequently no need for a messiah, a warrior to lead them into battle.

<sup>30</sup> Shinan and Zakovitch, *From Gods to God*, 27.

‘... And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgment, when He shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation forever. It shall then be given to the righteous and holy. Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the Lord, the Eternal King. Then shall they rejoice with joy and be glad, And into the holy place shall they enter; And its fragrance shall be in their bones, And they shall live a long life on earth, Such as thy fathers lived: And in their days shall no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity touch them.’ Then blessed I the God of Glory, the Eternal King, who hath prepared such things for the righteous, and hath created them and promised to give to them.

1 Enoch 25:4-7 [Isaac]

While the reference to the tree forbidden to mortals, clearly evokes the sin of Adam and Eve, the issue being addressed by the resurrection of humankind at the judgment in this passage was the victimization of humanity by the angels not the consequence of humanity’s own folly in the mythic garden. Resurrection in this text was a correction, a restoration precisely calibrated to an exigence created by the reclassification of humanity as victim. Thus humans would be resurrected at the final judgment to *long life on earth such as their fathers lived* (1 En 24:6) and therefore to a second death not to eternal life, the thing lost to them in Eden. It is important to note that the *Watchers* did not envision a complete unwinding of history with its theory of resurrection but the redressing of a specific wrong revealed by the author’s exploitation of the *Genesis* 6:1-2 gap.

The function of resurrection in the *Watchers*, similar to that in the prophets and *Kings*, was principally an act of healing, a reinstatement of life interrupted prematurely by death. The concept of resurrection in the prophets and *1* and *2 Kings* had been complicated, however, by the need to strike a careful balance between the competing claims of the justness of the punishment of exile over and against the portrayal of God’s character as essentially forgiving. Resurrection in the *Watchers*, by contrast, was a fairly straightforward proposition representing the restoration of the victims of the *Watchers*.<sup>31</sup> However, the victims of the *Watchers* was *humanity generally* and thus the redress of the sin of the angels implied resurrection of humanity generally, Jew and gentile.

This raised the corollary issue of theodicy which stocks any discussion of divine justice regarding the immoral who suffer no consequence for their impiety in their lifetime. The author of the *Watchers* adroitly resolved this problem by clarifying that the Lord will discriminate at the final judgment between the righteous and the wicked. The pious will be raised to live out their preordained lifespan in righteous peace. The wicked who reaped some consequence for the evil in their life will be left in their graves, those who had escaped, however, will be resurrected to torment.

And such has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgement has not been executed on them in their lifetime. Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgement and punishment and torment of those who curse for ever and retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them for

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<sup>31</sup> An alternative explanation as to why God truncated human life span to begin with is never offered in the *Book of the Watchers*. A generous reader is left to surmise that the shortening was an act of mercy in that righteous humanity would be left to live out the remainder of their years in peace.

ever. And such a division has been made for the spirits of those who make their suit, who make disclosures concerning their destruction, when they were slain in the days of the sinners. Such has been made for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement nor shall they be raised from thence.'

1 Enoch 22:10-13 [Isaac]

The *Book of the Watchers* is fundamentally separated from *Daniel* and the *Book of Dreams* by the nature of its exigence. The *Watchers*, written roughly half a century or more before the persecutions of Antiochus IV, was an esoteric, ahistorical, metaphysical exploration of the problem evil. Living under the defused menace of gentile subjugation, the author of the *Watchers*' interest in the supplemental transcendental origins of evil gave little cause to discuss Israel particularly much less the gentiles. For the authors of *Daniel* and the *Book of Dreams*, written in the aftermath of the persecutions of Antiochus IV, the continued political ascendancy of the gentiles was an acute crisis, a historical threat demanding resolution. Thus *Watchers* occupied a liminal space between the prophets and shape the idea of resurrection would come to assume in *Daniel* and the *Book of Dreams* – prefiguring but not part of the conversation which followed.

### Resurrection in Daniel

At that time, Michael, the great prince who protects the sons of your people, will appear. It will be a time of trouble unlike anything which has happened from the beginning of the nation came into being until now. At that time, your people will be rescued, all who are found written in the book. The many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake to eternal life and others to eternal shame and contempt.

Dan 12:1-2

The book of *Daniel* was the first canonical witness to a marked shift in the Jewish conception of resurrection unambiguously claiming that some humans would be physically resurrected to an eternal fate at the final judgment.<sup>32</sup> It was an innovation which enjoyed sweeping and sustained popularity all seemingly sparked from this lone, rather spartan reference. Scholars have subsequently puzzled over the origin and motivation for this development which so radically altered the Jewish religious landscape. Though the debate has been both nuanced and protracted it has revolved primarily around the question as to whether the concept of *resurrection to an eternal fate* was the product of foreign influence or whether it was a domestic evolution of the prophetic argument.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “[T]here is virtually unanimous agreement among scholars that Daniel is referring to the actual resurrection of individuals from the dead.” John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress: 1993) 391 also N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 85-128. “This belief should not be confused with the Hellenistic concept of the immortality of the soul, which seems to be espoused in the Wisdom of Solomon (3:1-4:16).” James H. Charlesworth, *Resurrection*, 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Leonard J. Greenspoon counters in this debate, “In discussions of origins for Biblical practices and beliefs (such as resurrection), one often encounters terms such as ‘inner-Israelite development’ and ‘foreign influence/borrowing’ used as if they were clearly understood, mutually exclusive expressions. In our opinion, such a use is too restrictive, even misleading, for when properly defined, these terms can describe complementary, and not opposing aspects of the same process.” Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of

Scholars persuaded of the extrinsic origins of *resurrection to an eternal fate* cite the late date of *Daniel* (c. 150 B.C.E.); the lack of direct precedent in the Tanakh; Israel's prolonged contact with cultures possessing sophisticated concepts of the afterlife; and the author's use of elements of foreign mythology (particularly the image of the rider of the clouds in *Daniel* 7) as the reasons for their suspicion.<sup>34</sup> The Canaanites,<sup>35</sup> Persians<sup>36</sup> and Hellenes<sup>37</sup> have alternately been proposed as sources of this infiltration. Israel's association with these cultures as adversaries, relations, trading partners and overlords lends credibility to the idea that the resurrection was one of many ideas that may have been absorbed through the porous borders of culture in the long centuries of close contact with peoples who had a developed cult of the afterlife. Yet, while "it strains credulity to think" these cultures "exerted no influence at all on Judaism,"<sup>38</sup> the various postulations for the extrinsic origin of the concept of the *resurrection to an eternal fate* are not without significant complications as the evidence for direct dependence on any of these alien sources is largely circumstantial.<sup>39</sup>

Those arguing *resurrection to an eternal fate* was the product of a domestic development cite 1. the considerable prophetic use of the idea of resurrection to describe their hope for Israel's return; 2. the similarity of *Daniel's* description of death as something individuals will be woken from to that of *Job*, *Jeremiah* and *Psalms*;<sup>40</sup> 3. the rich Jewish catalogue of stories of reversal and victory of which life from death was but yet another example.<sup>41</sup> While not denying the acute nature of the exigence of the Antiochian persecutions, its effect on the community of the righteous or its intimate connection to the apocalyptic, those of the internalist school have seen this evolution in the concept of resurrection as primally linked to aspects of ancient Judaism, namely the

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Resurrection," in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson; Ann Arbor: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 248.

<sup>34</sup> For discussion see; F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973); John J. Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula: Scholars, 1977) 95-122; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: University, 1985)

<sup>35</sup> John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 2000) 91-95. also Segal *Life After Death*, 70-199.

<sup>36</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Rutherund Reichard, 1906) 577-594; Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism: Volume 2: Under the Achaemenians* (Lieden: Brill, 1982) 178-208; Jenny Rose, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction* (New York: Mcmillan, 2010) 70-98. On the limited influence of Zoroastrain Robert Martin-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960) 186-195 and Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* (vol 1. trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974) 196.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol 1, 196-202. John Harrison, *Hellenistic Influence Upon the Judaic Concept of the Resurrection of the Body During the Intertestamental Period* (Wheaton: Wheaton, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 215.

<sup>39</sup> Segal, *Life Afeter Death*, 119.

<sup>40</sup> Specifically *Job* 14:12, *Jeremiah* 51:39 and *Psalms* 13:4.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions* (WUNT 207; Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*.

twin tenets that God was a life giving and healing deity who willed the existence and prosperity of Israel.

The question then becomes what would have motivated this innovation within a culture seemingly at peace with the cycle of life and death. Here, both camps agree in principle that *resurrection to an eternal fate* was aimed primarily at addressing the martyrdom of the *maskilim* under Antiochus IV to shore up the resolve of the faithful to endure the *gezerot*.<sup>42</sup> The externalists suppose the martyrdoms of the righteous posed a direct challenge to the core tenant of Jewish theology that *God is just*.<sup>43</sup> The internalists, by contrast, contend that the martyrdoms were only a catalyst prompting the further, more dramatic articulation of an equally core tenant of Judaism that *God is a healer*.<sup>44</sup>

Jon Levenson makes the astute observation that martyrdom was hardly an unknown phenomenon in ancient Judaism, nor had it been perceived to pose a challenge to divine justice at anytime previous to the composition of *Daniel*.

[T]he notion that the pious may experience death (even as a consequence of their piety) and the disobedient may experience life (even as a consequence of their disobedience) was hardly a discovery of Second Temple Judaism. Consider, for example, the narrative of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16), already ancient by the time of the book of Daniel... the indictment of Cain and the vindication of Abel in no way reverse the former's survival or the latter's death. More important, the narrator does not seem bothered by the grave theological problem that modern scholars (and hardly they alone) perceive in this. He feels no need to construct a theodicy with a postmortem vindication. Similar things can be said for a host of other texts, all of them earlier than Job, Qohelet, or Daniel, and none provoked by the deaths of Jewish martyrs in the second century B.C.E.... here, too, the vindication of the LORD's justice and his prophets takes place purely and exclusively on the plane of history (whether the narrated events happened or not): the innocent victims remain dead, and death in disgrace exhausts the punishment on their murderers. Neither victim nor victimizer awakens to a further judgment. Consideration of texts like these impels us to but one conclusion: that the innocent die and the guilty continue to live was indeed recognized as a possibility early on and, more important, was not necessarily thought to impugn God's justice. For God's vindication of the oppressed could be realized after the latter's death, quite without objection (however inadequate this may seem to us)... Cases like those of Abel, the prophets of the LORD in Elijah's time, and Naboth all demonstrate that in pre-exilic narratives the righteous will of God could triumph, justice could be done, and the hapless victim vindicated, all without the felt need for the dead to be compensated.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 182-183.

<sup>43</sup> "In light of the persecution of the Maccabean era, fantasies of deliverance from a fiery furnace could not be taken literally, if they ever were. It was necessary to find a theology that could accept the deaths of the righteous. The explanation was provided by the belief in resurrection..." John J. Collins, *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 14-15

<sup>44</sup> "[I]f life is somehow equivalent to healing, and death to wounding, then why cannot the sole and unchallengeable Deity who heals lesser wounds also heal the graver malady that is death? To put it differently, if the semantic range of 'death' in biblical Hebrew includes both disease and biological cessation, is there any reason – again, strictly within the cultural universe of pre-exilic Israel – to think that God could heal disease but could not reverse death?" Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 172; also Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006. 100-101.

<sup>45</sup> Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 192-193.

Accepting Levenson's line of reasoning, however, we are left with an anemic exigence, a vague aspiration to immortality pushed gently into shape over centuries. Left unanswered are the questions as to why *resurrection to an eternal fate* would have surfaced so late in Jewish tradition only to be casually, almost tangentially dropped in the final chapter of the apocalypse of *Daniel* and why, given resurrection's origin in the hope for national renewal, does the author of *Daniel* imagine it would only apply to the select few.

If our quest is turned, however, from the attempt to identify the extraordinary, extraneous factor(s) capable of motivating this innovation in Jewish theology to look instead for some narrative necessity for postulating a select *resurrection to an eternal fate* new possibilities present themselves, the foremost being that the resurrection in *Daniel* might have, in fact, been chiefly about the wicked and only secondarily about the righteous.

The primary agenda of the author of the apocalypse of *Daniel* was to account for the Antiochan persecutions within the scope of Jewish monotheism. The *gezerot* which specifically targeted the righteous had, in God's sovereignty, been permitted. Of the classic interpretive options before him – the failure of the covenant, failure of God or the failure of the people – the author of *Daniel* saw a fourth option which upheld the character of God and the everlasting nature of the covenant while also honoring the efforts, even deaths of the righteous. The element of this theological puzzle which invited reinterpretation was the Seleucid persecution itself. Disallowing the possibility that the *gezerot* were a divine punishment for a new offence, the author of *Daniel* postulated instead that Israel was still in her time of chastisement which had only begun with the destruction of Jerusalem and exile.

This interpretation the Antiochian persecutions had the distinct advantage of also accounting for the lackluster return of the exiles from Babylon and failure of nation to regain sovereignty. It preserved the prophetic promises of restoration by postponing their fulfillment to the fast approaching day of judgment. Stretching the punitive aspect of the prophetic apologia to encompass the crisis of his own time 400 years later required the reinterpretation of the prophecy of *Jeremiah* that the punishment of Israel for their covenant infractions would be 70 years (Jer 25:11-12 and 29:10).<sup>46</sup>

Through a series of elaborate visions and dialogues with angels, it is revealed to the seer Daniel that Seleucids were the last in a series of foreign oppressors which was Israel's one punishment. Daniel was further given to understand that *Jeremiah's* prophecy of 70 years was to be taken to mean *70 weeks of years*, a reinterpretation which

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<sup>46</sup> "In Jeremiah [the 70 years] refer to the time of the Babylonian empire, and in 2 Chr 36:22-23/Ezra 1 the end of this time coincides with the "first year of Cyrus" and with the beginning of the reconstruction of the temple as predicted in Zech 1:12; 7:5." Rienhard Kratz, "The Vision of Daniel" in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 109. The author of *Daniel* dealt only with the *Jeremiah* directly quoting it in Dan 9:1-2.

sufficiently extended the allotted time of discipline covering the Seleucid period.<sup>47</sup> The contemporary readers of *Daniel* were thus reassured that severe though this chastisement was, it was almost over. The Seleucids were a part of the divine punishment of Israel and as such, Israel was required to endure her discipline in righteousness until the judgment. The final judgment, however, was on the horizon and would reorder the world. The gentile empires that had been given power over Israel would soon be held to account for their abuses and faithful, enduring Israel would receive back her kingdom.

There was, however, a logistical problem with this new scheme: the historical subjugators and oppressors of Israel, all but the Seleucids that is, were long dead. How were they to be held accountable for their over zealous destruction and oppression of Israel in a still future judgment? As in the *Book of the Watchers*, resurrection provided a tidy mechanism by which the problem of time and human mortality might be resolved. A select resurrection of the particularly worthy (established in *1* and *2 Kings*) would make Israel's oppressive suzerains available again for judgment. The author of *Daniel* was not interested in resurrection per se but in facilitating the execution of justice at the final judgment for the empires into whose abusive hands Israel had been delivered to serve out her sentence. Thus, the author claims, only *some will awake...*

However, much as in the *Book of the Watchers*, the solution of one problem created yet another which called for solution in its turn. If the very wicked were to be resurrected in order to face judgment, surely the next question to occur to the author of *Daniel* would have been – to what end? They were, after all, already dead and though not humiliated on the field of battle by Jewish forces, they were at least remembered in infamy. Their kingdoms vanished, their people long dead, there would be no one who knew the suzerains' former glory alive at the judgment to witness their shame and marvel at the vindication of Israel and the glory of the Lord. The moment in history in which their judgment would have been meaningful had long since passed at the point of the composition of *Daniel*. To what end then were these enemies to be resurrected? Here is the necessity for an eternal fate, an eternal punishment, something so horrifying as to be worth deferring to the end of time. Thus the author proclaims only *some will awake... to reproaches, to eternal abhorrence*.

With the logistics of the final judgment of Israel's abusers neatly trussed, the antithesis of this proposal must have presented itself immediately. If it was possible to be so very wicked as to be deserving of eternal punishment, was it possible someone could be righteous enough to be worthy of an eternal reward? The martyred *maskilim*, murdered for holding fast to the covenant, were certainly plausible candidates if anyone was eligible for such commendation. If the martyrs were to be resurrected, what more appropriate reward for their valor than the restoration of their lives to them? Thus the author prophesied that *some will awake to eternal life...*

The postulation that the *maskilim* would be resurrected to eternal life put into play the subject of the first divine punishment of humanity in the garden. Given the *Watchers*

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<sup>47</sup> For a break down of the apocalyptic math involved in this recalculation, see Rienhard Kratz, "The Vision of Daniel" 110.

reversal of the second divine sanction (the truncation of human lifespan for collusion with the Watchers) it is tempting to interpret the author of *Daniel* as making a similar midrashic move prophesying that the decree of death would similarly be reversed.<sup>48</sup> If God was both able and willing to reverse one punitive decree, why not another, that of death itself, for the extremely deserving, the kind of law-abiding loyalists who would have never committed the folly of Adam and Eve in the first place? To further complicate matters, the tidal pull of the New Testament draws the interpretation of the resurrection in *Daniel* inevitably into its current as the evolutionary link to its sweeping annulment of death for any who would be righteous some 200 years later. So sandwiched, it is difficult to fully appreciate how adroitly the author of *Daniel* managed this destabilizing supposition of resurrection to eternal life.

Here is a finely drawn yet critically important point: the resurrection of the *maskilim* at the final judgment was not intended to represent or otherwise signal the upheaval of the existing moral order. The author of *Daniel* believed in the power of his God, the promises of the prophets, that the piety of the righteous would restore Israel and that death had been ordained for humanity. If the resurrection of the martyred *maskilim* had been an issue of justice, surely the appropriate recompense would have been the restoration of their interrupted, mortal lives similar to that envisioned by the author of the *Book of the Watchers*, a resurrection to the rest of their lives and a second death. The resurrection of the martyred *maskilim* to eternal life was an expediency balancing the narrative equation of the extreme punishment of the subjugators of Israel in this period of divinely sanctioned chastisement necessitated by the postponement of the subjugators' reckoning to the final judgment. The rest of humanity, the commonly good and ordinarily evil, would remain in Sheol having lived their lives and reaped their rewards according to the established system of Torah. The resurrection to eternal life was not then an issue of justice for the author of *Daniel*, a debt owed the *maskilim*, but a special dispensation for the worthy, as in *Kings*, a particular gift. The author introduces the idea of resurrection to eternal life only to limit its application without further elaboration.<sup>49</sup>

Thus it may have been by a series of half measures and patches, the idea of resurrection of individuals to an eternal fate may have come to be woven into the Jewish eschatological tapestry; less as a “basis for a new understanding of the cult”<sup>50</sup> (though

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<sup>48</sup> For discussion concerning the dependence of Dan 7 on the *Book of the Watchers* see; H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to Revelation* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Lutterworth, 1947) 29. Hans Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (WUNT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1951) 54-55; D. S. Russell *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 BC – AD 100* (London: SCM Press, 1964) 340-345; T. F. Glasson, “The Son of Man Imagery: Enoch XIV and Daniel VII,” *NTS* 23 (1976): 82-90. Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 255-58; Black, *Book of Enoch*, 151-52. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (TSAJ 63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997) 121-23 also “Daniel and Early Enoch Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 378-85.

<sup>49</sup> The author makes no claims for the martyrs of previous persecutions. It is important to bear in mind that resurrection was clearly not a central theme of his apocalypse as it is mentioned only once, briefly and then only in the last chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Segal, *Life After Death*, 318



arguably that was its outcome) but as a logical facility necessitated not by external pressures, theological embarrassments or revenge fantasies<sup>51</sup> but for the coherence of the narrative solution to the exigence of gentile ascendancy.

### Resurrection in the Book of Dreams

All who had been destroyed and scattered and all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven assembled in that house...

1 En 90:33a

The authors of *Daniel* were concerned not with the prophetic apologia itself but the details of how the schema would unfold. Their answers, though elaborate and innovative, were intended to buttress the prophetic platform in the face of the challenges of later centuries. However, the exploitation of the gap in *Genesis* 6 by the author of the *Watchers* and the reinterpretation of *Jeremiah's* 70 years by the author of *Daniel*, though done with extreme care, inevitably altered the prophetic structure they were trying to preserve. One of the aspects of the prophetic vision which was sacrificed in these reworkings was the moment of Israel's public vindication when the gentiles would at last realize the scope of their error and repent of their evil ways.

The absence of this component in the *Watchers* was in large part due to the narrative's otherworldly focus. Humans received only tangential mention in the apocalypse, *gentiles* as a subcategory of humanity received no direct reference at all. It is the evil angels, the antagonists of the story, who are made to answer at the judgment, regret their wickedness and repent begging Enoch to intercede on their behalf (1 En 13).<sup>52</sup>

*Daniel*, however, was a different story. The postulation that the subjugators of Israel would be brought to justice at the final judgment had necessitated the resurrection of those enemies who had died over the long centuries of the nation's chastisement. Resurrection as a solution to the confines of human mortality effectively took the judgment of this select group out of time, certainly out of the natural human lifespan but also out of the natural cycle of human empire. The vast kingdoms these enemies had once ruled (excepting the Seleucids) were long gone, their populations consigned to Sheol. There was no one left of these gentile kingdoms to cower in fear, to repent of their wickedness and to beg for their lives upon witnessing the humiliation and condemnation of their kings. Constrained by this resolution, the author of *Daniel* simply left this aspect of the prophetic vision aside.

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<sup>51</sup> "The vision predicts that, after the present arrogant dominion has had its short day of dominance, God will intervene and destroy the hateful oppressors who also arrogantly oppose God's will. From this point of view, the apocalypticist is prophesying revenge against the hated oppressors just as surely as he is predicting the promised remedy for its injustice. As opposed to prophecy, repentance can avert any of God's threats, in this vision, the predicted end will come, regardless of human behavior. No one expects Antiochus to repent and become a believer in God. His fate is sealed." Alan Segal *Life After Death*, 189.

<sup>52</sup> While the author of the *Watchers* did not sketch a similar scene of gentile remorse and repentance on earth mirroring that of the Watchers in the heavens, there was nothing in the apocalypse which precluded the expectation that the surviving gentiles would be brought to a similar pass as predicted by the prophets when the world was at last set right.

In the *Book of Dreams*, by contrast, the judgment seat of God is set up on the battle field interrupting a war in progress. The final judgment in this text was thus thrust into human history, part and parcel of terrestrial time. The judgment commences and those directly implicated in the abuse of the sheep, human and angelic, are condemned. Plenty of gentiles remain, then, to cower in awe of God and fear of the Jews. *And I saw the sheep that remained. And all the animals that were upon the earth and all the birds of heaven were falling and bowing down to those sheep and beseeching them and obeying them in every word.* (1 En 90:30).

The few prophets who had bothered to picture gentiles in the eschaton at all had left the details of their status, level of integration and future role post-judgment extremely vague. Isaiah who had the most to say on the subject envisioned that the surviving gentiles would stream to Jerusalem bringing with them the Jews exiled among them (Isa 66:19-21); that they would seek to know God, to learn his ways and would look to the Jews to teach them (Isa 2:2-4; also Mic 4:1-3; Zech 8:22-23) and that Jerusalem would become a *house of prayer for all peoples*. (Isa 56:7). Yet, it is important to note, even in Isaiah's utopian vision, the eschatological benefit accrued to the gentiles was never the point. The *metanoia* of the gentiles was rather the blandishment of conversion, the satisfaction of the enemies' penitent realization of the scope of their error, a testimony to and witness of the greatness of God and the vindication of Israel. As the gentiles who survived the winnowing of the judgment were only second-order participants in the drama of redemption, the details of their fate in the world-to-come had accordingly held little interest for the prophets.<sup>53</sup> This reductive categorization of gentiles came under increasing strain, however, in the centuries following the return of the exiles which saw not only continued existence of the gentiles but their absolute political dominance despite the earnest piety, even martyrdom, of many of the faithful.

In an attempt to rationalize this state of affairs, the author of the *Book of Dreams* broke with the sentiment of *Daniel* putting forward the radical hypothesis that gentiles must possess value to God independent of Israel. Having then retained the classical prophetic element of Israel's vindication before the gentiles and further postulating that gentiles were themselves salvageable, the author of the *Book of Dreams* naturally retained Isaiah's utopian vision that the gentiles would stream to Jerusalem with the returning Jews in anticipation of their healing. Accordingly, he tucked the pilgrimage of the gentiles in with the return of the scattered and the resurrection of the dead, *all who*

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<sup>53</sup> The author of the *Book of Dreams* was hardly alone, however, in his expectation that there would be some manner of reconciliation of the gentiles with redeemed Israel. However, this utopian vision of enlightened gentiles made docile by the revelation of God's glory and the vindication of Israel must be balanced against the lengthy oracles of doom which predict nothing but the destruction of the gentiles (Jer 30-31; Ezek 17, 34; Zeph 2). So while there was biblical precedent for the *Book of Dreams*' post-judgment benevolence, in the collective work of the prophets, the question of the gentiles in the world to come was considerably more ambiguous. This ambiguity is due to the fact that the fate of the gentiles was not a point of overwhelming interest for the prophets. The gentiles were, after all, only tools God used in the chastisement of his people. As such, there was no obligation owed the gentiles, no requirement that they be redeemed or otherwise recycled. Any benefit they were expected to receive in the age to come was derived from the excess, the overflow of the blessing poured out on Israel.

*had been destroyed and scattered and all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven assembled in that house...* (1 En 90:33a).

This singular, passing reference in 1 En 90:33 is all that is said about the resurrection of the dead in the *Book of Dreams*. It reveals nothing concerning the type of resurrection envisioned (to an extended mortal life as in the *Watchers* or eternal life as in *Daniel*) or even who would be resurrected (those martyred by Antiochus or the righteous more generally). What is clear from its post-judgment placement is that the resurrection of the dead, commensurate with the return of the expatriates and gentiles, was an act of national healing in this text. The reclamation of the lost – the *dead*, the *dispersed* and the *gentiles* – were not merely three *events* of the eschaton but three *commensurate aspects* of the restoration itself enabling the healing of Israel. Thus the *Book of Dreams* is aligned with the sentiment, if not the particulars, of the prophets (who had not envisioned the resurrection of individuals from the dead but did use the motif of resurrection to depict the healing and restoration of the nation) and is differentiated from that of the *Watchers* (where resurrection was a correction of an injustice) and *Daniel* (where it served to facilitate the final judgment of Israel's oppressors).

The author's ordering of these classes of people in 1 En 90:33 starkly underscores the general conviction in Second Temple Judaism that these categories of people were of a kind; in some sense they were all dead or as good as dead.<sup>54</sup> The *dead*, the *dispersed* and the *gentiles* were all in a collective state of separation from Jerusalem and thus from the Temple and access to God, existing as shades, cut off from the source of life. Their journey to Jerusalem anticipated the end to their estrangement from the community of the righteous and the Temple and thus, to varying degrees, their alienation from God and, in both a literal and metaphorical sense, from life itself. While their return certainly, even primarily, represented the healing of the nation, these were categories of people who themselves were in need of healing and a miracle was equally required for all three. For the *dead*, the miracle was resurrection, for the *scattered*, it was the destruction of the oppressive gentile empire in the final judgment and for the *gentiles*, the miracle was transformation. For all, it was a great reversal and a type of resurrection and regeneration, a coming into life.

#### The Phantom *Book of Dreams* School – a Theory

For the gentiles to be acceptable to God *as gentiles* in the age to come, the *Book*

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<sup>54</sup> “[T]he ultimate foundation for a truly prosperous life is to be found in obedience to and fellowship with Yahweh, i.e. the ‘Living God’ (יְהוָה). . . In short, the normal Israelite view, which dominates the conception of man in the Old Testament, is that to be in sickness of body of weakness of circumstance is to experience the disintegrating power of death, and to be brought by Yahweh to the gates of Sheol; but to enjoy good health and material prosperity is to be allowed to walk with Him in fullness of life.” Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 71. 98; 108-109; also Greenspoon, “When all aspects of man’s being are functioning well, then there is a force or vitality that the Hebrews summed up through the word ‘life.’ Thus understood, ‘life’ has a positive connotation which extends far beyond the mere function of certain organs of the body. . . Life then is fullness, activity, power. Anything that would siphon off this active, vital power so the ‘soul,’ man’s entire being, cannot function to its fullest capacities leads away from life.” Greenspoon, “The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection,” 250.

*of Dreams* theorized that at some future point, the gentiles would need to be purged of their degeneracy. Unable to imagine how this might be brought about short of their conversion, the author concluded that the ethical transformation of the gentiles would be nothing short of a miracle. The idea of the redemption of gentileness as a category of being had no precedent in Jewish eschatology, thus the event of the transformation of the gentiles had no natural place in the traditional ordering of the eschaton. Thus he placed it at the tail end of the apocalypse proper in 1 En 90:38 as the last thing God would magically do in this final righting of the world.

This placement, however, separated the transformation of the gentiles from their earlier pilgrimage to Jerusalem *and incorporation into the new eschatological Temple populated by righteous Israel* by four critical verses. In most narratives, four lines might not amount to much but in the compendious *Book of Dreams* these four verses cover considerable ground making it impossible to directly correlate or otherwise conflate the arrival and incorporation of the gentiles with their transformation. Thus, as presented in the *Book of Dreams*, the transformation of the unregenerated gentiles was not a condition of their reception into the Temple or the community of the righteous.

It is unlikely the author of the *Book of Dreams* intended some grand theological statement by this ordering of events. If the lament of Enoch which follows the conclusion of the apocalypse can be read as voicing the author's own frustration over what he considered the only viable, but nonetheless extremely unpalatable, explanation for the longevity of gentile dominion, he was likely too preoccupied with the revolutionary nature of the assertion itself to have been particularly struck by the momentary theological quandary this order of events created. However, when read in the intervening centuries by those no longer reeling from the shock of the theory that God might value gentiles *qua* gentiles, such a gap may have presented itself as a far more pressing problem. For a Pharisee like Paul, this ordering of the eschaton would have posed an inherent theological problem as it would have been difficult to read the integration of the gentiles into the eschatological community of the righteous in the precincts of the remade Temple prior to their transformation into righteous beings themselves as anything but the mixing of holy and profane and thus the defilement of all which had just been made right.

The solution to this predicament was fairly straight forward; the eschatological order of events as presented in the *Book of Dreams* required only a minor adjustment. To avert the threat of contamination, the transformation of the gentiles needed to be shifted to take place at some point prior to their eschatological entry into Jerusalem. Arranging the transformation of the gentiles as a precursor to the final judgment avoided the risk of defilement by a wide margin. This is, in fact, exactly what we see in Paul, the eschatological elements of the *Book of Dreams* are present, but the order has been

adjusted so that the transformation of the gentiles is the first thing which happens.<sup>55</sup>

It is the transformation of the gentiles in the waters of baptism into righteous beings which enabled their incorporation into the community of the righteous, an argument Paul was at some pains to support in *Galatians*. It is interesting to note, then, that on the much discussed point of *Jewish – baptized gentile consortion* in the early church, Paul may well have been greatly misunderstood. When set against the Jamesian conversionists (those who preached the circumcision of the converts in Galatia), I concede, Paul looks the part of a radical integrationist. But when set against the *Book of Dreams*, however, with its unqualified mixing of redeemed Jews and unregenerate gentiles in the most holy site on earth, Paul, by adopting the reorganizing eschatological order, appears rather orthodox.

This is not to argue, however, that the reordering of the eschatological transformation of the gentiles was Paul's invention. In fact, I rather doubt it could have been, as he expended no effort to explain or justify the shift in his letters to people who would have greatly benefited from such a clarification but rather simply assumes the logic of it. As the composition of the *Book of Dreams* predates that of the Epistles by nearly 200 years, it is further unlikely Paul could have been the first person to recognize the peril inherent in the eschatological ordering of the apocalypse. Though I can offer no textual proof, it is highly probable that the shift of the transformation to anticipate the final judgment had already, even long since, taken place in this eschatological school of thought.

The reorganization of the eschaton presented in the *Book of Dreams* corrected the problem of the pending defilement of newly redeemed Israel by the inclusion of the reprobate gentiles, but, as in all such efforts to mend a gap in another author's work, it created a lacuna of its own. The transformation of the gentiles in the *Book of Dreams* had been a divine act, one of the many miracles God would perform in the execution of the final judgment along with rebuilding the Temple, resurrecting the dead and the ingathering of those in exile. Antedating the transformation of the gentiles to avoid contamination effectively removed it from the scope of God's direct intervention in the final judgment. The transformation became a precursor to but not a part of the final, miraculous righting of the world in this reordered eschaton. So removed from the scope of projected eschatological miracles, the reclamation of the gentiles needed an alternative agency of transformation.

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*Book of Dreams*

		<u>Paul</u>	
Judgment of the wicked	90:20-27	Transformation	Gal 3:27-29
Ingathering	90:33	Jews & gentiles worship together	Gal 2
Jews & gentiles worship together	90:31-36	Judgment of the wicked	2 Cor 5:10
Peace	90:34-37	Ingathering	1 Thes 4:15-18
transformation	90:37-38	Peace	Rom 9-11

Judaism, of course, had already a means for the transforming gentiles in conversion. Conversion to Judaism in the late Second Temple period seems to have comprised three aspects; ablution, sacrifice and, for men, circumcision. Having ritually renounced their essential natures, converts were raised out of the waters of the *mikvah* as Jews, ritually cleansed of their gentleness.<sup>56</sup> They had only to make a sacrifice to their new God as which was both their right and obligation as a member of the covenant community and to score their decision in their flesh, marking themselves the children of Abraham. The school formed around the thesis of the *Book of Dreams* did not, then, need to look far for an effective, time-tested method by which gentile transformation might be accomplished; the demonstrably powerful tools of conversion lay ready at hand.

#### Excursus:

#### Evidence For and Against Baptism as a Ritual of Conversion to Judaism in the Late Second Temple Period

The evidence that Jews practiced ablution in the Late Second Temple Period is substantial. “Excavations have revealed hundreds of mikvaoth in Israel, over 150 from the first century in Jerusalem alone...”<sup>57</sup> The *Sibylline Oracles* state, “Miserable mortals, change these things... murder and outrages and wash [λούσασθε] your whole bodies in ever flowing rivers. Stretch out your hands to the sky and ask forgiveness for your previous deeds and make propitiation for bitter impiety... God will grant repentance and will not destroy...” (4.162-170 [Collins]). Philo wrote, “Men are sanctified when washed with water, while the water itself (is sanctified) by the divine foot.” (*QG* 4.5 [Marcus]) The Mishnah records, “According to the School of Shammai they may immerse themselves in a rain stream, and the School of Hillel say: that they may not do so. The School of Shammai say: if a man became a proselyte on the day before Passover, he may immerse himself and consume his Passover-offering in the evening. And the School of Hillel say: He that separates himself from his uncircumcision is one that separates himself from the grave.” (*m. Ed.* 5.2 [Danby] also *m. Pes.* 8.8).<sup>58</sup>

Rituals of ablution marked the transition of individuals from one state/station of being to another. The *Life of Adam and Eve* records that Adam was washed as a condition of his admittance into paradise, “One of the six-winged seraphim came and carried Adam off to the Lake of Acheron and washed [ἀπέλουσεν] him three times in the presence of God” (37.3 [Johnson]). The author of the *Testament of Levi* stated Levi underwent ritual ablution administered by angels in preparation to becoming a priest, “Then I washed myself in living water [ἐλουσάμην] and made my ways straight,” (*T. Levi* 8.5 [Kee]). In describing the Essenes, Josephus noted that an individual who wished to join the sect after proving himself able to live according to

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Macy Finn, *From Death to Rebirth: Ritual Conversion in Antiquity* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1997) 132-33.

<sup>57</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 86.

<sup>58</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen has argued, however, this rabbinical debate was not about proselyte conversion, see; “Is ‘Proselyte Baptism’ Mentioned in the Mishnah? The Interpretation of *m. Pesahim* 8.8 (= *m. Eduyyoth* 5.2),” in *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder* (eds. John C. Reeves and John Kampen; Sheffield: ISOT Press, 1994) 278-292, also Cohen, *From Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 44.

their way of life and standard of conduct was “made partaker of the waters of purification” and after two more years of steadfast commitment was then admitted to their society (*War* 2.8.7 [Whiston]).<sup>59</sup> For the Essenes, ritual ablutions marked the movement of an individual from the common, corrupt Jewish world into the separatist pietism of the community. The *Community Rule*, makes clear that the efficacy of baptism lay in the repentant heart of the supplicant, “He who has not the strength to convert his life shall not be counted with the upright... he will not become clean by acts of atonement, nor shall he be made holy by sea or river, nor shall he be purified by all the waters of ablution... by the compliance of his soul with all the laws of God his flesh is cleansed by being sprinkled with cleansing waters and be made holy with the waters of repentance.” (1QS iii.1-9 [Martínez and Tigchelaar]). While neither the initiation of new members to the Qumran community nor Adam’s transfer to paradise were intended as models for gentile conversion, the use and understanding of baptism in the transfer and transformation of individuals (particularly in the case of Qumran, a sect which seems to have considered outsiders, Jew and gentile alike, profane) suggest parallels for how baptism may have been used and understood in other less puritan communities open to proselytes, a people profane by definition.

As ablution was prerequisite for *Jews* to offer Temple sacrifice (Ex 30:20; *T. Levi* 9.11, *Jub* 21.16) it simply strains credulity to imagine there was no ritual ablution necessary for *gentile* converts to undergo in order to make their sacrifice. While the New Testament offers the first unambiguous reference to baptism as a ritual of gentile conversion, the New Testament authors adopt a severely assumed manner as regards the ritual; as though their readership had intimate previous knowledge of the baptism, its significance and practice as to be able to appreciate the nuanced application of the rite within the nascent Christian community. This had led many to conclude that rather than inventing baptism as an initiatory rite, the early Christians simply borrowed it from Judaism, possibly adapting it from the developed scheme of ceremonial cleansing legislation outline in Levitical law.<sup>60</sup>

The major challenges to the inference that baptism must have been a Jewish ritual of conversion antedating the New Testament have been the three Late Second Temple Period tales of gentile conversion; Achior (*Jdt* 14:10), Izates (*Jos. Ant.* 20.2) and Aseneth (*Jos. Asen.*) none of which mentions the gentile convert undergoing a traditional ablution rite as a condition of their conversion (i.e. immersion; *m. Miqw* 8.5; 9.1-4). It is instructive to note here, however, that water ablution was also a prevalent, widely attested practice in the gentile cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. Walter Burkert notes, “[p]urification rituals [were] involved in all intercourse with the sacred and in all forms of initiation... the most widespread means of purification is water and in the Greek purification rituals contact with water was fundamental.”<sup>61</sup> Anders Petersen remarks, “[t]he underlying *raison d’être* [was], of course, that one cannot approach the sacred things unless one is in a pure state of

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<sup>59</sup> Casey D. Elledge, *Life After Death in Early Judaism: The Evidence of Josephus* (WUNT 208; Mohr Siebeck, 2006)

<sup>60</sup> A. Y. Collins, “The Origin of Christian Baptism,” *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989): 28-46.

<sup>61</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, (trans. John Raffan; Cambridge: Harvard, 1985) 76. - brought to my attention by A. K. Petersen in “Rituals of Purification”.

being.”<sup>62</sup> As the tales of Achior and Izates were of gentile *men* converting to *Judaism*, their tales of conversion naturally focused on their *circumcision* as the dramatic mark of Jewish distinction and not on the culturally commonplace ritual of ablution. It is likely that the ancient original audiences of these texts would have inferred some sort of ablution ritual must have taken place as a matter of course. Aseneth, however, was a woman and as such was not eligible to be circumcised according to the Jewish custom. As the context of her story predated the building of the Temple, Temple sacrifice could not serve as a demonstration of her conversion either. Ritual ablution would seem then to have offered the author the singular mode by which he might demonstrate Aseneth’s conversion, yet, as commentators commonly note, overt mention of the rite is absent in this tale. It is, nevertheless, interesting Aseneth is told by an angel to wash her hands and face with “living water” (14:12). The command to use *living water* often cited in relation to ritual ablution. When Aseneth received the command from the angel to wash in living water she was covered in ash having prostrated herself on an ash pile she had earlier hauled to her room that she might mourn and repent (14:3). Her washing evokes the creation myth and God’s creation of humanity from the dust and represents her transfer from the dust of the grave to life in fellowship with God. This is reflected in Joseph’s prayer for Aseneth,

Lord God of my father Israel the Most High, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all (things) and called (them) from the darkness to the light, and from the error to the truth, and from death to life (καί ἀπο θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν); you, Lord, bless this virgin, and renew her by your spirit, and form her anew by your hidden hand, and make her alive again by your life (καὶ ἀναζωοποιήσου τῆ ζωῆς σου) and let her drink your cup of blessing, and number her among your people that you have chosen before all (things) came into being, and let her enter your rest which you have prepared for your chosen ones, and live in your eternal life for ever (and) ever.

*Jos. Asen.* 8:10-11 [Burchard]

While not a baptism proper, Aseneth’s washing at the command of the angel in association with her repentance certainly bears striking similarity to the symbolism and practice of baptism expounded upon in the New Testament.<sup>63</sup>

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Of course the goal of conversion was to transform bad *gentiles* into righteous *Jews*. The eschatological vision of the *Book of Dreams* had called for the transformation

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<sup>62</sup> Anders Klostergaard Petersen “Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation,” in *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (eds. David Hellholm et.al.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) 7.

<sup>63</sup> For further discussion see; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1955) 1:40; Randall D. Chesnutt, *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995) 160; Joseph H. Crehan, *Early Christian Baptism and the Creed: A Study in Ante-Nicene Theology* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1950) 2-4; Louis Finkelstein, “The Institution of Baptism for Proselyties,” *JBL* 52 (1933) 203-11; Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1985) 29; John Pryke, “The Sacraments of Holy Communion in the Light of Ritual Washings and Sacred Meals at Qumran,” *RevQ* 5 (1966):337-352; J. A. T. Robinson, “The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community” *HTR* 50 (1957): 175-92; T. M. Taylor, “The Beginnings of Jewish Proselyte Baptism,” *NTS* 2 (1956) 193-98; Barbara E. Thiering, “*Inner and Outer Cleansing at Qumran as Background to New Testament Baptism*,” *NTS* 26 (1980): 266-277, also “Qumran Initiation and New Testament Baptisms,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 615-31.



of bad *gentiles* into righteous *gentiles*. Righteousness, however, was not a vague concept in ancient Judaism. To be righteous was to be in covenant, to follow Torah, *to be Jewish*. For gentiles to foreswear their essential nature, submit to baptism and follow Torah yet remain gentile, something in the conversion process had to be withheld to prevent their full, indistinguishable identification as Jews. The *khukim* were the obvious solution. They were historically significant, deeply meaningful, widely practiced among Jews thus capable of acting metonymically for the biological descendants of Abraham. At the same time the *khukim* were not directly implicated in the governing moral behavior and therefore auxiliary to the ethical, moral transformation of gentiles. By denying the gentiles the *khukim*, gentile believers could be brought within a hair's breadth of conversion; they could be essentially righteous without being actually Jewish. Thus, by a largely academic distinction, the newly precious gentile identity could be preserved thereby creating the contingent of righteous gentiles the author of the *Book of Dreams* had reasoned would be the product of, and therein the justification for, the troubled history of the Second Temple period.<sup>64</sup>

In denying the gentile proselytes the *khukim*, however, conversion had lost its traditional purpose. Baptism, the ritual of turning and transformation, needed to be redefined in terms of the eschatological vision of the *Book of Dreams*. The question was how?

The reordering of the transformation of the gentiles as a precursor of the final judgment had fundamentally altered the relation of these two events. The gentiles slotted for transformation were no longer anticipated to be saved *through* the final judgment but *from* it; they were brands to be plucked from the fire.<sup>65</sup> Having arrived at this pass through a series of logical half steps, this school of eschatology was in wholly uncharted territory. It is often the case, however, that in their greatest moment of innovation those on the far ends of shaky theological limbs reach instinctively for solid surety of tradition as a means of stabilizing their most radical assertions.<sup>66</sup> So it was the case with this school. Meeting the unprecedented challenge of saving gentiles *qua* gentiles from the future judgment they reached back for the only viable candidate within Jewish tradition with the résumé to deal with gentiles as gentiles – the messiah.

There was a clear logic in this, after all the gentiles had been the historic prerogative of the messiah. Granted the role of the messiah traditionally had been to destroy gentiles but *messiahs* were in essence catalysts of reversal, a means of bring about the justice of God for the righteous. As the assemblage of a quorum of righteous

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<sup>64</sup> This is the point at which I imagine an interlocutor, based on *Acts 15*, might raise the issue of the *Sheva mitzvot B'nei Noach*, commandments binding on all the children of Noah, which decree the establishment and maintenance of law courts and forbid idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, sexual immorality, eating the flesh of a still living animal. The question of an ethical code for gentiles, however, was clearly not the issue in *Galatians* but the *identity* of the baptized. Understanding themselves to have converted to Judaism their uncircumcision placed them in a dangerous limbo; neither gentile nor wholly Jew.

<sup>65</sup> This is the austere judgment of *Daniel*; there are no second chances or miraculous transformations.

<sup>66</sup> As with *Job* whose author directly challenged Deuteronomistic theology theorizing that righteous people may indeed suffer despite their piety only to return to an orthodox theological fold as Job is blessed twice over for his trouble in the conclusion of the book.

gentiles had become a necessary precursor to the final judgment, it may not have posed the theoretical leap often imagined for the students of this school to have supposed a messiah might be involved in bringing the transformation of gentiles about in order to facilitate the advent of the final judgment and thereby the damnation of the wicked and peace for the righteous.

However, the tack away from the final eschatological battle toward a protracted War of Piety in the Later Second Temple period had had the predictable, if not purposed, consequence of making the conventional role of a messiah irrelevant. The goal of the righteous had shifted from vindication on the battle field enabled by their piety to acquittal before the judgment seat of God *on account of* their piety. It was a scenario for which a clear understanding of the Law was required, not a messiah. Accordingly, none of the texts discussed above, the *Book of the Watchers*, *Daniel*, the *Book of Dreams*, envisioned a traditional warrior messiah tasked with resolving the external threat of the gentiles. The resolution of the gentile menace had been deferred to the final judgment. Reviving the messiah in the context of the War of Piety required a refocusing, a tailoring of the messianic mission in terms of the eschatological agenda outlined by the *Book of Dreams*.

The way had been paved for this adaptation by the treatment of Judas Maccabeus in *1* and *2 Maccabees*. Judas, a warrior par excellence, successfully prosecuted a conventional, physical war. He was portrayed in these texts as the divinely sanctioned martial defender of the righteous, the σῶζων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ (1 Mac 9:21). His great triumph, however, was interpreted within a theological landscape which had begun to look in earnest to the final judgment, understanding the righteous to be engaged primarily in an eschatological War of Piety. In this revised theater of war, the authors of *1* and *2 Maccabees* presented their readers a hybrid hero; a conventional messiah whose success was ascribed not to his tactical military genius but entirely to his piety (2 Mac 15:21).<sup>67</sup>

Arguably though, piety had always been at the heart of prophetic interpretations of Israel's conflict with the nations. The emphasis, however, had been on the peoples' deficit of piety as the root cause of conflict and oppression. The messiahs of the prophetic world were instruments of reversal, tools to effect the redemption of a *repentant* Israel. The particular piety of a given messiah, though perhaps an ideal, was comparatively a non-issue. Samson, Saul, David, all men of considerable moral failing yet were wielded to devastating messianic effect by God in the rescue of his people. Cyrus did not even have distinction of being an immoral Jew and yet the author of *Second Isaiah* makes clear he was used by God, unbeknownst to him, to deliver Israel. The interpretation of the piety of Judas Maccabee as *essential* to the messianic success of his mission had the effect of sublimating all complementary messianic qualifications and considerations to itself. It was this interpretation – that piety was the only thing which mattered – on which the concept of messiah in the late Second Temple period pivoted,

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<sup>67</sup> Piety in *1* and *2 Maccabees* was power. It was the piety of the martyrs which had turned the wrath of God from Israel's apostasy against the Seleucids, wrath embodied in Judas and his army. It was a weapon to be harnessed, a means of ensuring God's favor and thus victory over the enemy (e.g. 1 Mac 7:40-50; 11:67-74; 2 Mac 8:2-4; 12:38-42).

evolving to meet the exigencies of the War of Piety. Cast in this revised mold, a messiah of the War of Piety needed to first lead the moral charge, interpret scripture, calling the devout to ever greater acts of righteousness and exhibiting himself the utmost moral rectitude even to the point of martyrdom (2 Mac 15:7-9).

The author of *1 Maccabees* depicted the death of Judas on the battlefield of Elasa as that of a martyr. Facing overwhelming enemy forces, two thirds of his army having deserted him, Judas refused to flee. Fully aware of the danger and having the opportunity to escape he instead accepted his fate, “*If our time has come, let us die bravely for our kindred...*” (1 Mac 9). Judas’ death proved a catalyst for the Jewish resurgence under his brother Jonathan which finally succeeded in driving the Seleucids out. His martyrdom was thereby linked to the martyrs proceeding him in consequence. As the deaths of the martyrs prior to the outbreak of the war were efficacious in turning the wrath of God which had resulted in messianic commission of Judas so Judas’ own martyrdom was efficacious ultimately for a decisive victory over the Seleucids and thus the salvation of Israel.

Martyrdom was the ultimate expression of piety; across lines of class and gender nothing greater could be asked and nothing greater offered. It was a catalyst of reversal in its own right, the ability to draw God’s mercy to intercede for the benefit of the community of the righteous.<sup>68</sup> For all the debate over how the concept of the messiah came to be linked with martyrdom in the first century, it has largely escaped comment that the reintegration of the concept of the messiah into the framework of a War of Piety (a war in which piety was the only effective weapon and the goal of which was acquittal before the throne of God on the day of judgment) invited such a marriage of identities – that a martyred messiah was, in fact, particularly suited to a War of Piety.

Given the extreme paring back of messianic qualifications in *1* and *2 Maccabees* to a single attribute – *piety* – it is hardly surprising that two centuries later messianic rumors would have come to swirl around a man like Jesus, an intensely pious carpenter turned itinerant preacher working miracles of healing in the country. The gospels attest that Jesus was marked early in his career as a messianic contender. The miracles he performed were a clear indication of divine favor. It was likely, then, not much of a stretch for Jesus’ first century Jewish followers to have supposed that if God was willing to heal the infirmities of common individuals in the hills of Galilee that he might be on the verge of healing other aspects of the collective Jewish experience as well such as the cancer of gentile oppression. It was this identification as a possible *messiah*, so laden with military and revolutionary connotations, which eventually ran Jesus afoul of the Jerusalem authorities who contrived to have him executed on charges of sedition.

All messianic hopes surrounding Jesus abruptly evaporated in the face of his execution.<sup>69</sup> It was not particularly an uncommon tale; a righteous prophet meets a fateful end at the hands of wicked men. Had Jesus remained dead, his disheartened

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<sup>68</sup> Perhaps nowhere more exemplified than by the figure of Taxo and his seven sons in *Testament of Moses* 9.

<sup>69</sup> *But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel* (Lk 24:21).

followers who had thought he would restore Israel would likely have interpreted his death as that of a martyr. As the death of the pious had proven the catalyst for reversal in the time of the Maccabean Revolt, given enough time the disciples may have come to hold a similar hope that Jesus' martyrdom might similarly prove efficacious in their own time. Certainly they would have expected Jesus to receive the martyr's reward and be resurrected at the final judgment. Jesus' resurrection three days after his execution, according to the gospels, independently of the martyrs,<sup>70</sup> ahead of the final judgment, suddenly and dramatically revived his followers' messianic hopes concerning him.<sup>71</sup>

The military application of a newly undead messiah was readily apparent to his pious followers. The reflexive, conditioned assumption among the disciples was to imagine the resurrected Jesus would march against Rome exacting vengeance or, at the least, expel the Romans and their collaborators from Palestine. The author of the book of *Acts* voiced this assumption as the disciples ask the resurrected Jesus, *Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?* (Act 1:6). The disciples were quickly dissuaded of this course and instead commissioned to preach to the nations, baptizing those willing to listen and teaching them to live according to the teachings and example of Jesus (Mt 28:17-20 Mk 16:15-16 Lk 24:47 Jn 20:21).

This peaceful, merciful assignment to the gentile enemy seems on the surface wholly un-messianic. However, the school which had formed around the eschatological vision of the *Book of Dreams*, disillusioned with the fateful cycle of the second age saw the only hope for the definitive resolution of the problem of the gentiles in the final judgment. The rise and rapid fall of the Hasmoneans kingdom likely only served to underscore the fact that any victorious campaign a given messiah might prosecute against an exiting gentile power could at most grant a brief respite, a few precious decades of freedom from oppression until another empire rose in its place to again threaten Israel. The final judgment promised an end to this destructive cycle.

However, the final judgment, the cure for all which ailed the righteous, had been delayed by several cruel centuries. In rationalizing this delay, the author of the *Book of Dreams* had entertained the theory that the gentiles may have an independent value to God and had reluctantly concluded that God must be intent on redeeming something of gentleness as a category of being. Hardly able to imagine how this might be brought to pass, the author of the *Book of Dreams* had tacked the transformation of the gentiles onto the tail end of the eschaton. This, though, proved a problematic ordering of events as it had unredeemed gentiles entering the eschatological Temple and worshipping with sanctified Israel prior to their own transformation into righteous beings. The adherents of the *Book of Dreams* School had likely resolved this problem by reordering the eschaton so that the transformation of the gentiles would take place prior to the final judgment thereby avoiding the defilement issue. No longer the prerogative of the eschaton, the reordering of the transformation to precede the judgment had thrust the transformation of

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<sup>70</sup> With the possible exception of Mt 27:52-53, *And the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection, they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.*

<sup>71</sup> The reflexive assumption among his disciples was that the resurrected Jesus would mount a campaign to restore Israel. According to the book of *Acts*, they are quickly disavowed of this idea by the ascension.

the gentiles solidly back into the account of the second age. To facilitate the advent of the final judgment, and therein the consummate rescue and redemption of righteous Israel, the newly accrued obligation to the ledger of the second age had first to be cleared. It is thus likely that adherents of this eschatological school actively anticipated a miracle which could/would facilitate gentile transformation and a messianic figure to perform it ahead of the final judgment.

Here it is worth noting that the needs of the (proposed) school of the *Book of Dreams* were in fact extremely modest. Far from the radical challenge to Judaism and the Law as is often supposed in Pauline studies, all that was required to enact the amendment proposed by the *Book of Dreams* was a means of halting transformation of gentiles just shy of their full conversion, a means of modifying the baptism of converts to produce righteous *gentiles*. It was to this end, in service of the expedition of the final judgment, that the adherents of this school applied the resurrection of Jesus.

### Paul

As the founding religious conviction of Judaism was that the covenant and community were *life*, the conversion of a gentile to Judaism was quite naturally understood as a resurrection – the convert’s ritual movement from the estranged death of their gentileness to new life as a Jew.<sup>72</sup> In baptism, the convert symbolically acted out this transfer. Ablution cleansed the body, removing dirt as though from the grave. Immersion in the inhospitable element of water stopped a convert’s breath, suggestive of drowning. In the Jewish context, the waters of baptism were meant to call to mind the tales of the flood and the Hebrews’ crossing of the Red Sea, waters through which the righteous emerged and the wicked were drowned (1 Pet 3:18-22). Baptism was the vivid depiction of a convert’s rebirth as a Jew reminiscent of the story of birth of the world from the waters of chaos, newly formed and full of potential.

The additional signification of this ritual enactment of a convert’s death and rebirth, with the literal physical death and resurrection of Jesus, created a strong parallel association in which these new type of converts denied the *khukim* could anchor their identity; a way for those who were no longer wicked on account of their baptism yet not Jews on account of their foreskins to positively identify themselves. The converts were

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<sup>72</sup> This is clearly illustrated in the romantic novella *Joseph and Aseneth* in Joseph’s prayer for conversion of the Egyptian Aseneth (cited in excursus above, here also for convenience). *Lord God of my father Israel the Most High, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all (things) and called (them) from the darkness to the light, and from the error to the truth, and from death to life (καὶ ἀπο θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν); you, Lord, bless this virgin, and renew her by your spirit, and form her anew by your hidden hand, and make her alive again by your life (καὶ ἀναζωοποιήσον τῇ ζωῆς σου) and let her drink your cup of blessing, and number her among your people that you have chosen before all (things) came into being, and let her enter your rest which you have prepared for your chosen ones, and live in your eternal life for ever (and) ever (Jos. Asen. 8:10-11 [Burchard]).* The Mishna records, “[T]he School of Hillel say: He that separates himself from his uncircumcision is one that separates himself from the grave.” (*Ed. 5.2 [Danby]*). C. Burchard comments, “Around the beginning of our era ‘He who gives life to the dead’ had become all but a definition of God.” C. Burchard (*OTP II*, 234). also see; Boyarin, *Radical*, 170; Randall D. Chesnutt *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995) 60; Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*.

clothed in Christ (Gal 3:27), conformed to his image (Rom 8:29), marked from judgment by his blood as their Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7) like the Hebrews who being indistinguishable from the Egyptians<sup>73</sup> had been marked by the blood of the lambs on the lintels the night they were resurrected from their enslavement in Egypt.<sup>74</sup>

The construction of the identity of the converts was, however, an extremely precarious negotiation. The school of the *Book of Dreams* needed gentile believers to remain *gentiles* for the purpose of the eschaton and the redemption of history though in no way to believe or act like gentiles. Their proposed identity *in the messiah* was an ingenious navigation of this predicament. To be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus was to act like a pious Jew, to follow the Law even to the point of martyrdom,<sup>75</sup> bringing the gentile believers to the very precipice of full conversion. In the emulation of Jesus, gentile believers could become *functionally* righteous yet while remaining *technically* gentile.

It was this application to the rite of convert baptism which made the martyrdom and resurrection of Jesus *messianic*. It addressed the *problem of the gentiles* as identified in the *Book of Dreams*, namely the need to salvage a gentile remnant in justification for, and redemption of, the history of the later Second Temple period. It was *salvific*, certainly for the gentiles concerned, but more importantly for the longsuffering community of the righteous as the transformation of the gentiles in this eschatological schema was anticipated as the direct precursor to the final judgment, the last bit of business of the second age, clearing the way for the final destruction of the wicked and the blessing of the pious.

This was the heart of Paul's *metanoia*. Far from the grand theological/philosophical challenge to Judaism long supposed by interpreters of the Epistles, Paul changed his mind about an entirely practical issue – whether the resurrection of Jesus as applied to the baptism of converts could produce the righteous gentiles required to bring about the final judgment. It was a calculation already preformed and being implemented by the first followers of Jesus, a fact which was likely the source of Paul's extreme early distress, as it would have been difficult for the Pharisaically trained Saul to have viewed the mixing of Jews and gentiles as anything but a serious threat, prior to his own

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<sup>73</sup> Zakovitch, “*And You Shall Tell Your Son...*”, 117.

<sup>74</sup> Levenson, *Resurrection*, 161.

<sup>75</sup> Paul wrote, “Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our bodies. For we, the living, are always being given up to death for the sake of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor 4:10-11). For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.” (Phi 1:21)

Martyrdom was fully embraced in early Christianity as the privilege of the pious to imitate their Lord; e.g. Tertullian, “‘But he who will endure until the end – this man will be saved.’ By enduring what but persecution, – betrayal, – death? For to endure to the end is nought else than to suffer the end. And therefore immediately follow, ‘The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his own lord;’ because, seeing the Master and the Lord Himself was steadfast in suffering persecution, betrayal and death, much more will it be the duty of His servants and disciples to bear the same, that they may not seem as if superior to Him, or to have got immunity from assaults of righteousness, , since this should be glory enough for them, to be conformed to the sufferings of their Lord and Master...” *Scorpiace* (ANF 10 [Thedwall]).

persuasion as to the efficacy of the resurrection of Jesus in the ethical transformation of gentiles. His mission (and that of others) to the gentiles was the logical consequence of his conviction. If the ethical transformation of some segment of the gentile population was required to clear the way for the final judgment (thus the redemption of righteous Israel)<sup>76</sup> and this transformation was made possible by baptizing converts into the name of the messiah, then Paul and his compatriots would wade boldly into the gentile morass in search of gentiles to baptize.

That the phantom *School of the Book of Dreams* had already straightened out the chronology of the proposed eschaton in the *Book of Dreams* (moving the transformation of the gentiles to precede the final judgment) and solved the ensuing issue of how the transformation would be accomplished (via a messiah). Only the *mechanism* by which the messiah would effect the transformation of the gentiles remained unanswered. This, however, was a matter of correctly identifying the divinely sanctioned event or opportunity which would provide the means of transforming gentiles. The recognition of such an event was a realization of an established eschatological theology; its consummation not its overthrow. Thus Paul's *metanoia* was not a cause for cognitive dissonance on his part as it did not represent a break with any part of his tradition. While the particulars of the solution may have initially caught him off guard (the crucifixion), once the efficacy of Christ's resurrection in resignifying convert baptism was demonstrated in the transformation of gentiles, Paul seems to have signed on to the mission of the early Church's without so much as a backward glance. Paul's puzzling rhetorical affect (the absence of a personal struggle, his level of assumption, his lack of explanation, his staggering confidence) is then perfectly understandable – the resurrection of Christ was not a *revelation* to him, not an epiphanological vision of a new humanity, but the *realization* of a revised eschatological thesis of the *Book of Dreams*, the fulfillment of what he and those of this school had long expected.

The threat the circumcision of the converts would have posed in terms of the eschatological expectations of the *School of the Book of Dreams* was clear. The baptized converts had been given the name and identity of Christ in lieu of being given an identity as Jews. Circumcision would have completed the believers' conversion to Judaism robbing the messiah of his product – a contingent of righteous gentiles making possible

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<sup>76</sup> Though not explored in any detail in this study, the salvation of the Jews was not *altered* by the reclamation of the gentiles in this schema. The ultimate salvation of the Jews lay as it always had in the final judgment in which the wicked and apostates would be ultimately destroyed and the righteous at last would be able to follow the Law in peace, free from threat and abuse of the Lawless. The *Book of Dreams* had envisioned a contingent of righteous gentiles as the eschatological complement to righteous Jewry; Jewry must then continue to exist for this vision to come into being. As *gentiles* in this schema were forbidden to become *Jews*, so *Jews* would have had to have been forbidden from becoming *gentiles* (though this did not appear to have been a pressing concern). It stands to reason that Jews would have every reason to continue to practice the *khukim* while the gentile converts abstained. The reclamation of some portion of the gentiles was anticipated in this school to be the penultimate event prior to the final judgment. The realization of the reclamation functioned as a catalyst, clearing the way for the final judgment, and in that sense was salvific for Jews, or at least actively anticipated their salvation. For the *gentiles*, their reclamation represented an immediate, literal salvation from wickedness; practicing the *mishpatim* they came into faith and communion with God and the community of the righteous even though their ultimate salvation, tied to the redemption of the Jews, was deferred to the final judgment.

the advent of the final judgment. Their foreskins were all that was left of their precious gentile distinction; their circumcision threatened the erasure of their difference altogether. Consequently, Paul warns the Galatians in no uncertain terms, *Look, I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you.* (Gal 5:2).

Yet, where Paul could have dissuaded the Galatians from their course of action by dissociating the exclusive correlation between *righteousness* and *Jewishness* he instead reinforced correlation, asserting that the converts, too, were the children of righteous Abraham by virtue of their baptism. It was a claim clearly meant to comfort the converts, a reassurance that they would be counted among the righteous despite their foreskins in the judgment to come. It was as close to calling the Galatians *Jews* as Paul could possibly come, the thing the Galatians both wanted most and had virtually become, save their foreskins.

Paul's claim that *sans* circumcision the Galatian converts were *children of Abraham* by virtue of their baptism was prefigured in the *Book of Dreams*. In the animal allegory, the righteous (Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham and Isaac) were depicted as *white bulls* up to the birth of Jacob and his offspring who are ever after depicted as *sheep*. When the gentile beasts are transformed at the end of the age, they pointedly become *white bulls*, not sheep. In the *Book of Dreams* the significance of this metamorphization is to liken the beasts in substance to Adam representing their healing and the healing of the world; the realization of the beasts' latent, inherent potential for righteousness as the creations of a righteous God. In their transformation, however, the beasts are as much like Abraham as they are Adam in the allegorical world of the apocalypse – white bulls. The author of the *Book of Dreams* did not draw the specific parallel between Abraham and the transformed beasts but the association was nevertheless ready to hand. Two hundred years later, in the face of the Galatians' insecurity, the ease of the association did not escape Paul.



## CONCLUSION: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In this study I have attempted a reading of Paul as a man not merely influenced by his Jewish *épistème* but as a man bound by his Jewish *episteme*; a reading which assumes that Paul, socialized as a Jew, could not have easily escaped the constraints of this identity. It has been my founding premise that on the subject of circumcision, Paul's literary output simply does not reflect a man attempting to throw off one of the longest standing, emotionally compelling, grounding signifiers of his culture. Given the level of threat Paul claimed circumcision of gentile converts posed to the messianic age; the form, brevity and tone of his argument in *Galatians* strongly suggest that the Apostle's position on circumcision was not the paradigm shifting revelation generally supposed, but the product of a well established set of eschatological expectations now being realized in the application of the death and resurrection of Christ to the ritual of convert baptism.

The *Book of Dreams*, I propose, offers a precedent for Paul's program of gentile inclusion in its vision of the eschatological reclamation of 'gentileness' as a category of being and an explanation as to *why* Paul would have identified the circumcision of the converts as a first order threat to the messianic age. The theory that a school formed around the eschatological thesis of the *Book of Dreams* and came later to revise the order of the eschaton as presented in the *Book of Dreams* to avoid the contamination issue provides a plausible, if hypothetical, evolutionary trajectory reconciling the two points of significant difference between the *Book of Dreams* and the Epistles (the timing of the gentile transformation and the role of the messiah). At the least, it is evidence these ideas were circulating two centuries prior to the composition of the Epistles.

As many questions as this theory may answer, it raises many more. There are two aspects which immediately present themselves for further study. The litmus test of all New Perspective readings is whether a given theory produces a coherent reading of *nomos* in the Epistles. It remains to be shown whether the reorientation proposed in this study can better explain some of the more difficult *nomos* passages without resorting to the conventional Paul v. Judaism antithesis. In addition, it would be interesting to discover if a wider, more detailed reading of texts roughly contemporary with the *Book of Dreams* and Epistles might further substantiate the existence of the theorized *School of the Book of Dreams*. It may be the case that all which remains is the reflective impact of the idea, like the crater of a meteorite destroyed on impact. However, there may be bits of the meteorite still left to be discovered embedded in other projects of the industrious religious theorists of the Second Temple period.

## APPENDIX A

### The Absence of the Law in the *Book of Dreams*

This striking absence of an overt reference to the Law in the *Animal Apocalypse* has lent substantial support to the emerging impression that Enochic literature was the product of a Judaism not principally centered on Torah. Scholars have observed that while there are “a vast number of allusions to and quotations from the Torah (and Prophets)”<sup>1</sup> in *1 Enoch*, no formal parallels actually exist between the cultic laws and the books of *1 Enoch*.<sup>2</sup> More telling still, the biblical and Enochic authors created entirely different theological systems from the same literary material (particularly in regards to the origin and nature of sin) suggesting to some a rivalry of competing priestly schools.<sup>3</sup> Proponents of this theory imagine the empowered Zadokite priests, who experienced the world as a fundamentally ordered and rational place, to have championed the Law as a means of perpetuating their hegemony. The Levites, by contrast, who experienced the world as religiously disordered as a result of their disenfranchisement, would have found Enochic literature appealing both in its quest for additional revelation as means of explaining their historical experience and its apocalyptic promise of renewal.

The impression that Torah was not of central concern<sup>4</sup> to the Enochic authors is most palpable when the books of *1 Enoch* are read canonically. Read as independent compositions, however, the theory seems more dubious, particularly in the case of the *Book of Dreams*.

Divorcing the *Book of Dreams* from the Enochic canon, however, is not a straightforward proposition. While individuals write texts, communities preserve them thereby offering clues as to how a text may have been interpreted. The earliest evidence from Qumran testifies that the *Book of Dreams* circulated with what has been taken as the exemplar of the Enochic, anti-Zadokite theology, the *Book of the Watchers*.<sup>5</sup> While the ancient compilers of the canon clearly thought the *Book of Dreams* belonged in the

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas Bedenbender, “The Place of Torah in the Early Enoch Literature” in *The Early Enoch Literature* eds. Gabriele Boccaccini and John Collins (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 65.

<sup>2</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 50.

<sup>3</sup> G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Enochic Wisdom: An Alternative to Mosaic Torah?” in *Hesed ve-Emet. Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*, (eds. J. Magness and S. Gitin; Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 124.

<sup>4</sup> Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) and *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, From Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 50.

<sup>5</sup> Three scrolls were found to have two or more books on a single scrolls dating from the first century. All three contained the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Book of Dreams*. James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (ed. James C. VanderKam, and William Adler; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996) 34. “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” Pages 33-101 in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*. Edited by James C. VanderKam, and William Adler. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996.

collection of Enochic writings, the relationship could have, in fact, been superficial. In an argument which runs a bit like a Möbius strip, it may well have been the case that the *Book of Dreams* espoused a Torah-centric *Weltanschauung* but, because it was attributed to Enoch, was apocalyptic, despaired of the second age and lacked overt reference to Torah it was interpreted along the lines of Enochic theology, particularly if it was read in close proximity to the *Book of the Watchers*. Thus we may have a Torah centric-work in a collection of non-Torah-centric texts.<sup>6</sup>

The crux of the problem with a non-Torah-centric reading of the *Book of Dreams* lies in the fact that judgment is the central theme of the apocalypse.<sup>7</sup> Judgment implies, even necessitates in the context of Jewish religious discourse, “a corpus or collection of laws and commandments that form the criteria for judgment.”<sup>8</sup> In a text on such a subject, the author could hardly have afforded to be vague about the standard by which the wicked were to be judged and hoped to have been compelling. The absence of a direct reference to the Law which advocates for a non-Torah-centric reading have taken as an omission (either of ignorance or repudiation) could equally have been a presupposition which the author assumed the subject matter of the apocalypse would have made abundantly clear. The allegory is, after all, a review of *biblical* history which revolves from beginning to end around the applications and implications of the Sinai covenant. Nor was the author’s recounting a sloppy, inaccurate effort but proves to be a close tracing of the narrative arc of Torah albeit a severe abridgment – an impressive feat given scope of biblical literature which demonstrates the author’s mastery of the material. It is Moses, the great Law-giver, who the author shone the spotlight on the longest, recounting his career and accomplishments in the greatest detail without a hint of criticism. Moses’ ascension of Sinai so clearly evokes the transmission of Torah I would think readers of any age would be hard pressed to disassociate the one from the other simply because the author did not fully sketch the famous scene. If readers thought of it at all, they likely imagined the omission was driven by the author’s need to truncate the lengthy storyline. Moreover, the narrative is driven by the protagonists’ (white bulls and sheep) struggle to realize their potential righteousness and thus qualify for divine blessing. It is a Deuteronomistic, Zadokite perspective on the nature of sin; namely that sin is a human problem for which the righteous through the Law are capable and competent to deal with.<sup>9</sup> This stands in sharp contrast to the Enochic mythology which held that the consequence for the Watchers transgression was the “unleashing of chaotic

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<sup>6</sup> Some have cautioned the contrast between Enochic and Zadokite Judaism advocated by Boccaccini and others has been drawn too sharply and the Enochic literature should not be construed as representing anything approaching a “school.” See; Michael Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Text and Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 2; Hindy Najman, *Past Renewals: Interpretative Authority, renewed Revelation, and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 189-206 and Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton, Princeton: 2001) 49-100.

<sup>7</sup> Enoch’s first dream which depicts the destruction of the world in the flood sets the keynote for the apocalypse. Throughout the author’s bleak recounting of sacred history, the drumbeat of judgment is relentless. Each tableau the author pauses to depict (Adam and Eve, the Watchers, Noah, Moses, Elijah, Judas) is uniformly a scene of judgment or scene promising future judgment all building to the finale where God judges the world at last and puts an end to this futile age.

<sup>8</sup> Nickelsburg, *I Enoch I*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Boccaccini, *Roots*, 80.

forces [which] condemns humans to be victims of an evil they have not caused and cannot resist.”<sup>10</sup> So thus, while the Law is not specifically referenced in the *Animal Apocalypse*, it is nevertheless clear that the narrative is pervaded by a Torah-centered *Weltanschauung* and that the Law was the assumed criterion of judgment.

If this was indeed the case, the question remains as to the author’s rationale in avoiding direct reference to the Law. The primary reason is likely far less exotic than previously imagined. What is at issue is logic of the allegory. The blunt, animal physicality of the narrative simply did not lend itself to theological detail or dramatization. Having created a world in which humans were depicted as animals, the author has them behaving in accordance with their species, predators and prey. As sheep, the Jews had precious little use for a book; they were instead in need of a fold. The *house of the Owner* collapsed the intricacies of the involved Jewish cult into a single symbol – it was an image which worked well in the allegorical world as the sheep could physically enter the structure and find safety metaphorically demonstrating their obedience. The demotion of the created order drastically simplified the biblical narrative as well. Gone is the moral struggle, the introspection, the midrashic interpretation, the character development of biblical literature. The illusive human quest for righteous is painfully reduced to a single, simple choice – a choice which is obviously in the best interest of the sheep. Thus, far from a confession of Enochic sympathies, the absence of the Law and presence of the tabernacle/Temple in the *Animal Apocalypse* was an allegorical expediency.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 91; also *Beyond*, 68-79.

## APPENDIX B

### The Resurrection Tales of *1* and *2 Kings*

#### 1 Kings 17 – Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath

The scene of the first tale of bodily resurrection in *Kings* is set against the backdrop of the chastisement of King Ahab. God sends the prophet Elijah to notify Ahab that the drought now descended on Israel was the direct consequence of his idolatry. God then hides Elijah by the Wadi Cherith and commands ravens to feed him. When the wadi eventually dries up in the drought, God tells Elijah to leave Israel for Sidon where he has commanded a widow there to feed and shelter the prophet. Arriving at his destination, Elijah approached a widow at the city gate for food and water. The widow swears by Elijah's God that she has nothing to offer him and is in fact preparing to cook the last of what she has for herself and her son and then fully expects to starve to death. Elijah prophesizes that, should she offer it, the widow's hospitality would be rewarded; her meager flour and oil would not run out. In an extraordinary leap of faith, the widow does what Elijah has asked of her and, as the prophet had predicted, her little bit of oil and flour miraculously never run out. She, her son and the prophet are spared.

This happy interlude is immediately dispelled, however, as the very next thing the reader learns is that the son has died. With the death of her son, the widow, already someone intimately familiar with tragedy and desperation, truly enters the ranks of *personae miserabiles*, one cursed by the gods. Lamenting, she wonders aloud if her proximity to the holy man called attention to her sin, causing the prophet's God to smite her son. Elijah clearly wondered the same thing, "LORD my God, have you brought calamity upon this widow whose guest I am, and let her son die?" (1Kng 17:20). It is a speculation which reveals an impression of the gods, God not exempted, as fundamentally vengeful in their justice. Neither the widow nor Elijah deny her guilt or the right of God to hold the guilty to account. They rather take issue with the timing, the death of the boy while Elijah was still under the widow's roof. Elijah was, after all, a prophet in whom God clearly took special interest. The death of this particular child so closely associated with this favored prophet could not have escaped God's notice. Surely the divine protection which Elijah enjoyed could have been extended to this family for the duration of the prophet's stay.

The widow's assumption that the death of her son must be a punishment for her sin is the heart-wrenching moment of this tale. For the widow, the miracle of the flour and oil had only served to stave off her inevitable demise. She and her son had prospered by the miracle due to their proximity to a man God was subsidizing in the midst of his castigation of King Ahab. What had seemed the turning point of her fortune had, in the end, been intended for the benefit of the prophet; she, like the ravens at Cherith, only the tool of its delivery.

This gentile widow's interpretation of the death of her son was wholly Deuteronomistic, *I have sinned, therefore I suffer loss*. The essence of her lament was an articulation of the prophetic apologia which could easily be transposed onto the lips of the exiles in Babylon and the *am ha'arets* sitting among the ruins of Jerusalem, *we have done this to ourselves*. No matter how incontrovertible the evidence historians such as the author of *1 and 2 Kings* marshaled to demonstrate the Lord's forbearance over the centuries of Israel's impiety, for the generation from which payment was exacted, it would have been difficult not to echo the widow's sentiment; while God may have been just in allowing their destruction, it was nonetheless vengeful in its brutality and scope. Thus, the widow gives vicarious voice to exiles, their situations analogous in their hopelessness.

*1 and 2 Kings* is a morality tale. The author listed offenses which provoked the Lord's anger as both an apologia for the destruction of Israel and Judah but also as a teaching, a clear catalog of things to be studiously avoided in future. The challenge of a historian like the author of *Kings*, though, was that the story he inevitably had to tell was that of the failure of monarchs. The exiled audience which he hoped would grasp his lesson, however, was not comprised of kings but of the religious and civic aristocracy; people unlikely to ever rise to such a position in the normal course of their lives, let alone now in exile. A morality tale told only of kings ran the dual danger of either exempting its audience from responsibility or utterly demoralizing them in the demonstration of their lack of power to effect their circumstance. This is where the brilliance of the tale of Elijah's encounter with this destitute widow becomes clear; it hangs on the single detail – she was a Sidonian.

The identification of the widow as a Sidonian sets her in immediate contrast to the Israelite Queen, *née* Sidonian princess, Jezebel.<sup>1</sup> These women differ in every conceivable way; the one widowed, poor, common, nameless, powerless; the other married, rich, royal, named, empowered. The one sacrificially hospitable to an exiled prophet in her country, the other horrifically inhospitable, actively hunting and murdering prophets within the borders of Israel. While the widow offers a clear foil to the Queen, the reader hardly needs the widow's tale to grasp the depth of Jezebel's depravity. The story, however, is well crafted, lengthy at 24 verses and emotionally compelling. The first instance of bodily resurrection in the Tanakh, it possesses one of the more spectacular miracles in the considerable divine arsenal and yet it is given to a gentile widow who does not go on to any further purpose in the narrative of *Kings* let alone to factor into any noble lineage (as Rahab or Ruth) or even to convert to Judaism for that matter. Why, one might ask, of all dead boys did the author of *Kings* resurrect this one?

Stories of hospitality offered or denied to emissaries of God could not help but evoke in the minds of ancient readers the legend of the hospitality Abraham showed the Lord and his entourage by the oaks of Mamre and its consequence (Gen 18). In return for

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion see, Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster, 2007) 150; K. A. D. Smelik, "The Literary Function of 1 Kgs 17,8-24," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies* (ed. C. Breckmans and J. Lust; Leuven: Peeters, 1990) 241; Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996) 263. et. al.

his hospitality, Abraham had received as a *xenion* the prophecy that Sarah would bear the long promised son within the year. The birth of Isaac, a life called from a dead womb, was the “functional equivalent” of Abraham’s resurrection.<sup>2</sup> In the tale of the Sidonian widow, it is on the basis of her hospitality that Elijah dares ask for a comparable miracle on her behalf.

Of course, Abraham and Elijah had reason to believe God could and would bring about reversal; Abraham had a direct promise from God and Elijah, as a prophet, knew intimately the character and power of his God, himself a direct result of God’s promise kept to Abraham. The gentile widow, on the other hand, had no reason to think another miracle was either possible or probable in her case; even with the demonstrably powerful prophet still under her roof, it did not occur to the widow to seek a miracle for herself. It is the prophet who takes the dead boy from his mother to an upper room and stretching out three times over the corpse beseeched the Lord to resurrect him in return for the widow’s hospitality. As the Lord listened to Abraham intercession on behalf of the people of Sodom because of his hospitality, so he listened to Elijah’s intercession on behalf of this widow on account of hers. God returned the boy’s life to him and the prophet returned the boy to his mother.

The larger narrative of *1* and *2 Kings* is a complicated calculation of national culpability accrued over centuries, epitomized by Israel and Judah’s monarchs; a carefully balanced presentation of the peoples’ depravity and the Lord’s forbearance in support of the justness of the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem. Resetting the culturally defining legend, which overtly linked the patriarch’s piety (exemplified by his hospitality) and its consequential blessing (the birth of Isaac and thus the nation), in the alien context of a *gentile widow* enabled the author to remove all considerations of covenant privileges and communal obligations; to reduce the story to its essence, thereby reminding his readers of the simplicity of the covenant equation – God loves and blesses the pious.

The widow, like the exiles, was a confessed sinner; by virtue of being gentile she had, in fact, never been anything else. With no back-story and no further role in *Kings*, the reader is presented only with the widow’s singular act of faith and piety, for which she received a wholly unprecedented reversal, the reanimation of her dead son. She, a nameless, powerless, destitute, gentile, sinner, was the least likely candidate for such a miracle. However, her seeming ineligibility for such divine favor, I imagine, was precisely the author’s point. After all, who was Abraham but a gentile gone straight, a pagan who at the age of 75 responded to the call of a deity unknown to him (Gen 12)? The exiles had been reduced to a state of essential gentileness – people out of covenant with God. Unlike the leap of blind faith required of Abraham and the Sidonian widow, however, the exiles had the profound advantage of knowing the character and power of their God. They were the product of the great reversal granted Abraham, a resurrection in its own right. Like Elijah, the exiles should know not only that God was capable of bringing about reversal in their case (the nation’s resurrection from exile) but that they should ask for it.

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<sup>2</sup> Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 118.

The tale of the Sidonian widow functions in the narrative of *1* and *2 Kings* as an elaborate *qal va homer* argument; if God was able and willing to bring about reversal in the case of this poor, nameless, gentile widow in return for a lone act of hospitality how much more so repentant, exiled Israel? It is the author's reminder to his readers of the inherent power of the piety known to them from their very myth of origin. It was a power which lay well within the exiles' grasp.

#### 2 Kings 4:1-7 – Elisha and the Prophet's Widow's Oil

Nine chapters later, the author of *1* and *2 Kings* greatly expanded the story of the Sidonian widow in the Elisha cycle re-appropriating and refashioning its components into two domestic tales, that of the widow's oil and the Shunammite woman, to address some of the challenge posed by the prophetic apologia more directly.

Elisha encountered a distressed and destitute widow, the wife of one of the prophets murdered by Jezebel. To compound her misery she had been made effectively childless by the threat of her sons becoming slaves in payment of a debt. The enslavement of the sons not only parallels the current circumstance of the exiles but echoes the story of the Hebrews enslaved by the Egyptians and, more importantly, their miraculous redemption which foreshadows the redemption of the widow's sons realized in this tale and the hope for the nation's redemption from exile in future.

The threat to the widow is painfully clear. On hearing of her tragedy, Elisha immediately orchestrates the redemption of her sons and thus salvation of the widow in a manner similar to that of his master, a miracle of abundance involving oil. Elisha instructs the widow to gather all the empty jars she can find and pour the oil she possesses into them. The containers miraculously fill and Elisha instructs the widow to sell the oil and redeem her sons with the proceeds.

Where the first widow was approached by the prophet, the second widow notably sought out the prophet. Where the widow Elijah encountered associated the loss of her son with her own sin (the internalization and application of the prophetic apologia to her personal circumstance), the second widow rejects this explanation of her circumstance contending that she who had suffered the murder of a righteous husband should not also be made to bear the loss of her children. Her insistence in the righteousness of her husband elevated her case from an issue of compassion to one of justice. That she sought justice from a powerful prophet of God was simultaneously a claim to her right to justice as it confessed her belief that justice was still possible in the case of her sons despite the injustice of her husband's murder. Elisha's prompt response to the widow's assertion proved her assumption correct.

The reader is led to understand that the widow's problem – the inability to pay her debts which resulted in enslavement of her sons – was the direct result of her husband's martyrdom. What is striking about this story, given its proximity to tales of resurrection, is that upon being presented with the threat to the widow's sons, the prophet did not



simply resurrect her husband; a miracle one imagines which would have presented a resolution to the immediate crisis and avert similar crises in future. Beyond the clear benefit to the family the resurrection of the husband would have been, there is the outstanding justice issue of his martyrdom in the first place. Yet Elisha does not redress this first wrong of the murder of the husband, only the threat of enslavement of the sons in its aftermath.

This, from a narrative critical vantage, was likely the teaching moment, the critical piece which spoke to the situation of the intended audience of the books of *Kings* suffering the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem, the righteous and repentant among the exiles. They, like the family of this story, had survived a death of their source of security and provision; the woman of her husband, the boys of their father, the readers of Jerusalem. Like the widow's sons, the readers, too, had been taken into slavery, made the vassals of a gentile king. Yet the power of this story lies in the widow's knowledge of, and faith in, the just character of Israel's God and her courage to make her case.

The widow, as a figure of extreme vulnerability and dependence, was a particularly fitting proxy for the exiles. Yet *this* widow of a murdered, righteous prophet daring to assert her right to justice offered a critical counter image to the viciously effeminized portrayal of Israel as an unfaithful wife raped to death as punishment for her crimes in Ezekiel.<sup>3</sup> The power of the widow to redeem the tragedy of her sons' near enslavement lay in the justness of her case pled before a just deity. Her piety was her salvation and that of her sons. So, by extrapolation the power of the righteous and repentant exiles lay in their piety, the potential to be worthy of redemption from the slavery of exile.

## 2 Kings 4:8-37 Elisha and the Shunammite Woman

Where Elijah's encounter with the Sidonian widow had echoed the tale of Abraham at Mamre, the story of Elisha's encounter with the Shunammite woman fully engaged the patriarchal legend. A prominent woman of Shunem offered hospitality to Elisha as he travels through her area. Perceiving that he is a holy man she creates a room for him to stay whenever he should have need of it. For this exceptional act of *xenia*, Elisha, on learning she is barren and married to an old man, prophesized that she will bear a son the following year. Like Sarah, the Shunammite was barren and married to an old man.<sup>4</sup> Like Abraham, she extended exceptional hospitality to the emissaries of the

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Erica, *Lovely Tents of Jacob: The Vagina in Scripture* (Upland: Sopher, forthcoming - 2013) 117-120.

<sup>4</sup> Living, as we do, in an age that has seen great advancements in the treatment of infertility, we are, of course, inclined to place these events in categories completely different from those of the ancients. The birth of a first child to a childless couple (one or both of whom is old or has always been infertile, to boot) is surely a cause for joy and wonder, we are likely to say, but not an impossibility like the resurrection of a dead person. But the placement of the Shunammite woman's objections suggests that, at least to the author of 2 Kings 4, the two unlikely events were much closer in kind than they appear to us, perhaps even identical. Both the birth of a child to an infertile couple and the resurrection of a dead person testify to the triumph of the wonder-working God (and the validity of his wonder-working prophet, the "man of God") over the cruel course of nature. Each is a humanly inexplicable reversal of the seemingly inevitable

Lord, both receive a *xenion* in the form of a prophecy that they will have sons the following year (*kd`et hayyd*).<sup>5</sup> Both Sarah and the Shunammite are in doorways (*petah*) when they receive the annunciation.<sup>6</sup> Both Sarah and the Shunammite express disbelief at the prophecy (Gen 18:13-14).<sup>7</sup> And both prophecies are duly fulfilled as both Sarah and the Shunammite bear sons within the predicted time frame.

Some years later the Shunammite's son was in the field with his father, complained of a headache, was carried back to his mother where he sat on her lap and promptly died. Having so clearly evoked the story of the birth of Isaac, the death of the Shunammite's son cannot help but conjure the *akedah* in the reader's mind.<sup>8</sup> This, however, is where the tales pointedly and purposefully begin to diverge. Where Isaac was brought to the precipice of death by a father who had every intention of killing him, he did not actually die. Death was averted in his case by the angel's staying of Abraham's hand; the entire exercise is a test of his father's faith. The Shunammite's son, by contrast, much as the nation of Israel itself, did in fact die. There had been no miraculous intervention for the Shunammite's son, no last minute stay of execution for the nation. Nor were either of these deaths constructed as tests, opportunities to demonstrate qualities or attributes which if successfully navigated promised greater blessing. The death of the Shunammite's son and that of the nation were rather the common, inglorious playing out of nature in the case of the son and the covenant in that of the nation. As God had decreed the death of humans in Eden for the first couple's failure to adhere to the command not to eat from the forbidden tree, he had decreed destruction for Israel if the nation did not adhere to the statutes of the covenant. While tragic for the mother and the exiles alike, neither the death of the son nor that of the nation was an issue of injustice as had been the case with the widows or, for that matter, Isaac about to be murdered on his father's altar. Thus the Shunammite mother occupied a place analogous to that of the exiles in the yawning aftermath of tragedy; she, like they, has no case to argue before God. Consequently, it was the Shunammite's response to the death of her son which would have been instructive to the first readers of the books of *Kings*.

The Shunammite laid her dead son on the bed she had made for the prophet, in a very literal sense returning him to the place of his origin, the act of hospitality which had caused Elisha to intercede on her behalf allowing her to conceive the boy. Again the author closely parallels the story of the *akedah*. Shutting the door behind her as if to conceal the fact of her son's death, the Shunammite sends to her husband for a servant to accompany her to find Elisha. When he inquires as to why she should need to see the

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sequence of events whose last word is death. Each represents a victory of life over death. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 125.

<sup>5</sup> "[T]he term [*kd`et hayyd*] occurs in these texts alone, twice in each chapter (Gen 18:10, 14; 2. Kgs 4:16, 17)." Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 125.

<sup>6</sup> Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings*, Berit Olam (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000) 29, brought to my attention by Levenson in *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 125.

<sup>7</sup> For discussion see also Uriel Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives* (trans. Lenn J. Schramm; Bloomington: Indiana University, 1997) 227-262.

<sup>8</sup> Levenson. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale, 1993) 125-42. also *Resurrection*, 252.

prophet, she does not answer replying only, *it is well* (1 Kng 4:23). Her response to him is both a confession of faith in what she believes God will do for her but also a striking omission of the reality of what has happened. In this, she is not unlike Abraham who dodged Isaac's inquiry as to what they were going to sacrifice with the clever obfuscation, *God will provide* (Gen 22:8) as well as what one assumes must have been the deception of Sarah on some scale.<sup>9</sup> As Abraham saddled his donkey and with his servants headed for Mt. Morah to meet God, so the Shunammite saddled her donkey and with her servant headed toward Mt. Carmel to find the prophet of God.

The Shunammite, unlike Abraham, sought not of the death of her son but his life. Finding Elisha, she grabbed his feet saying, *Did I ask for a son from my Lord? Didn't I tell you not to raise my hopes?* (2 Kng 4:28). Where the Abrahamic cycle is driven by his quest for a son, the Shunammite woman reminds Elisha by this statement that the boy had been a gift.

Where Abraham who had pled for a son made no protest in the face of his impending sacrifice, the Shunammite who had not requested a son now pleads for the restoration of his life. This, too, created a rough analogue to the situation the exiles found themselves. However, many centuries after Abraham had struck his deal with God, by accident of birth, the exiles had inherited the covenant obligations and suffered duly the consequences of having transgressed it. Now they, as the Shunammite, were in the position of pleading for the restoration of a thing for which they had not asked. They, as the Shunammite mother, were left to harness the power of their myth of origin; that the God who called them into being from a barren, dead womb could call them back to life from the death of exile and, perhaps more to the point, would want to do so.

The urgency of Elisha to come to Shunammite's aid illustrates God's desire to restore what he has given. The prophet sends his servant to run ahead, stopping for nothing to try to rouse the boy with his staff which fails to wake him. The mother, knowing her hope lies with the prophet who called her son into being and not with his surrogate, refuses to leave Elisha's side. Elisha quickly follows and arriving, goes up to the room, prays and stretches himself out on the boy, mouth to mouth, eye to eye, as if to transfer his life essence. It takes two attempts, but the boy is resurrected and the prophet returns the boy to his mother.

The point of this tale, the longest at 29 verses by far, is to illustrate not merely the power of God to mitigate suffering and loss but his power to undo it altogether; a demonstration of his willingness to restore what he had previously given. The potential for the nation's resurrection lay in the exile's recognition of who they were to God and who they might still be.

## 2 Kings 13:20-21 Accidental Resurrection of a Man

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<sup>9</sup> Granted, that Sarah was deceived is conjecture. However, I cannot imagine a woman willing to leave Hagar and Ishmael to die to protect her son would have ever signed off on his sacrifice.

The final resurrection story in *2 Kings* is an odd little tale of an accidental resurrection. A dead man comes to life when the mourners attempting to bury him hurriedly throw his corpse into Elisha's grave to avoid a band of Moabite raiders. When the dead man comes in contact with the bones of the prophet, he is returned to life.

The two verses allotted this tale would make it appear as detritus, a bit of lore floating about that the author or redactor tucked in as a final proof of Elisha's superiority to his master. There is after all, no intention. No one was seeking a miracle on this man's behalf, in fact, the way the story is told, it is not clear any of his undertakers were there to witness the man's miraculous resurrection. Absolutely nothing is known of the man himself, his age, the manner of his death, whether he was righteous, anything which would make sense of the incredible miracle done on his behalf. More confounding still, the man does not go from his grave to any great purpose, nothing more is made of this story.

Looking for a rhetorical agenda for this peculiar tale, it strikes me that there is a gap in the tales of the Sidonian widow and that of the Shunammite woman the author may have been addressing with this story. The need for Elijah to stretch out over the Sidonian boy three times and Elisha to stretch out over the Shunammite's son twice in order to resurrect them could have been interpreted to mean the miracle of resurrection was difficult. If the miracle was difficult in the case of these children of pious, hospitable mothers how much more difficult would the resurrection of an unrighteous nation be? Impossible?

Stripped of human intent or prophetic agency this resurrection is reduced to naked display of divine power. That the dead man immediately pops up after inadvertently coming in contact with the prophet's remains starkly reveals the fact that neither prophet nor supplicant are needed for God to wrest life from death. By extrapolation, then, nothing about the state of Israel's exile or her resurrection posed a difficulty for God.

While the ease of this miracle was likely the primary point of this tale, it also served another rhetorical end, albeit obliquely. For those likely to have been persuaded by the prophets' apologia and thus inclined to buy into their stratagem for national salvation (namely the peoples' rededication to God and covenant) there was likely a lingering doubt as to whether such devotion was possible on the national scale; whether Israel could collectively repent offering a piety radical enough to qualify them for deliverance. Even if God was both willing and able to resurrect the nation, the nation might never become pious enough to warrant resurrection.

The prophets addressed this apprehension by expanding on the foundational tenet of Jewish theology that LORD is a forgiving God.<sup>10</sup> The prophets declared not only does God accept the repentance of sinners but he proactively *seeks* reconciliation with those who have offended him. It is God in Jeremiah who pleads with rebellious Israel to return

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<sup>10</sup> The Levitical Code anticipates the need for repentance as well as provides the means by which atonement can be made assuring the supplicant that repentance was offered and will be accepted, *thus the priest shall atone for him for the sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven* (Lev 4:35).

and for Judah to repent that he might forgive them. *Go, and proclaim the message toward the north, and say: Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord. I will no longer frown on you, for I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not be angry forever (Jer 3:12).* And later, *Perhaps when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to inflict on them, all of them may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. (Jer 36:3).* Isaiah anchors the divine motivation for restoring the nation in God's own character, *I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins (Is 43:25).*<sup>11</sup> It is God who sent a prophet to Nineveh, over the strenuous objections of Jonah, that the Assyrians *may* repent.

The tale of the accidental resurrection of this dead man in *2 Kings* played further into this prophetic assertion revealing what would prove a pivotal and provocative plank of the Jewish theological platform in the late Second Temple period; God can and does bless those who do not, even cannot, seek their own restoration.

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<sup>11</sup> A reiteration of the argument Moses offered in the Sinai Desert advocating clemency on behalf of the rebellious Israelites in the face of the wrath of God (Num 14:17-20).

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