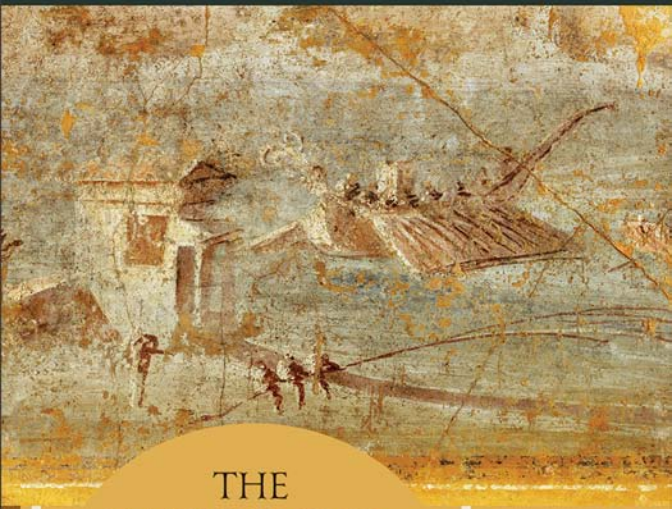

THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts

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19

The Dead Sea Scrolls

C. D. ELLEDGE

Since their discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) have contributed some of the most significant resources for understanding Palestinian Judaism during the period of Christian origins. Preserving approximately nine hundred compositions, the Scrolls range in date from about 250 BC to the first century AD, an era of crucial concern for NT backgrounds. An ongoing problem since the discovery has been the identity of those who placed the Scrolls in the eleven caves that ran along a north–south axis surrounding *Khirbet Qumran*, an archaeological site overlooking the northwest coast of the Dead Sea.

Identity of the Qumran Movement

The "Qumran-Essene hypothesis" identifies the community of the DSS as a group of Essenes, a Jewish religious movement referenced in both pagan (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 5.73; Synesius, *Dio* 3.2) and Jewish writers (Philo, *Prob.* 75–80; *Contempl.* 1–3; *Hypoth.* 11; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.119–61; *Ant.* 18.18–22; *Life* 2). By correlating the contents of the Scrolls with such evidence from ancient writers, the hypothesis identifies shared property, predeterminism, pure meals, and initiatory practices as among the more convincing intersections between the Scrolls and the Essenes. Although these correlations are not always precise, the hypothesis has withstood ardent criticism and remains, in spite of its shortcomings, the most

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19.1. Ruins of the Qumran community, including the scriptorium (where the scrolls were copied) and storage rooms.

commonly accepted identification of those who preserved the Scrolls. A few comparisons illustrate the logic of the hypothesis.

The Scrolls portray a movement that formed a community of goods, a popular practice among Essenes. According to the *Rule of the Community*, a disciplinary code for the Qumran community, everyone who enters as a full member "shall have his property merged" with the larger movement (6.23–24).[1] Analogous customs are also attested of Essenes: "Those entering into their movement must devote their property to the order . . . there is a single commonwealth in which the possessions of each man are mixed together" (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.122, author's translation).[2]

Admission into the community was strictly supervised by a formal initiation. According to the *Rule*, an extended novitiate involves initial examination, which allows prospective members a year of provisional membership. After another examination, a prospective member is allowed access to pure meals alone for an additional year; then finally, a successful initiate is granted full membership, access to the pure drink of the community, and the incorporation of their property (1QS 6.14–24). Differing in some details, Josephus also reports that Essenes admitted members through a three-year initiation (*J.W.* 2.137–42).

1. Translations of the DSS in this chapter follow Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

2. My translation has been published in C. D. Elledge, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Archaeology and Biblical Studies 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 48.

The *Rule* also offers stridently predeterministic teaching regarding the deity's creation of the world: "From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed He established their whole design . . ." (3.15–16). Josephus, likewise, distinguishes Essenes by their predeterministic theology: "The teaching of the Essenes is fond of admitting all things to the care of God" (*Ant*. 18.18).

The most significant information about this community, of course, emerges from the Scrolls themselves, as its authors tell the story of their own movement. Both Pliny and Dio Chrysostom, for example, situate an Essene community in the same general locale as Qumran in the Judean wilderness; yet the Scrolls themselves reveal much more about the community's understanding of its geographical setting. According to the *Rule*, the members of the Qumran community viewed themselves as fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. 40:3: "they shall separate from the habitation of unjust men and shall go into the wilderness to prepare there the way of Him; as it is written, *Prepare in the wilderness the way of [the* LORD*], make straight in the desert a path for our God*. This (path) is the study of the Law which He commanded by the hand of Moses, that they may do according to all that has been revealed from age to age, and as the Prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit" (1QS 8.13–16). Finding in themselves the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the community attached profound meaning to its wilderness vocation. Through their legal observances and worship, they were preparing the path for God's future redemption of Israel.

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19.2. Cave 4 at Qumran is the site of the largest discovered collection of Dead Sea Scrolls.

Although no manuscripts were discovered at the particular archaeological site of Qumran, numerous details point toward an active association between the

site and the manuscripts found in nearby caves. First, the dates of occupation at Qumran roughly correspond to the dates of the Scrolls. Qumran may have been utilized sometime after 140 (de Vaux, *Archaeology*) or just after 100 (Magness, *Archeology of Qumran*) BC; portions were destroyed and reoccupied by the Romans during the First Jewish Revolt in AD 68. Second, fragments of the relatively rare cylindrical pottery types in which seven scrolls were preserved in Cave 1 were also discovered at the Qumran site itself, thus linking Qumran to the caves and to the Scrolls themselves. Third, the architecture of Qumran suggests that it would have been a fitting locale for the kinds of religious practices described in the *Rule of the Community*. For ritual lustrations, for example, Qumran offers at least six stepped bathing pools; for communal meals, it offers a long, narrow room approximately twenty-two meters long, with an accompanying chamber in which over a thousand pottery vessels were stored. Moreover, the Qumran site rests in a centrally located position relative to the eleven caves in which scrolls were found.

Centering on an anonymous figure, called the "Righteous Teacher" (or "Teacher of Righteousness"), the Scrolls further situate the origins of their religious movement in conflicts between the Teacher and the Jerusalem priesthood in the second century BC. The chronology of the *Damascus Document*, for example, situates the coming of the Teacher to a fledgling group of penitents sometime after 177 BC during a time of great religious darkness: "He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart" (CD 1.10–11). Elsewhere in the Scrolls, the coming of the Teacher is heralded as a fulfillment of scriptural prophecy. The *Pesher on Habakkuk*, for example, reveals that the "vision" of Hab. 2:1–4 is fulfilled, not in the days of the prophet, but in the advent of the Righteous Teacher, "to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets" (1QpHab 7.3–5). The Teacher's authority as the chosen mediator of scriptural revelation came into direct conflict with a certain "Wicked Priest." This anonymous epithet seems to refer to the priestly rulers of Jerusalem's Hasmonean dynasty, which controlled the high priesthood from 152 to 63 BC (1QpHab 8.3–17; 11.4–7, 13–14; 12.8–9). Qumran would define its own origins in the advent of the Righteous Teacher and his powerful—yet ultimately rejected—revelation of the proper interpretation of Israel's law and prophecy, even in writings that were copied a century after his own activity had ceased.

When the reports of ancient historians, the relationships between Qumran and the Scrolls, and the internal evidence for the origins of the community are considered together, they yield the portrait of a religious movement of Essenes, pure religious communalists who rejected the authority of the Hasmonean priesthood and separated from other Jews in what they perceived to be an apocalyptic era of corruption. Inspired by the struggle of the Righteous Teacher, they turned to Qumran as the wilderness landscape in which they would "prepare the way of the LORD" through their exclusively pure observance of Jewish law, living out

this vocation in a highly structured community maintained by strong boundaries, shared property, pure meals, scriptural study, and a disciplinary code. It is likely that the Scrolls represent the remains of the religious library collected by this movement over approximately two centuries of its history.

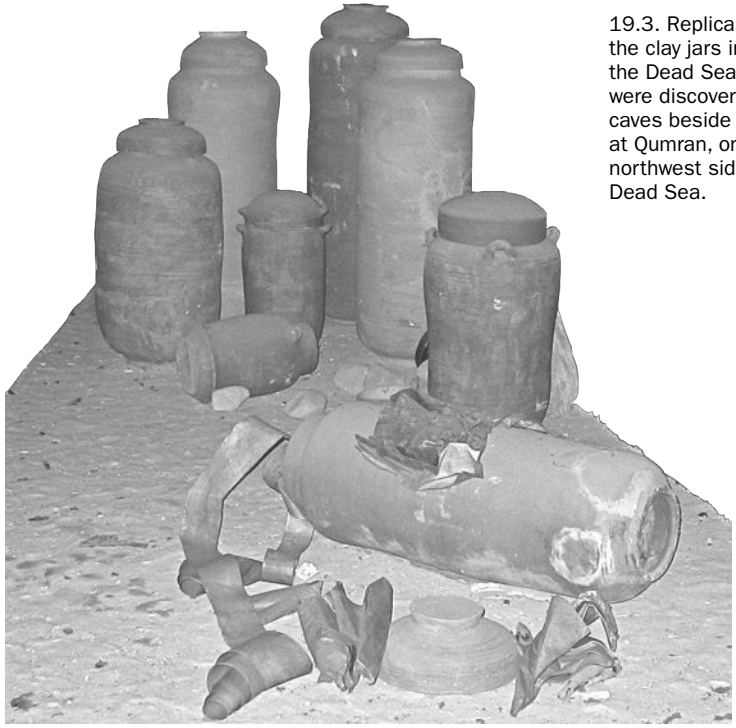
The Contents of the Scrolls

The DSS represent a diverse range of literary compositions. Nevertheless, some of the most frequently encountered categories of literature include scriptural manuscripts and commentaries, rules and legal writings, hymns and prayers, and writings concerned with apocalyptic and sapiential themes.

Scriptural Manuscripts and Their Interpretations

Among the remains of the Qumran library, the most abundantly attested kind of writing includes scriptural texts. Just over two hundred manuscripts from the eleven Qumran caves—approximately 25 percent of the entire collection—are copies of the same books that now appear in the canonical Jewish Scriptures. The Scrolls thus provide remarkably rich and detailed insights into the varied nature of Scripture texts during the period of Christian origins. The most frequently attested of these is the "proto-Masoretic" type, which represents the same kind of text that would ultimately factor into Judaism's official scriptural version, the Masoretic text. Additionally, however, Qumran also preserves scriptural copies that resemble the Samaritan Pentateuch; still others represent the text type that underlies the LXX. Yet other manuscripts exhibit a style that seems unique to Qumran itself, while others align with none of these categories (Tov, *Textual Criticism*). Since Qumran provides evidence that the same religious movement preserved multiple text types, this has advanced the possibility that the phenomenon of "textual plurality" prevailed within Judaism of the Second Temple period. While later Judaism would follow the Masoretic text as its official version, Qumran poses an earlier moment in which Jews studied multiple versions of scriptural books as authoritative writings.

Moreover, Qumran exhibits a relatively different understanding of "authoritative literature" than would prevail within Judaism in later times. The Scrolls certainly attest to a strong reception for the books of the Torah and the Prophets, as well as a comparatively smaller collection of the Writings (the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible). Other compositions from among the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, however, feature so prominently in this community's collection that one may venture the possibility that they functioned with a measure of authority equal to that of "canonical" books. These include *Jubilees*, which registers fourteen to fifteen copies at Qumran, a number surpassed only by Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms. As for *1 Enoch*, the community preserved at least eleven copies. A range of modified



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19.3. Replicas of the clay jars in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in caves beside the site at Qumran, on the northwest side of the Dead Sea.

scriptural texts also flourished among the Scrolls. Scriptural "anthologies," like the *Testimonia* and *Consolations*, edit a series of select scriptural passages that converge upon common themes. Perhaps the most protean category of modified scriptural texts exhibits the practice of "rewriting" Scripture. Utilizing a diverse range of compositional methods, the *Temple Scroll*, *Reworked Pentateuch*, *Apocryphon of Joshua*, and *Pseudo-Ezekiel* (along with many other texts) actively rewrite the language of earlier Scriptures while also subtly interweaving their authors' interpretive viewpoints. In such cases, the boundaries between Scripture and rewritten Scripture, between text and interpretation, are often difficult to discern. Since both the *Apocryphon of Joshua* and *Jubilees* (itself a rewriting) are actually quoted as scriptural authorities in other scrolls, it seems likely that rewritten Scriptures could function as authoritative literature for the Qumran community.

The authors of the Scrolls also devised distinctive practices of scriptural interpretation that legitimated their own religious movement as the locus of prophetic fulfillment. A group of formal scriptural commentaries, organized by explicit citation and interpretation styles, offers interpretations of prophetic literature and the Psalms. These commentaries title their interpretations with the Hebrew word *pesher* (plural: *pesharim*), a word used in earlier dream-interpretation literature

(e.g., Dan. 2:4–6, 24–26; 5:15–16; 7:16). A pesher is literally an "unloosening," a "solution," of the mysteries of prophetic revelation. In the Qumran pesharim, such interpreted mysteries from Scripture find their fulfillment in the prior history of the Righteous Teacher's conflicts with the Wicked Priest, in the present political circumstances of Judea under the rule of the *Kittim* (a probable reference to the Romans), and in the future glorification of the community in the latter days, when "God will execute the judgment of the nations by the hand of His elect" (1QpHab 5.4–5).

Rules and Legal Writings

As part of a movement disciplined by specific communal structures, the community at Qumran preserved a number of writings that it classified by the title *Serek*, or "rule," documents. These include twelve copies of the *Rule of the Community*, a disciplinary code for a group of Jewish males who enter into a covenant community, or *yaḥad*, defined by a strict process of initiation, pure meals, liturgical guidelines, and dualistic teachings. The community organized by these principles describes itself as "Sons of Light" in the midst of a cosmic conflict between Truth and Falsehood. Representing the last vestiges of Truth in a divided cosmos, the community suffers trial as it awaits God's final apocalyptic triumph over evil. Another remarkable way in which this community describes its own vocation is in its crucial role of atoning for the sins of the entire land of Israel (1QS 8.3–10; 9.3–6). In this way, the community seems to have regarded its own practices—and not those of the Jerusalem temple or its leadership—as the divinely sanctioned means of removing guilt from Israel.

Alongside the *Rule of the Community*, other documents called "rules" are also attested. Edited together within the *Rule* scroll from Cave 1, for example, are two additional rules. The *Rule of the Congregation* describes the proper configuration of Israel for a latter-day procession and feast "when [God] leads forth the Messiah with them" (1QSa 2.11–12). The accompanying *Rule of the Blessings* concludes the great *Rule* scroll with a series of benedictions upon various figures who will emerge in the latter days, including an ideal assembly of Zadokite priests and a "Prince of the Congregation," who will govern Israel justly.

The *Damascus Document*, present in ten copies, represents yet another rule. It is written for communities of righteous Jews, both men and women, who have entered into a "new (or renewed) covenant" (CD 6.5, 19) that was originally devised in the land of Damascus. The *Damascus Document* views the community's struggle to live by the laws of God within a dualistic conflict between good and evil; and it is highlighted by extended legal expositions that range from oaths and offerings to the proper practices of bearing witness, keeping the Sabbath, ritual lustrations, and dietary laws. Finally, the *War Scroll* spells out the proper military code for the last days, when Israel and the nations will clash in an apocalyptic holy war.

In addition to these rule documents, Qumran preserved a larger range of legal expositions that charted the proper practice of Jewish law. In the *Halakic Letter*, an exposition of over twenty points of legal interpretation, is introduced with the declaration "These are some of our words . . . " (4QMMT B1–3). It is imperative that the priests direct these rulings faithfully; otherwise, they will "lead the people into sin," defiling Jerusalem and its temple. The authors plead diplomatically with their opponents, suggesting that "these are the latter days," when Israel will now turn to the true interpretation of the Torah. It has often been conjectured that the *Halakic Letter* represents the legal conflicts that originally animated Qumran's rejection of the present temple leadership. Perhaps the work may even express the views of the Righteous Teacher himself, making his diplomatic appeals to the Wicked Priest and explaining the community's rationale for why "we have separated ourselves from the multitudes of the people" (section C 7). The dates of actual copies of the *Halakic Letter* in the first century BC suggest that, whatever its origins, this legal exposition continued to guide the community's reading of the Torah long after those conflicts had emerged.

In the *Temple Scroll*, a vast rewriting of passages of the Torah reveals its authors' judgments regarding the temple's sacred artifacts and altars (11QT^{a} 3.1–13.8), sacrifices and offerings (13.9–29.8), the architecture of the larger temple complex (29.8–40.6), and laws of purity (45.7–51.10), concluding with a paraphrase of Deut. 17–26 (51.11–66.17). Contemporary reflection on the *Temple Scroll* continues to explore its possible functions within the Qumran community. One theory regards the scroll as a kind of reformist, eschatological Torah that Israel would follow in a new era when "I shall create my sanctuary, to establish it for myself for all time" (29.9–10).

Alongside many other legal expositions, the *Halakic Letter* and the *Temple Scroll* are important reminders that the character of the Qumran community was forged not only by its eschatological expectation or by political conflicts within the priesthood. It was equally charged by legal concerns over the proper interpretation of the Torah. Such legal devotion was further expressed within a larger cosmic, apocalyptic framework in which Truth and Falsehood conflicted within a period of latter-day affliction. Qumran's legal opponents were deceived by powerful supernatural beings, while the community itself strived to represent the last vestiges of truth in a fallen world.

Ardon Bar Hama/Wikimedia Commons

19.4. A portion of the great Isaiah scroll found in Cave 1 at Qumran. This scroll, containing the complete text of the book of Isaiah, is called "great" (i.e., complete) to distinguish it from a second Isaiah scroll found at Qumran, which preserves only 75 percent of the biblical text.

Liturgical and Hymnic Writings

Qumran's religious devotion is also expressed in the form of hymnic writings, which provide some of the most sophisticated poetic compositions from this era. In the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (*Hodayot*, 1QH[a]), worshipers offer blessings to the deity with the typical form of introduction, "Blessed are you, O Lord, because. . . . " The many reasons for praising the deity range from personal redemption to enlightenment in the mysteries of divine wisdom. Likewise, another text, *Bless, O My Soul*, praises the deity for having mercy on the destitute and atoning for the sins of the speaker. In the *Angelic Liturgy*, a collection of hymns is sequenced with the offering of the Sabbath sacrifice and describes the heavenly worship of angelic beings within the celestial realms. The *Words of the Luminaries* praises the deity through a reminiscence on the history of Israel, in which the deity has remained faithful in spite of Israel's transgression: "You remembered your covenant, for you redeemed us from among the nations and did not abandon us among the nations" (4Q504 16.9–11). One of the more prominent claims among these writings is that the members of the Qumran movement worship in the presence of angelic beings of supreme holiness (*Angelic Liturgy*; *Blessings*); as the *Rule of the Community* states, God "has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven" (1QS 11.8), as though the lines separating heaven and earth have diminished in Qumran's pure worship.

Wisdom and Apocalyptic Writings

The Scrolls also attest the flourishing of Jewish wisdom and apocalyptic traditions in the late Second Temple period. In addition to copies of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job, as well as a *Targum of Job* and portions of Ben Sira, the Qumran community preserved several previously unknown wisdom compositions. These include writings like *Sapiential Work A*, which explores topics ranging from creation to anthropology and eschatology in pursuit of "the mystery that is yet to be" (see also *Book of Mysteries*). Other poetic compositions, like *Beatitudes*, extol the blessedness of pursuing Lady Wisdom: "Happy is the man who has attained wisdom, and walks by the law of the Most High, and fixes his heart on her ways, and gives heed to her admonitions" (4Q525 frg. 2 2.1–4; trans. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts*); while still others malign the ways of folly and seduction (*Wiles of the Wicked Woman*).

Although the Scrolls have not unearthed a large number of new literary apocalypses, they have provided an extensive resource for the flourishing of apocalyptic ideas within early Judaism. Daniel became a popular writing at Qumran within a generation of its composition (assuming a second-century date for this work), with eight copies attested; *1 Enoch* also featured prominently. Among previously unknown writings, at least six copies of an apocalyptic tour of the heavenly Jerusalem offer a detailed description of how the holy city will be renewed in the eschatological age; *New Jerusalem* thus unveils the kinds of apocalyptic traditions

that Rev. 21 has reactualized in its portrait of the holy city. Other eschatological traditions, like the *Messianic Apocalypse* and the *Aramaic Apocalypse*, offer significant evidence for the nature of Jewish messianism prior to the era of Christian origins. Apocalyptic thought pervaded multiple aspects of the community's self-awareness, worship, and legal piety. The presence of apocalyptic teaching in the community's rule books (1QS 3.13–4.26; CD 1.1–2.1) strongly indicates that Qumran's self-understanding and religious behaviors were intensively shaped by apocalyptic currents in early Jewish thought.

Contributions to New Testament Research

The DSS emerged from the same historical and cultural context as Jesus and his earliest followers. Yet the precise methods of interpreting the NT in light of the Scrolls have remained a matter of ongoing investigation. Three categories that have traditionally been explored include Qumran's relevance for understanding (1) actual persons in the NT, (2) the communal structures of the early church, and (3) the religious ideas found in the NT. Taken together, these areas of inquiry have gradually enhanced modern awareness of how Jesus and his earliest followers did—and did not—fit into the religious landscape of Palestinian Judaism. Attempts to show that Qumran functioned as a more direct religious progenitor to the church have proved inconclusive. Instead, the Scrolls' contribution to NT study is to be found in the ways they have expanded our understanding of the diverse context of religious thought and practices that existed within first-century Judaism, a context within which both Qumran and Christian origins flourished—each in its own way.

Persons in the New Testament

The NT figure most likely to resemble the community members at Qumran remains John the Baptist. Although proposals that Jesus or other early Christian figures had some relation to the community have not been successful, the striking comparisons that can be made between John and the Qumran members require more careful examination. The issues at stake in such a connection are profound. If John bore any connection to Qumran, then it would follow that the historical Jesus himself stood at least that much closer to the community's activity. Both John and the Qumran community seem to have been active at the same time and in the same region (Matt. 3:1; Josephus, *Ant*. 18.116–19). Both insisted that rituals of purification in water were only efficacious when accompanied by a life of ethical repentance (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:7–14; Josephus, *Ant*. 18.117; 1QS 3.8–9). Both are further associated with the explicit fulfillment of Isa. 40:1–3 (Mark 1:1–4; 1QS 8.13–16). Together with other commonalities, including references to the "Holy Spirit's" eschatological cleansing of humans and to strict matrimonial laws, these parallels have sometimes led to the conclusion that John the Baptist could have had some earlier connection to Qumran (or to Essenes more generally).

Even so, differences between the two are equally intriguing, suggesting that even if John had somehow associated with Qumran, he must ultimately have broken away from them in a bold new direction. For the community at Qumran, the Jordan held no sacred significance; their rituals of purification were daily, yet John's baptism may have been a final eschatological cleansing. The social dynamics of the two movements also differ; John is never associated with a community of goods or with a novitiate. John's wilderness preaching was also public in a way that Qumran's more introverted piety was not. However one concludes the matter, it is at least clear that the wilderness setting offered a sacred landscape for religious renewal that held mutual appeal for Qumran, John, and Jesus.

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19.5. The walls of the scriptorium in the ruins of Qumran. The view is toward the Dead Sea.

Communal Structures in the Early Church

Another comparison frequently made between Qumran and the NT emerges in the form of communal structures in the early church. The book of Acts, for example, suggests that the Jerusalem church practiced a community of goods, in which "all who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44–45). Qumran attests yet another Jewish union in which members devoted their property to the worshiping community. As Acts describes this phenomenon primarily among the Jewish believers in Jerusalem (Acts 4:32–35), scholars have been willing to consider the possibility that the early Jerusalem church may have shared the popular religious option of shared property, a practice also attested in contemporary Judaism at Qumran. Like the Matthean community (Matt. 18), Qumran also provided in its *Rule* a disciplinary code for admonishing and restoring errant members of its movement (1QS 5.24–6.1).

Religious Ideas in the New Testament

Finally, the greatest contributions that Qumran has made to the writings of the NT center on the religious ideas attested in the Scrolls. An excellent example concerns the very notion of messianism itself. At the center of Qumran's messianic teaching seems to have been the expectation of dual messiahs, one royal and one priestly. This form of expectation is directly attested in the *Rule of the Community*: "They . . . shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel" (1QS 9.10–11). Since the expectation of dual messiahs seems further to be reinforced in other Qumran writings (CD 12.23; 14.19; 19.10–11; 20.1; 4QFlor 1.10–12; 4QTest 9–20), this "diarchal messianism" appears to have stood as the core messianic vision of the Qumran community. This expectation of dual messiahs cuts subversively against the wider political realities of Qumran's own social setting, where the Hasmonean priests also reigned as kings; in Qumran's ideological vision, God would restore these roles in the future between two separate, anointed rulers.

Alongside this core messianic vision, the Scrolls also preserve other, more diverse expressions of messianism. In the *Rule of the Congregation*, a single "Messiah of Israel" is portrayed as proceeding in a holy congregation of all Israel, preeminent among the people, yet equally guided by priestly authorities (1QSa 2.11–22). The *Commentary on Genesis A* envisions a "Messiah of Righteousness," who will be like David (4Q252 frg. 6 5.1–4). The *Melchizedek* document further expects a "Messiah of the Spirit," one whose prophetic anointing will fulfill the expectations of Isa. 52:7 (11Q13 2.15–20). An *Aramaic Apocalypse* at Qumran also depicts one who is called "Son of God," an apocalyptic figure modeled on the "son of man" prophecy of Dan. 7. A "messiah" with universal rule in "heaven and earth" headlines the expectations of the *Messianic Apocalypse*, a writing that envisions how God will restore the fortunes of the suffering righteous, healing the wounded, reviving the dead, and proclaiming good news to the poor (4Q521 frgs. 2+4 2.1–13). Finally, several scrolls anticipate a "Prince of the Congregation," a charismatic warrior who will exercise violent power against Israel's enemies in the military conflicts that will characterize the latter days (*Rule of Blessings*, *Rule of War*, *Moses Apocryphon*^{b}, *Commentary on Isaiah*^{c}; cf. CD 7.20).

When the early church called Jesus "Messiah" and "Son of God," it appears to have appealed to a number of traditional messianic ideals, while also dramatically reinterpreting them in light of the distinctive features of Jesus' own activity. Today NT scholars note, in particular, the surprising commonality between the description of the messianic era in the Qumran *Messianic Apocalypse* and the Q sayings material attested in Matt. 11:2–6//Luke 7:18–23. Both sources share the common tradition, perhaps inspired by mutual reflection upon Isa. 61, that in the time when the messiah is revealed, the wounded will be healed, the blind will receive sight, the dead will be raised, and the poor will have glad tidings proclaimed to them. Likewise, the *Aramaic Apocalypse* has deepened understanding of how the title

"Son of God" functioned as a messianic term in Judaism prior to Christianity. The messianism of the *Aramaic Apocalypse* emerges through the author's heavy reliance on the scriptural context of Dan. 7–12, a tendency also reflected in the messianism of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 13:24–27; 14:61–62 par.). Since the *Aramaic Apocalypse* utilizes the very words "he will be called [gr]eat and will be designated by his name. He shall be called Son of God, and they will call him Son of the Most High, . . . his kingdom will be an eternal kingdom," some scholars have even considered the possibility of a more direct literary relationship between this writing and Luke 1:32–33, where the coming of the messiah is anticipated in strikingly similar language (Collins, *Scepter*). Whether direct literary reliance can be certified, Qumran has revealed the extent to which NT literature reflects popular messianic traditions that had an extended history in earlier Judaism.

Beyond the specific question of messianism, the Scrolls offer a deep reservoir for understanding the history of other ideas of crucial concern in the NT, including teaching on divorce and remarriage (11QT^{a} 57.15–19), the Sabbath (CD 10.15–11.18), resurrection and the afterlife (*Messianic Apocalypse*, *Pseudo-Ezekiel*), demonology and exorcism (*Songs of the Sage*, *Apocryphal Psalms*, *Incantation Formula*), the beatitudes (*Beatitudes*), dualism (1QS 3.13–4.26; CD 1.1–8.21), and criticism of Jerusalem and its temple authorities (*Halakic Letter*, *Damascus Document*, *Commentary on Habakkuk*). The result of such deepening historical awareness has been an unprecedented recognition of the diversity of early Jewish thought in the age of Christian origins, a diversity within which Jesus and his earliest followers forged their own paths of devotion. Neither Qumran nor the Jesus movement aligned themselves with the kind of Judaism represented by the Jerusalem priestly aristocracy or the Pharisaic-rabbinic stream that would prevail after the temple destruction; yet both of them faithfully reinterpreted Israel's faith in their own ways and even utilized, at times, common traditions as they addressed the predominant religious concerns of Judaism in the first century.

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20

Prophetic Movements and Zealots

JAMES D. G. DUNN

Prophetic movements and Zealots" refers primarily to a sequence of movements that emerged in Judea in the buildup to the Jewish revolt against Rome (AD 66–70) and that contributed decisively to the revolt itself. In both cases, prophetic movements and Zealots, our information comes almost exclusively from Josephus in his history the *Jewish War* and in his subsequent larger account of Israel's history, *Jewish Antiquities*. The movements emerged in the period following the death of Herod Agrippa, who, under Emperor Claudius's patronage, had been granted the same degree of sovereignty previously enjoyed by Herod the Great (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.214–17; *Ant.* 19.274–75). Prior to that, the only serious unrest in Palestine under Roman rule had been in the period immediately following the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, including the messianic pretenders Simon and Athronges (*J.W.* 2.10–79; *Ant.* 17.206–18, 250–98). The intervening period, including the (probably) three years of Jesus' mission, had been relatively quiet. The Roman historian Tacitus indeed reports that "under Tiberius [AD 14–37] all was quiet" (*Hist.* 5.9 LCL; see Schürer, *History*, 1:330–35).

Agrippa, however, had evidently used his short period of kingship (AD 41–44) to demonstrate his Jewish piety (Josephus, *Ant.* 19.293–94), to win favor with the Jerusalemites (*Ant.* 19.299), to stoke the fires of resentment at Roman rule (*Ant.* 19.300), and to strengthen Jerusalem's defenses (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.218; *Ant.* 19.326). In so doing, he presumably intended to strengthen Israel's self-identity and to heighten its nationalistic hopes for a restoration of Judea's sovereignty, lost

a century earlier with Pompey's conquest of Palestine in 63 BC. Agrippa also developed alliances with other client kings in the region, which aroused the Roman governor's undoubtedly justifiable suspicions (*Ant.* 19.338–42). Whatever plans or hopes Agrippa had cherished, they were cut short by his unexpected death in AD 44 (Josephus, *Ant.* 19.343–50; Acts 12:20–23). Josephus also reports that the Caesareans and Sebastenes (Samaria) received the news of Agrippa's death with riotous pleasure (*Ant.* 19.356–59), which strongly suggests that the stirrings of Judean nationalism and possible revolt under Agrippa were regarded with understandable trepidation by the Hellenistic cities around Judea's borders (Schürer, *History*, 1:442–54).

Messianic Claimants around the Time of Jesus

Judas of Sepphoris, son of Hezekiah, the "brigand chief" (4 BC)
Simon of Perea (4 BC)
Athronges the shepherd of Judea (4–2 BC)
Menahem (grand)son of Judas of Sepphoris (AD 66)
John of Gischala, son of Levi (AD 67–70)
Simon bar Giora of Gerasa (AD 68–70)
Lukuas of Cyrene (AD 115)
Simon ben Kosiba/Bar Kokhba (AD 132–135)

Following the death of Agrippa, the restoration of Rome's direct rule, badly mishandled by a series of incompetent procurators (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.223–44), or so Josephus leads us to believe, no doubt added to the flames of increasing resentment and thoughts of revolt (Schürer, *History*, 1:455–70). It was in this context of mounting unrest and disquiet that the prophetic movements and Zealots emerged.

Prophetic Movements

Theudas, the Egyptian, and Sign Prophets

Josephus characterizes two of the movements that emerged in Judea in the late 40s and 50s as prophetic, focusing on the leadership of two individuals explicitly named as "prophets." Both evidently intended to reenact miracles of the entry into the promised land.

Josephus narrates that during the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus (AD 44–46), "a certain imposter [*goēs*] named Theudas persuaded the majority of the masses to take up their possessions and to follow him to the Jordan River. He stated that he was a prophet and that at his command the river would be parted and would provide them an easy passage [that is, presumably to cross back into the promised land]. With this talk he deceived many" (*Ant.* 20.97–98). The NT contains a complementary report, though Acts 5:36 numbers Theudas's followers at only about four hundred. According to Josephus, Fadus sent against them a squadron of cavalry, which caught the would-be revolutionaries/pilgrims unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many prisoners. Theudas himself was captured and peremptorily executed, and his severed head was taken to Jerusalem.

A second prophetic movement, during the procuratorship of Felix (AD 52–60), featured an "Egyptian," designated by Josephus as a "false prophet, a charlatan [*goēs*]." He had gathered about thirty thousand followers (Josephus calls them "dupes") and led them by a circuitous route from the desert to the Mount of Olives. According to Josephus, his intention had been to force an entrance into Jerusalem, assuring his followers that at his command the walls would fall down (as they had at Jericho). After overpowering the Roman garrison, he planned to set himself up as a tyrant of the people. Felix confronted him with a heavy force of Roman infantry, supported by the population, says Josephus, and killed and took prisoner most of the Egyptian's followers. The Egyptian himself escaped with a few of his followers, and the rest dispersed and sneaked back to their homes (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.261–63; *Ant.* 20.167–72). Acts also refers to "the Egyptian," since, according to Luke, the tribune who arrested Paul in the temple at first assumed that he was "the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness" (Acts 21:38).

The differences in numbers should not occasion any surprise, since the numbers of large crowds are still notoriously hard to estimate, and there is a natural tendency of the victors to exaggerate the size of the forces defeated. The figures in Acts are more sober and probably nearer the mark, which only serves to highlight both the fear that even a small prophetic protest movement occasioned in the Roman authorities and the ruthlessness of their response. Also interesting is the fact that both movements started with a return to the desert, presumably as part of a purifying ritual, a return to the priorities and discipline that had initially secured the promised land.

Jewish Prophets around the Time of Jesus

John the Baptist (late AD 20s)
The "Samaritan" (ca. AD 26–36)
Theudas (ca. AD 45)
The "Egyptian" Jew (ca. AD 56)
An anonymous "impostor" (ca. AD 61)
Jesus son of Ananias (AD 62–69)
Jonathan the Weaver, refugee of Cyrene (ca. AD 71)

Josephus also refers to others who promised "signs of deliverance" (*J.W.* 2.258–60 [= *Ant.* 20.168]; 6.285–7 ["many prophets"]; 7.437–41; *Ant.* 20.188), and though he does not describe them all as prophets, the recent practice of classifying them all as "sign prophets" is quite justified (particularly Barnett, "Sign Prophets"; Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 112–44). This data, together with that relating to John the Baptist, provides sufficient evidence that the category of "prophet" was still viable at the time of Jesus.[1]

1. It is now generally recognized that the idea of the prophetic Spirit's having withdrawn (with reference to the variegated evidence of Ps. 74:9; Zech. 13:2–3; 1 Macc. 4:45–46; 9:27; *2 Bar.* 85.1–13) has been much exaggerated; see particularly J. Levison, "Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel? An Evaluation of the Earliest Jewish Data," *NTS* 43 (1997): 35–57.

Jesus and the First Christians as a Prophetic Movement

Jesus was seen as a prophet during his mission. The testimony of the Jesus tradition is both quite widespread and consistent across its breadth.

1. Jesus emerged from the circle around John the Baptist. The Synoptic Gospels make some attempt to cloak this fact. For example, Mark delays his account of the beginnings of Jesus' mission until after the Baptist has been arrested and removed from the scene (1:14); and Matthew tries to explain why Jesus, the son of David, submitted to a baptism of repentance at the hands of the Baptist (Matt. 3:14–15). But John makes it clear that two of Jesus' closest followers were drawn from the ranks of the Baptist's disciples (John 1:35–39) and indicates that Jesus' early mission paralleled that of the Baptist (3:22–26). So it is entirely relevant to note that the Baptist was seen as a prophet. According to John 1:21, he was asked whether he was "the prophet." The overtones of John as an Elijah-type figure may well have deeper roots than Christian apologetic, that is, as more than an attempt to legitimize Jesus' messianic claims by identifying John the Baptist as the forerunner prophesied by Mal. 4:5. And both the report of John's popularity in Q (Matt. 11:7–9//Luke 7:24–26) and the argument about Jesus' authority (Mark 11:27–33 par.)[2] assume that John was widely seen as a prophet. Josephus does not call the Baptist a "prophet," but that may well be because Josephus regarded the category as dubious ("sign prophets"), whereas he respected John. If the Baptist was thought to be a prophet, then it would be natural for the same speculation to be voiced in regard to Jesus.

2. Mark 6:15 and parallels, as well as 8:28 and parallels, specifically report rumors or speculation that Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah, or a prophet. Such reports are certainly part of the developed form in which these stories were told. In the one case, they are attributed to Herod Antipas; in the other, such inadequate rumors serve as a foil for Peter's confession of Jesus as "the Messiah" (8:29). But the variations in these reports (a prophet, one of the old prophets, Jeremiah) likely attest the range of rumors that circulated (and continued to circulate) within Palestine regarding Jesus.

3. That the question was voiced whether Jesus was a prophet, or even *the* prophet, is attested more widely. Notice that in Matt. 21:10–11, when asked, "Who is this?" the crowds reply, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" (cf. 21:46; see also Luke 7:16, 39; 24:19). And the references in John's Gospel, though drawn fully into John's dramatic presentation, confirm that Jesus as (the) prophet was a possibility debated among those intrigued by the reports of Jesus' mission (John 6:14; 7:40, 52 [in John 7:52 "the prophet" is the reading of two early manuscripts, $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$]). That various miracles reported of Jesus seemed to

2. Opinion is divided on the historical value of the passage; see, e.g., J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (2 vols.; AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981–85), 2:1272–73; W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 3:157–58.

parallel those attributed to Elijah and Elisha would presumably not have escaped notice. Compare particularly Mark 5:22–34 with 1 Kings 17:17–24 (Elijah) and 2 Kings 4:18–37 (Elisha). The account of Jesus being mocked as a failed prophet (Mark 14:65 par.) should also be given some weight.

4. It would appear that Jesus himself was by no means unwilling to refer to himself as a prophet (Mark 6:4 par.; Luke 13:33). And if indeed he did regard Isa. 61:1–2 as setting out the program for his own mission—as is explicitly claimed in Luke 4:17–21 (and implicit in Luke 6:20–21//Matt. 5:3–6 and Matt. 11:5//Luke 7:22)—that essentially describes a prophetic figure and role (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 655–66). Many of those who study the historical Jesus think that Jesus is best characterized in terms of the "eschatological prophet" (Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 666n244).

5. That political implications were readily attached to the belief that Jesus was a prophet is indicated by the sequence of John 6:14–15: the Galilean crowd thought Jesus was indeed a prophet and intended to "take him by force to make him king." Particularly notable also is the sad confession of Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, following Jesus' execution: "Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. . . . We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:19, 21). The argument has been made several times, indeed, that Jesus was charged with leading people astray and false prophecy, though the Gospels know nothing of this; however, Luke does refer to a charge of political agitation (Luke 23:2; see Stanton, "Jesus," 175–80).

6. It is true that the thought of Jesus as the prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18) is given some mileage in early Christianity (esp. Acts 3:22–23; 7:37). But otherwise the evaluation of Jesus as a prophet is usually noted, only to be left on one side to be superseded by higher christological claims. The most notable of these is the confession at Caesarea Philippi: others say Jesus is a prophet, Peter says he is the Messiah, Jesus says the Son of Man (Mark 8:28–31 par.). Cleopas says he is "a prophet mighty in deed and word," but does so in an encounter with the risen Christ (Luke 24:19). For John, Jesus as the prophet like Moses is far transcended by Jesus as the one who gives and is the living bread from heaven (John 6:25–58). Overall, there is no indication whatsoever that the first Christians regarded themselves as a prophetic movement gathered around the prophet Jesus.[3]

7. However, the first Christians can be properly characterized as a prophetic movement. Acts begins the story of Christianity with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). And in quoting Joel 2:28–32 (3:1–5 MT), Luke repeats the promise that those who receive the Spirit "shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18). Thereafter, prophecy is depicted as a regular feature of early-church gatherings (11:27–28; 13:1; 15:32; 19:6; 21:9–10). Paul too regards prophecy as a regular feature of his churches' worship and ranks prophecy as the most valuable of the Spirit's gifts (see Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; 14:1–5, 39). It is notable, however, that prophecy is regarded as an in-house gift, for building up the church. There is no

3. See James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (2nd ed.; London: SCM, 1989), §19.1.

hint of what is commonly regarded as "prophetic" speech—that is, of critical social or political comments addressed to civic or political leaders, as was often the case with OT prophets. The one exception is the book of Revelation, which exalts its own prophetic role (1:3; 19:10; 22:7, 9–10, 18–19), including prophecy "about many peoples and nations and languages and kings" (10:11). A notable role is given to the mysterious two prophets who take a leading part in the confrontation with the beast in all the wickedness of its political power and who are killed by it (11:3, 7–10; 16:6). This is as near as first-century Christianity comes to being a prophetic movement like that of Josephus's "sign prophets."

8. Prophecy continued to be a major factor in early Christian worship into the second century, with the accompanying concern over the danger of false prophecy (1 John 4:1–6; *Did.* 11–13; *Herm. Mand.* 11). And prophetic movements continued to feature in Christianity through the following centuries, although the Montanist movement, which flourished in the latter decades of the second century, left a suspicion of enthusiasm and heresy that has haunted all subsequent expressions of Christian prophecy.

Zealots

The Zealots

For most of those with knowledge of the period, the name "Zealots" refers at once to the violent revolutionaries who emerged in Jerusalem as major players in the revolt against Rome (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.651) after its initial phase (winter of AD 66–67). They were one of the ruthless groups that fought for control of Jerusalem when the revolt sank into chaos and internecine warfare as hope to defeat the military might of Rome became increasingly unrealistic. For a flavor of the period, it is worth quoting at length a passage from Josephus, who as himself a former leader of the Jewish revolt in Galilee understandably regarded the final acts in Jerusalem with unmitigated horror. In the final section of his history of the revolt, he castigates unmercifully, but justifiably, those bent on tyranny and on violence and plundering the property of the wealthy.

> The Sicarii were the first to set the example of this lawlessness and cruelty to their kinsmen, leaving no word unspoken to insult, no deed untried to ruin, the victims of their conspiracy. Yet even they were shown by John [of Gischala] to be more moderate than himself. For not only did he put to death all who proposed just and salutary measures, treating such persons as his bitterest enemies among all the citizens, but he also in his public capacity loaded his country with evils innumerable, such as one might expect would be inflicted upon men by one who had already dared to practice impiety even towards God. . . . Again there was Simon son of Gioras: what crime did he not commit? Or what outrage did he refrain from inflicting upon the persons of those very freemen who had created him a despot? What ties of friendship or of kindred but rendered these men more audacious in their daily murders? . . . Yet even their infatuation was

> outdone by the madness of the Idumeans. For these most abominable wretches, after butchering the chief priests,[4] so that no particle of religious worship might continue, proceeded to extirpate whatever relics were left of our civil polity, introducing into every department perfect lawlessness. In this the so-called Zealots excelled, a class which justified their name by their actions; for they copied every deed of ill, nor was there any previous villainy recorded in history that they failed to emulate. And yet they took their title from their professed zeal for virtue, either in mockery of those they wronged, so brutal was their nature, or reckoning the greatest evils good. (Josephus, *J.W.* 7.262–70)

The Zealots were evidently a distinct faction, though their alliances with John of Gischala and the Idumeans against the more moderate Ananus makes for a somewhat confused story (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.193–216, 224–32, 305–13, 326). John is represented as breaking away from the larger Zealot body in aspiration for sole leadership (*J.W.* 4.389–95) and as leading Zealots in warfare against the Idumeans (*J.W.* 4.566–70). It was in response to the mayhem thus caused that Simon ben Giora was given entry to the city and confined John and the Zealots to the stronghold of the temple (*J.W.* 4.574–84; 5.527–30). Subsequently Eleazar formed a new faction of the Zealots and took control of the inner courts of the temple, leaving John in control of the outer courts and Simon in control of the upper city and a large part of the lower city (*J.W.* 5.5–10, 248–57). Josephus obviously regards these as circles of intensifying fanaticism.

Zealots are sometimes linked or identified with the Sicarii, a band of extremists whose name was taken from the curved dagger (Latin *sica*) that they concealed in their garments and used to stab opponents in crowds. They were probably the first of the extremist groups to emerge (during the procuratorship of Felix; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.254–57; *Ant.* 20.185–87). Josephus says of them: "The Sicarii were the first to set the example of this lawlessness and cruelty to their kinsmen, leaving no word unspoken to insult, no deed untried to ruin, the victims of their conspiracy" (*J.W.* 7.262). Nevertheless, they seem to have dropped out of the Jerusalem factions, focusing their energies in the defense of Masada, which they had previously captured (*J.W.* 4.400, 516; 7.253, 275; see further Schürer, *History*, 2:602–6).

In his description of the various subgroups within Second Temple Judaism, which for apologetic purposes he denotes as "philosophies" (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes), Josephus also seems to identify the Zealots with "the fourth philosophy" (*Ant.* 18.23). This is significant, since he describes the fourth philosophy as established by Judas the Galilean, in reaction to the census carried out by the Roman governor Quirinius in AD 6 or 7, and thus seems to indicate a coherent political body that existed from that time (Hengel, *Zealots*, 89). It is certainly the case that Judas's descendants were active in the two decades before the revolt, in the capture and defense of Masada and in the beginnings of the internecine rivalry in Jerusalem (Schürer, *History*, 2:600–601). However, Josephus himself seems to make a point of not using the term "Zealot" for a faction or party until

4. The chief priests Ananus and Jesus (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.314–17); Josephus dates the final overthrow of the city and the downfall of the Jewish state from the day of their murder (*J.W.* 4.318).

the revolt itself (see Horsley, "Zealots"; Schwartz, "Zealots").[5] According to Josephus, the fourth philosophy agreed with the Pharisees in all respects, "except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master" (*Ant.* 18.23). So "the fourth philosophy" is probably a general title for the more extreme views that bubbled below the surface until they began to come to expression in the two decades before the revolt and climaxed in the several factions that brought the revolt to its disastrous climax in AD 70.

Christian Zealots?

Too little noticed is the fact that, apart from his regular references to the Zealots in the *Jewish War*, Josephus also uses the term "zealot" more broadly. In *Antiquities* he never refers to the "Zealots" and uses "zealot" only in the sense of someone completely committed to his religious traditions and praxis (10.49; 6.271; 20.47). He also describes himself as a "zealot" in his search for the right philosophy for his own life (*Life* 11) and even ranks Pythagoras as a "zealot" in his attitude to Israel's law (*Ag. Ap.* 1.162–65; cf. also Philo, *Migr.* 62; *Somn.* 1.124; 2.274; *Abr.* 22, 33, 60; *Mos.* 1.160–61; 2.55, 161, 256).

Here we should recognize that the "Zealots" took their name from a long tradition within Second Temple Judaism that prized "zeal" as an expression of ardent commitment to maintain and defend the unique relationship (covenant) that Israel believed God had established with Israel alone. In the expression of such zeal, these zealots would believe that they were taking their lead from God himself. For "zeal" (*qn'*) also means "jealousy" and is so used to describe Yahweh's "zeal/jealousy" in insisting that Israel must not worship any other gods but must remain dedicated to him alone. So, classically, God's jealousy is described in Exod. 20:5: "You shall not bow down to them [other gods] or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God" (see also Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:23–24; 5:9; 6:14–15; 32:21; Hengel [*Zealots*, 146] notes that the adjectives are applied only to God). Notably in the Greek translation of these passages, it is God himself who is described as a "zealot" (Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15).

The great hero of "zeal" was Phinehas, who, when an Israelite brought a Midianite woman into his tent (into the congregation of Yahweh), forthwith slew them both "because he was zealous for his God" (Num. 25:6–13); it is no surprise that in Num. 25:11 Phinehas's zeal is understood as a direct reflection of Yahweh's. For this single deed he was often recalled and his zeal praised (cf. Ps. 106:28–31; Sir. 45:23–24; 1 Macc. 2:26, 54; 4 Macc. 18:12), and he became the model and inspiration both for the Maccabean rebels against Syrian overlordship and for the later

5. Josephus's earlier uses of the term (*J.W.* 2.444, 564) are best translated in some way other than as "Zealots," and in *J.W.* 2.651 he refers to "those called Zealots" in Jerusalem at the beginning of the war, evidently conscious of the fact that they were being so named in his history for the first time. See also D. Rhoads, *ABD* 6:1043–54.

Zealots (Hengel, *Zealots*, chap. 4). Other "heroes of zeal" were Simeon and Levi, "who burned with zeal for you [God] and abhorred the pollution of their blood" (Jdt. 9:4), referring to their slaughter of the Shechemites after the seduction of their sister Dinah by the son of Hamor (Gen. 34). Notice that in *Jub.* 30 the avenging of Dinah's defilement (30.4–5) and protection of Israel's holiness from gentile defilement (30.8, 13–14) were counted to them for righteousness (30.17). Elijah's zeal for the Lord was most fully expressed in his victory over (and execution of!) the prophets of Baal (see 1 Kings 18:40; 19:1, 10, 14; Sir. 48:2–3; 1 Macc. 2:58). The prophets of Baal would at least include fellow Israelites who had taken service in the worship of Baal (see also Exod. 32:26–29; 2 Kings 10:16–28). And Mattathias sparked the revolt against the Syrians when, burning "with zeal for the law, just like Phinehas," he executed a Syrian officer and a fellow Jew who was going to apostatize by offering a forbidden sacrifice (1 Macc. 2:23–26). Mattathias rallied the rebellion by crying out, "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" (2:27; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.271), and his deathbed testimony is a paean in praise of zeal and the heroes of Israel (1 Macc. 2:50–60).

All this is relevant to the question of whether we can speak of Christian "zealots." One of Jesus' disciples is referred to as Simon "the zealot" (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). We should certainly not translate this as "Simon the Zealot," or conclude from the use of the term, as some have suggested, that Jesus had chosen a "freedom fighter" or "terrorist" as one of his disciples. As we have already noted, the extremist faction who called themselves "Zealots" did not emerge until the beginning of the First Jewish Revolt, nearly forty years later. But we can certainly infer that Simon ardently maintained the belief that Israel had a commitment to worship only the God of Israel. That Jesus chose such an intensely religious person, possibly with strong political views about Rome's domination of Israel, is itself significant.

A more obvious candidate for a Phinehas-like zeal is Saul of Tarsus, who is described in Acts as "zealous for God" (Acts 22:3) and who describes his pre-Christian religious intensity as being "zealous for the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal. 1:14). More strikingly, he attributes his persecution of the church to this same "zeal" (Phil. 3:6; cf. Gal. 1:13–14). His zeal had characteristics similar to those of Phinehas, in that he was prepared to use violence against his fellow Jews, presumably because, like Phinehas and the other "heroes of zeal," he thought it necessary to resist by force what he regarded as a threat to Israel's holiness (its set-apartness) to God alone. The degree to which his zeal foreshadowed that of the Zealots, even if only to a small degree, is one of the most embarrassing features of the biography of the great apostle to the gentiles. Of course, the Paul who admits to this "zeal" does so as an act of confession and repentance for what his conversion has convinced him was a totally unjustified and wrong attitude and policy. That, despite such repentance, Paul continues to use the term "zeal" as a positive term (2 Cor. 7:7; 9:2; 11:2; Col. 4:13 [variant reading]) is a reminder that the basic concept is a positive one and that the Zealots are to be condemned not so much for their zeal as for the abuse and extremist expression of their zeal.

Were Christians involved in the Jewish revolt? That is a question that can never be given a final answer, since our knowledge of Galilean and Judean churches during the period of AD 40–70 is so thin. As for the Jerusalem church itself, the only tradition relating to the outbreak of the war is what is known as "the flight to Pella" tradition, to the effect that early in the war the main body of Christians in Jerusalem fled from Jerusalem across the Jordan to the Perean city of Pella, one of the cities of the Decapolis (see Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.5.3; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 29.7.2–8). The tradition is much questioned, but it does provide what seems to be a likely link between the traditionalist Jewish Christianity in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20) and the later Ebionites, which cannot be lightly dismissed.[6] The point here, however, is that the only tradition available to us about the Jerusalem Christians in the course of the Jewish revolt indicates the unlikelihood that the bulk of the Jerusalem Christians were caught up in the revolt itself, and it is far less likely that they or any of their number could be ranked with the Zealots.

All, then, that can be attributed to the first Christians is a recognition that zeal can be pressed to extremes, but a readiness to recognize too that zeal for other people's welfare and good is something to be affirmed and commended.

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Apocalypticism

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Apocalypticism permeates the NT, and many scholars interpret early Christianity as an apocalyptic movement. At the very least, serious readers of the NT need a basic understanding of this complex, socioreligious phenomenon. Despite continuing terminological ambiguity, there is an emerging consensus on matters of definition, characteristics, and function. Debate still continues concerning its origins, social location, and significance for the NT.

Definition

At the outset, one must distinguish between several related terms. The noun "apocalypticism" and the adjective "apocalyptic" are transliterations of the Greek adjective *apokalyptikos*, meaning "revelatory," and are related to the Greek verb *apokalyptō*, "to unveil, disclose, or reveal." Typically, the content of what is unveiled deals with events leading up to and including the consummation of God's redemptive plan for individuals and the cosmos, matters traditionally designated as "eschatology" (i.e., the study of last things). Occasionally, the focus falls on the secret, inner workings of the cosmos, especially its celestial realms.

To the above terms should be added the Greek cognate noun *apokalypsis*, transliterated into English as "apocalypse" and denoting a divine disclosure or revelation. Scholars apply this term to a literary genre that purports to disclose

eschatological and cosmological secrets. The following is a widely accepted definition:

> Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world. (J. Collins, "Morphology," 9)

The seer communicates his or her visionary experience using a fairly standard stock of literary devices. All apocalypses known to us are pseudonymous (i.e., written under a false name), with the exception of Zech. 1–6 in the OT, the book of Revelation in the NT, and *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Apostolic Fathers. Typically, an apocalypse implicitly invokes the authority of a revered figure from the past. Whether the seer has actually experienced the ecstatic, visionary state described in an apocalypse is debated, though some recent study has taken more seriously the role of religious experiences (and particularly altered states of consciousness) that might give rise to visions of this kind. Probably a combination of intense visionary experience augmented by literary embellishment best accounts for the finished product.

To the uninitiated reader, apocalypses appear to be written in secret code. On closer inspection, however, one generally finds a reasonably reliable interpretive key in canonical apocalyptic prototypes: Isa. 24–27; 65:17–25; 66:22–24; Ezek. 38–48; Joel 2:28–3:21; Zech. 1–6; Dan. 7–12. The "source code" of apocalypses features a wide assortment of domestic and wild animals representing human or superhuman antagonists and protagonists. Liturgical, military, scribal, and numerical imagery and symbols abound, and angelic beings of various ranks, orders, and moral dispositions populate the world of apocalypse. Apocalypses blend ANE and Hellenistic mythological creatures (serpents, dragons, demons) and concepts (cosmology, primeval combat, paradise and Hades) with a wide array of Greco-Roman cultural features (cities, imperial cult, warfare, trade and commerce). The result is akin to a cartoonlike depiction of reality, such as one might experience in a vivid nightmare. It follows that the key to understanding an apocalypse lies in recovering as much as possible the symbolic world of the seer rather than importing one's own contempoary context. The indispensable starting point is the canonical background mentioned above.

The NT book of Revelation is a classic example of an apocalypse, even employing the term "apocalypse" as a self-description in its opening lines: "The revelation [*apokalypsis*] of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw" (Rev. 1:1–2). Some scholars also use the term "apocalypse" for eschatological passages inserted into another genre, such as a Gospel or an epistle

(Mark 13//Matt. 24//Luke 21 ["the little apocalypse"]; 2 Thess. 2:1–17 ["the Pauline apocalypse"]), but, strictly speaking, these are instances of apocalyptic eschatology.

"Apocalyptic eschatology" describes "neither a genre, nor a socio-religious movement, nor a system of thought, but rather a religious perspective, a way of viewing divine plans in relation to mundane realities, . . . a perspective which individuals or groups can embrace in varying degrees at different times" (Hanson, "Apocalypticism," 29). Many scholars also use the term "apocalyptic" as a noun to refer to both the basic ideas and the social movement that produced them. The resulting semantic confusion has led some scholars to urge a clear distinction between the noun "apocalypticism" and the adjective "apocalyptic" (Kreitzer, "Apocalyptic," 57). Nonetheless, the two terms are still used interchangeably.

In summary, apocalypticism is essentially a "worldview expressed in apocalypses and embodied in social movements." Apocalyptic eschatology is "governed by a worldview in which the revelation of divine secrets is constitutive of salvation from an alien or threatening world" (Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic Texts," 29). An apocalyptist is thus one who manifests an apocalyptic viewpoint or exhibits behavior typical of apocalypticism.

Overview of Sources

Apocalyptic literature, usually expressed in a specific literary genre called "apocalypse," flourished in the period of about 200 BC to AD 200. Included in this corpus are some thirty-seven extant documents, fourteen Jewish and twenty-three Christian (Kreitzer, "Apocalyptic," 58). In addition to apocalypses, there are other genres—such as the "rewritten Bible" *Jubilees*, the oracular work *Sibylline Oracles*, and a number of testamentary writings (e.g., *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Testament of Moses*)—that contain apocalyptic sections or passages. Perhaps the single most formative noncanonical Jewish work to significantly influence both Jewish and Christian apocalyptic thought is *1 Enoch*, a composite document consisting of five distinct works and dating from the mid-third century BC to the first century AD. It displays the features of at least three major genres: testament, apocalypse, and epistle. In this regard, one finds an interesting parallel in the book of Revelation, which combines the genres of epistle, prophecy, and apocalypse. The Jewish apocalypses (often with Christian redaction and interpolations) are accessible in an edition by James Charlesworth (*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*). One may consult the Christian apocalypses (often incorporating or influenced by Jewish traditions) in J. K. Elliott's *Apocryphal New Testament*.

Origins

Jewish apocalypses do not suddenly appear without precedent; precursors in OT canonical literature, especially Dan. 7–12, prepared the way. But what is the

taproot of this distinctive worldview? The majority view, especially among English-speaking scholars, understands apocalyptic literature as a historical development of OT prophecy. The national crisis confronting the Jewish people in the collapse of the first commonwealth (587 BC) and intensified during the Hellenistic era (ca. 323 BC to AD 63), especially during the onslaught of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167 BC) against their ancestral faith (1 Macc. 1:10–6:16), served as the catalyst for apocalypticism.

The magnitude of this unprecedented suffering challenged traditional understandings of God and his relationship to the world. Apocalyptists concluded that evil was so entrenched and cosmic in scale that only divine intervention could rectify the situation. But God was not unmindful of this catastrophic eruption of evil; all was foreseen, all was predestined. For the present, the faithful must persevere. Soon God will act decisively to destroy evil and evildoers. Apocalypticism in all its diversity gives expression to this unshakable conviction: God will triumph over the forces of evil and reward the righteous. Apocalyptic texts adapt imagery and themes found in OT prophetic texts to make this point and in so doing implicitly appeal to their authority.

Not all scholars agree with this postulated development of apocalypticism. Dismissing the direct link with the OT prophetic tradition, the German OT scholar Gerhard von Rad famously located the roots of apocalypticism in the OT wisdom tradition. He questioned whether the prophetic traditions could adequately explain the combination of determinism, dualism, radical transcendence, and esotericism (i.e., the mysterious and impenetrable). Furthermore, in both the wisdom and apocalyptic traditions, the sages and seers refer to themselves as "the wise" and commit their teachings to writing (Eccles. 12:9–12; Sir. 38:34–39:11; 51:23–28; Dan. 12:3; Rev. 1:11; 10:8–11; 13:18; 14:13; 22:18–19), and the sense of order and fascination with the cosmos more likely stems from wisdom circles interacting with Hellenism. Despite its eloquence, von Rad's narrowly framed thesis has failed to convince most scholars.

Some history-of-religions scholars argue that Iranian dualism and eschatology played a major role in shaping Jewish apocalypticism. Given the long period during which Jews resided in Persia, this cannot be discounted. On the other hand, the proposal has encountered resistance, not least because of the notorious problem of dating: the extant Iranian materials are considerably later than the Jewish apocalyptic texts. Furthermore, a close reading of the respective literatures reveals fundamental differences. Anders Hultgård therefore concludes, "There was no direct and general borrowing of the Iranian apocalyptic eschatology as such by Judaism and Christianity. Instead, the influence exerted itself in an indirect way but was of no less importance."[1]

1. Anders Hultgård, "Persian Apocalypticism," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. John J. Collins; vol. 1 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*; New York: Continuum, 1998), 39–83 (80).

An emerging consensus recognizes that an either/or solution misses the mark. Wisdom traditions, ANE mythology, Hellenism, and perhaps even Iranian thought all contributed to the genesis of apocalypticism. A majority, however, still gives priority to the OT prophetic traditions (which themselves evidence borrowing from ANE traditions).

Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

There is general agreement on certain distinguishing features of apocalyptic literature. There is less agreement on how best to integrate these into a coherent whole.

Dualism

All researchers agree that apocalypticism is marked by pronounced dualism, a dualism operating on three different axes or planes.

1. A *temporal dualism* exists between the present and the future. Two juxtaposed eras—the present, evil age and the future, glorious age to come—frame apocalyptic thought. In Jewish apocalypticism, the present age is demarcated by creation and the climactic day of the Lord. The age to come follows and lasts forever. This is classically expressed in the first-century AD apocalyptic work 2 Esdras (*4 Ezra*): "But the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come, in which corruption has passed away" (7:43 [113] RSV; cf. 2 Esd. 7:47, 50; 8:1).

Temporal dualism frames the NT master narrative with one, all-important modification: some of the blessings of the age to come are already being experienced by believers at the close of the present age (Heb. 6:5; Col. 3:1–4). The cross and resurrection of Jesus, providing forgiveness of sins (Rom. 3:21–26; 8:1–4) and guaranteeing the resurrection of believers at the parousia (1 Cor. 15:12–28), and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17–36) inaugurate the age to come. For this reason, some scholars prefer the expression "inaugurated eschatology" to distinguish this Christian concept from its Jewish predecessor. The reality is nicely summarized in the catchphrase "now but not yet." At the parousia (i.e., Christ's second coming), the present age drops away and the consummation of God's saving plan arrives in all its glory. In short, apocalyptic eschatology, whether Jewish or Christian, is essentially linear: history is moving inexorably toward a crisis climaxed by divine intervention. Consequently, apocalypticism displays a short-term pessimism but a long-term optimism. This linear movement, conceived in terms of a horizontal dualism between present and future, is fundamental to apocalypticism.

2. A second axis may be expressed in spatial terms: a *vertical dualism* exists between the above and the below, between a heavenly, transcendent realm and an earthly, finite realm. The temporal and spatial axes of apocalypticism are integrally related in that the earthly and heavenly realms parallel each other in the present

age until the crisis point, when God supernaturally intervenes in judgment. Then the earthly realm disappears (or is destroyed), and the new order characterizing the glorious, transcendent realm appears and endures forever. The Jewish apocalypse that most clearly emphasizes spatial dualism is *2 Baruch* (cf. *2 Bar.* 4.1–7; 32.1–7; 44.4–15; 51.1–16, esp. v. 8). Precisely such a spatial dualism also figures significantly in the NT and, in addition to Revelation (Rev. 4–5), is most clearly seen in Heb. 8–10 (cf. Col. 3:1–4; Eph. 1:20–22; 2:19–21).

3. The preceding two axes intersect with a third: *anthropological dualism*. Humanity falls into two clearly demarcated entities: the righteous and the wicked. Some scholars prefer to label this as an ethical dualism, reflecting a cosmic arena in which the righteous are pitted against not only the wicked on the earthly plane but also heavenly powers of darkness (Eph. 2:1–7; 6:12). Paul even attributes unbelief to the fact that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers" (2 Cor. 4:4; cf. 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 2:2). On the other hand, John and Paul are confident that the gospel is winning the long-term struggle against the powers of darkness (1 John 2:8, 14, 28; 4:4; 5:4–5, 18; Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:24), just as their Lord has promised (Mark 3:27; Matt. 16:18; Luke 10:18).

In some apocalyptic circles, the basis for ethical dualism is predestined; that is, human beings are foreordained either to be saved or to be condemned. This type of dualism surfaces, for example, in the Qumran writings generally assigned to the Jewish sect known as the Essenes (CD 2.7–8; 1QS 3.13–4.26).[2] Though clearly accepting an anthropological dualism, 2 Esdras lays the blame at the feet of those who disobey God's revealed truth in the law. In other words, human choice rather than divine decree determines the dualism. Precisely this tension between divine sovereignty and human freedom manifests itself in the pages of the NT (e.g., Rom. 8–11).

Angelic Mediators

Angelic mediation is a typical feature of apocalyptic literature in which an angel serves as a guide or informant for a visionary. This is seen already in Ezekiel: an angel transports the prophet, in a visionary state, from his refugee camp in Babylon (modern Iraq) to the Jerusalem temple (Ezek. 8–11). The angel guides him on a temple tour and intermittently asks him what he sees; Ezekiel replies with detailed descriptions of the abominations he witnesses. The medium of an angelic informant is developed further in Dan. 7–12 in that the seer now asks questions of the angel (Dan. 10:16–17) and makes requests (Dan. 10:19). Later apocalyptic literature takes this even further and often features extended dialogue back and forth between informant and recipient (as in *1 Enoch* and 2 Esdras).

2. See Jonathan Klawans, "The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes, and the Study of Religious Belief: Determinism and Freedom of Choice," in *Rediscovering the Dead Sea Scrolls: An Assessment of Old and New Approaches and Methods* (ed. M. L. Grossman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 264–83.

The book of Revelation displays this dialogical format (5:5; 7:13–17; 10:8–11; 17:6–18; 19:9–10; 22:8–11).

In connection with angelic mediation, a heavenly ascent regularly serves as the locus of revelation. Once again, *1 Enoch* is paradigmatic for this revelatory experience (*1 En.* 14.8). In neither Ezekiel nor Daniel does the seer ascend into the heavenly realm; rather, the revelation is revealed on the earthly plane ("In the vision I was looking and saw myself in Susa the capital, in the province of Elam"; Dan. 8:2). The opening three chapters of Revelation, reflecting the OT prophetic pattern, likewise feature a terrestrial revelation, on the island of Patmos (1:9–11), before switching to the apocalyptic mode and transporting the seer to the heavenly realms (4:1–2), where he receives celestial visions concerning "what must take place after this" (4:1). The apostle Paul mentions his extraordinary throne-room visit in 2 Cor. 12:1–13.

Revelation of Divine Secrets

We come to what many deem the essential core of apocalypticism, namely, the notion of revealing previously hidden information. Larry Kreitzer observes that "this is perhaps the only one [feature] which might gain a general agreement as essential to any definition of the literature as a whole" ("Apocalyptic," 62). In the book of Daniel, the sage/seer is commanded: "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end" (12:9). The book of Revelation, on the other hand, after identifying itself in its opening line as a "revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1), concludes with an angelic command: "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (22:10). In the case of Daniel, the end was perceived as distant; in the case of John of Patmos, the end is imminent (Rev. 1:1; 22:7, 12, 20). Only the Qumran community displays a sense of imminence comparable to what characterizes the NT (Collins, "Eschatology," 257–59).

Christian apocalypticism proclaims open secrets. This stands in stark contrast to Hellenistic mystery religions and the writings of the sectarians of Qumran, in which divine mysteries are closely guarded secrets (1QS 5.10–16; 9.16–17). New Testament apocalypticism revels in revealing God's saving secrets (Rom. 11:25; 16:25–26; 1 Cor. 15:50–58; Eph. 1:9–10; 3:3–13; 6:19–20; Col. 1:26–27; 2:2–7; 4:3–4; Rev. 1:20; 10:7; 17:5–18). Although Jesus limited his mission to Israel during his lifetime (Mark 4:10–12; Matt. 11:25–27; 13:51–52), he anticipates a time in which the "good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14; cf. Mark 13:10). Certainly, the postresurrection Great Commission makes no allowance for an elite circle of the enlightened: "teaching [all nations] to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20; cf. Acts 1:8). To be sure, the apostle Paul can speak of reserving wisdom for the mature (1 Cor. 2:6–7), but this occurs in a highly ironic and sarcastic context, in which he chastises his readers, who ought to be mature, spiritual people but were still "infants in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1–4).

The major content of these unveilings concentrates on eschatology, that is, the end times. How will human history conclude, and what eternal destiny is in store? But this is not the sole content. The inner workings of the cosmos are occasionally the subject of an unveiling of hidden secrets as well. The prime example is *1 En.* 72–82, the Astronomical Book, featuring a lengthy (if a bit tiresome!) tour of the celestial luminaries and a mechanical explanation for various weather phenomena. A closer reading of the text, however, suggests that even this digression into cosmological clockwork grows out of a deeper dispute over the proper calendar rather than fascination with the workings of the cosmos. In short, a solar calendar rather than a lunar calendar should be followed, and the tedious explanation for how it all works is part of a demonstration for the correctness of the solar option, which in turn significantly influences Enoch's eschatology. Seen in its larger context, such cosmological passages actually appear to be secondary to the primary focus on revealing eschatological secrets.

A primary focus of apocalyptic literature centers on the fate of the righteous and the wicked. Heaven and hell are matters of perennial interest to human beings, and in this regard apocalyptists do not disappoint. For example, extensive tours of heaven and hell feature in *1–2 Enoch*, and the book of Revelation itself concludes with a terrifying glimpse of the lake of fire and a grand tour of the new Jerusalem (chaps. 20–22). But also figuring prominently in apocalyptic texts are ascents to the majestic throne room of God. The Enoch traditions (*1 En.* 14) and the book of Revelation (chaps. 4–5) highlight throne-room scenes as a centerpiece of their respective revelations. The sovereignty of God is thus visually reinforced by picturing the entire cosmos in orbit around God's throne.

Jewish apocalyptic eschatology falls into two general types. On the one hand, some eschatological scenarios conceive the future in this-worldly terms. What will be is a greatly enhanced version of what has been: the end recapitulates the beginning. The end times involve a return to the pristine times of the primeval world. Redeploying ancient creation mythology, apocalyptic eschatology envisions a return to the garden of Eden. The best example of this imagery is the book of Revelation where the motifs of Gen. 1–3 reappear (Rev. 21–22). Such a patterning of human history is a standard feature of apocalyptic thought. If the Davidic dynasty disappointed by its covenant unfaithfulness and descent into degradation, the future kingdom fully actualizes the aspirations of prophet and poet for an ideal king and ideal age, a sort of Jewish Camelot (Amos 9:11–15; Isa. 2:1–5; 11:1–16; 32:1–8; Pss. 2; 72; 89).

Most often, Jewish apocalyptic literature demonstrates a radical break with the prophetic vision of the future and reimages it in transcendental terms: "Evil was so monstrous and entrenched that a mere restoration was not sufficient. Nothing short of transformation could eradicate the damage done" (Helyer, *Jewish Literature*, 119). This eschatological escalation is already adumbrated in Isa. 65:17, wherein the prophet envisions "new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah's new earth, however, is still recognizably continuous with the present world order.

To this should be compared *2 Baruch*, in which the age to come displays radical discontinuity with the present age. The NT emphasizes an other-worldly eschatology in 2 Pet. 3:10–13, where fire dissolves the present heavens and earth before the new heavens and a new earth appears. And in John's vision of the end, "the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more" (Rev. 21:1). Paul simply affirms "the glory about to be revealed" (Rom. 8:18) and a time that brings "unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ" (Eph. 1:10 NIV).

Social Location and Function of Apocalypticism

Perhaps the most problematic issue concerns the specific social environment that produced and nurtured apocalypticism. Attempts to trace this complex movement back to a particular socioreligious group from the Second Temple period—such as the Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees, or Zealots—have failed to win consensus. As a default position, many are content to postulate various anonymous apocalyptic groups whose existence is only inferred from the surviving apocalyptic literature. Though plausible, the highly subjective basis for this view is not always forthrightly acknowledged, with the results that supposition often becomes axiomatic and nondocumented apocalyptic sects tend to proliferate.

It is widely held that apocalypticism arises within groups who are oppressed and marginalized. But even this generalization has been called into question. It is conceivable that an apocalyptist could emerge from socially elite circles if for some reason that person became deeply disillusioned with the status quo. For example, although Leo Tolstoy was by no means an apocalyptist, he radically turned away from his aristocratic roots and identified with the poor and downtrodden peasants. Such may also have been the case for some who identified with apocalypticism. In spite of this caveat, modern sociological research on apocalyptic communities suggests a disenfranchised minority as the most likely locus for such thinking.

In this regard, the DSS have played a leading role in the debate over the social location of apocalypticism. Despite continuing challenges, a majority of scholars identify the Essenes as the community responsible for the distinctive sectarian literature emanating from the Qumran caves. Based on the number of copies found, the book of *1 Enoch* appears to have been a favorite of this community, as was the book of Daniel. In addition, fragments of previously unknown writings reflecting apocalyptic ideas were discovered in the Qumran library. The sectarian scrolls reveal a group of Jewish dissidents who were harassed by the Jerusalem temple priesthood. They bitterly condemn their opponents and articulate a well-defined scenario for the end time, which has either begun or is imminent. In short, they constitute a socioreligious group displaying characteristics that modern sociologists associate with an apocalyptic sect (see further A. Collins, "Apocalypses").

On the other hand, Pharisaism cannot be ruled out as another legitimate location for the rise of apocalypticism. Although it is true that in the aftermath of the Jewish revolts against Rome (AD 66–73, 132–135) the successors of Pharisaism (the Tannaim of ca. AD 20–200) distanced themselves from apocalypticism, its presence prior to this national disaster seems fairly certain. A prime witness is none other than the apostle Paul, a self-identified Pharisee (Phil. 3:5; cf. Gal. 1:14; see also Acts 23:6), whose eschatological views, especially affirming bodily resurrection (cf. Acts 23:6–10), were surely influenced by his Pharisaic roots (e.g., 1 Cor. 15; cf. 2 Maccabees; see Helyer, *Jewish Literature*, 163–64).

The function of apocalyptic literature is a by-product of its social location. In many ways, these writings are tracts for hard times in which the faithful are exhorted and encouraged to hang on in the midst of opposition and persecution. Appeal to the sovereign God, whose plan for the end is certain and imminent and involves reward for the faithful and punishment for the wicked, is a primary theme of this insider literature. Revelation provides a classic example, with repeated exhortations to patient endurance (1:9; 2:9–11; 13:9–10; 14:12–13; 16:15; 21:6–8).

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